



UNIVERSIDAD DE GRANADA



Ciencias de la Educación

**TEACHER TRAINING  
ON GENDER AND SEXUAL IDENTITIES  
IN A SPANISH CONTEXT**

Doctoral Thesis  
**Stefano Barozzi**

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**INTERNATIONAL DOCTORAL THESIS**

**Tesis doctoral internacional**

**TEACHER TRAINING  
ON GENDER AND SEXUAL IDENTITIES  
IN A SPANISH CONTEXT**

Author

**Stefano Barozzi**

Directors

**Dr Juan Ramón Guijarro Ojeda**

**Dr Cristina Pérez Valverde**

**Dr Raúl Ruiz Cecilia**

PhD in Education

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October 2015



*Je ne pense pas qu'il soit nécessaire de savoir exactement qui je suis*

*(I don't feel it is necessary to know exactly what I am)*

Michel Foucault



Designed by Mario Eskenazi

*Nature has her language... but we don't know  
all the intricacies of her syntax just yet,  
and in a hasty reading we may happen to extract  
the very opposite of her real meaning*

Mary Ann Evans (George Elliot)



## Abstract

This thesis is based on action research undertaken in Spain at the Faculty of Education of the University of Granada. The main research objective was to demonstrate the need to train and empower pre-service and in-service teachers so as to enable them to take pedagogical action in favour of LGBTI (Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans and Intersexual) and queer persons' equity in education.

In order to fulfil this aim, a pilot study on sexual identity issues with pre-service and in-service primary school English-language teachers was organised, resulting in requests for training in this area. Consequently, two teacher training courses were offered at the same university faculty. The first, in 2011, was given in English and aimed at pre-service primary and secondary school English-language teachers. The second, in 2013, was offered in Spanish to pre-service and in-service teachers, as well as university students, of different educational levels and disciplines.

In the training process, emphasis was put on practical activities and classroom interaction based on queer theory, critical and transformative pedagogy, as well as fuzzy set theory applied to sex and gender. This process helped raise the participants' consciousness of the ongoing complex reality of LGBTI and queer identities in education, and, through introspective personal reflections, to recognise that *homotransphobia* and heterosexism can affect anybody. Furthermore, they were empowered to take queer pedagogic action into their schools, despite having to face barriers and limitations at both social and institutional levels.

This research has contributed to queer pedagogy and literature by creating new knowledge, presenting the theory of sex and gender fuzzy sets for the first time in an academic context and by developing pedagogic strategies to counter gender binarism, *homotransphobia*, heterosexism and cissexism in education. Moreover, original queer teaching materials were created by the participants of the two courses, both in English and in Spanish.

The results of this research also suggest that training on gender and sexual identities should begin from early childhood education in order to be most effective and that it is fundamental to involve in the process not only school staff and students' parents/guardians, but also local and national education authorities and society at large, thus transcending academia. Finally, this study highlighted the fact that the existence of

progressive Spanish legislation for LGBTI persons is not sufficient in itself unless it is adequately implemented in education.

It is therefore necessary to promote teacher training programmes at all educational levels and disciplines through critical analysis and discussion in order to contribute to social and institutional transformation in support of gender and sexual equity.

**Keywords:** action research, cissexism, EFL, heteronormativity, homotransphobia, queer theory, sex and gender fuzzy set theory, sexual identities, Spanish education, teacher training.



## Resumen

Esta tesis se basa en una investigación-acción en el aula que se llevó a cabo en España en la Facultad de Ciencias de la Educación de la Universidad de Granada. Su objetivo principal es justificar la necesidad de formar y empoderar a alumnado universitario y a profesorado en activo en las identidades sexuales y en el no binarismo de género, a favor de la equidad de las personas LGBTI (Lesbianas, Gays, Bisexuales, Trans e Intersexuales) y queer.

Para la consecución de este objetivo se organizó un estudio piloto sobre esta temática con estudiantes de la Facultad de Ciencias de la Educación, especialidad Inglés, y con profesorado de Educación Primaria de Inglés. De este estudio se concluyó la necesidad de llevar a cabo una formación docente adicional y por ello se organizaron dos cursos: el primero en 2011, impartido en inglés, dirigido a profesorado de Inglés en formación y el segundo en 2013, impartido en castellano, tanto para alumnado universitario como para docentes en activo de varias disciplinas y niveles educativos. Todo el proceso formativo tuvo un enfoque eminentemente práctico basado en la teoría queer, en la pedagogía crítica y transformadora, y en la teoría de conjuntos difusos de sexogénero.

Este proceso redundó en que los grupos participantes se concienciaran sobre la situación de inequidad que existe actualmente hacia las personas LGBTI y queer en la educación, y, a través de un ejercicio de introspección personal, reconocieron que la *homotransfobia* y el heterosexismo afectan a cualquier persona. Por otra parte, pusieron en práctica su empoderamiento docente al tomar acciones pedagógicas a favor de las personas LGBTI en sus entornos laborales, enfrentándose para ello a barreras y limitaciones sociales e institucionales. Tomaron también conciencia de que exponer estos temas al alumnado desde edades tempranas hace que el proceso formativo sea más efectivo.

A través de esta investigación se ha contribuido a la pedagogía y literatura queer creando nuevos conocimientos, presentando por primera vez en un ámbito académico la teoría de conjuntos difusos de sexogénero y diseñando estrategias pedagógicas queer para contrarrestar la *homotransfobia*, el heterosexismo y el cissexismo en el aula. También se han producido nuevos materiales didácticos inclusivos y no discriminatorios hacia identidades no (hetero)normativas, tanto en inglés como en español.

De este estudio se ha concluido que para contribuir al cambio social e institucional es necesario establecer contactos con todos los niveles educativos, con las autoridades locales

y nacionales, y, para que la transformación sea más efectiva, con gran parte de la sociedad. Asimismo, esta investigación destaca que la mera existencia de una legislación progresista a favor de las personas LGBTI, como la que hay en España, no se traduce en medidas concretas que garanticen su cumplimiento en los centros educativos.

Debido a los resultados obtenidos en este trabajo, se considera necesario promover la creación de espacios formativos, en los que se fomente el diálogo y el análisis crítico a favor de la equidad sexual y de género.

***Palabras claves:*** cissexismo, educación española, formación docente, heteronormatividad, homotransfobia, identidades sexuales, inglés como lengua extranjera, investigación-acción, teoría de conjuntos difusos de sexogénero, teoría queer.

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In addition, I would like to express my special thanks to Kim Pérez, for being a valuable teaching and facilitating companion on the training course given in Spanish and a wonderful person from whom I have learnt many things. I also feel very grateful to Dr Timothy Bedford of the University of Oulu in Finland, who allowed me to use the material from his own research and has always encouraged me to complete this dissertation, and to Dr Luca Trappolin of the Faculty of Sociology of the University of Padua in Italy, for inviting me to present the work of this thesis in one of his sociology seminars. Special gratitude also to Cherynne Carayan, expert in gender studies, for her indispensable proofreading and editing of my work; Tara, who has been a source of inspiration for my research and Francisca, for her incredible support and for giving me crucial advice and assistance on how to structure and present this thesis together with Paco.

Thank you also to my sister who has always believed in my research and has always sustained me when I thought I could not accomplish it, and my mother, a special person who has transmitted her values to me. Finally, I am particularly grateful to all the participants of the pilot study and training courses of this dissertation, and all the other people I met in Spain and outside Spain during my PhD research, without whom this project would have been impossible.



## Glossary

The following definitions are mine; some of them were taken from cited sources and others were defined during the training courses of this dissertation after reaching agreement with the participants. They are fundamental terms and definitions used throughout the text that need to be specified and referred to here. However, I would like to point out that the meanings of these terms are not universal and other people might give slightly different definitions of the same words and terms.

**Cisgender/cissexual heterosexual** persons<sup>1</sup> (or **cis heterosexuals**) identify themselves with their own biological and subconscious sex, as well as their gender. They are attracted physically and emotionally to people of the opposite sex and gender. Trans persons might define themselves as *heterosexual* (as a *sexual orientation*) even if they do not identify themselves with their biological and subconscious sex or their gender. Unless expressed otherwise, in this work I will always associate the term *heterosexual* with cisgenderism.

**Cis persons/cissexuals/cislanders** unlike trans persons, feel comfortable with their own biological and subconscious sex as well as their gender (Serano, 2007). A cis person (cissexual/cisgender) can be homosexual, bisexual or heterosexual.

**Cissexism** is the belief that cis persons consider themselves superior to trans persons. This can be manifested in different ways, like for example not allowing a trans woman to enter and use a lavatory for women based on the assumption that she was born male, or an intended misuse of gender pronouns. **Cisnormativity** is related to the social norms which perpetuate *cissexism*.

**Cissexist** is a person who believes that their cis condition is superior of that of trans persons.

**Gender** is normally intended to be socially constructed in discourse and is a dynamic process referring to the cultural inscription of bodies into masculine and feminine characteristics. Thus, gender is not fixed in one's biological sex (drawn on Robinson and Díaz, 2006). For *gender code* and *gender role* see Chapter II-2.

**Gender and sexual identity.** The word *identity* is usually related to how people recognise themselves (or how they are told to do so) in a socially and culturally constructed context. To recognise oneself as lesbian, gay, trans, bisexual, heterosexual or intersexual is to accept a gender and sexual identity. To keep it simpler in this dissertation, I will often use the shorter 'sexual identities' without the term 'gender'. Sexual identities, unlike queer identities, refer to all types of identities, including cis-heterosexuals. I opted for using both 'gender' and 'sexual' identities in the title of this dissertation for the broad meaning that 'gender' bears and 'sexual' because the word is often considered taboo.

**Lgbti** is an acronym which is usually written in capital letters (LGBTI). It stands for lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans and intersexual persons. I prefer to use the small letters because the capital letters stand out almost aggressively in a text and I want it to be read like any other word, also because it

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<sup>1</sup> The use I make of 'persons' refers to the individuals, to the uniqueness of a group of individuals. Lgbti/queer 'persons' instead of 'people' is favoured by other researchers in the field like Bedford (2009). Although I have often written 'lgbti persons' in this dissertation, sometimes I have also employed the more common 'lgbti people'.

is often used as an adjective (lgbt persons). Sometimes there are other letters attached to this acronym, like ‘q’ for ‘queer’ or ‘questioning’, and others which I won’t be using as I prefer to keep it simpler; moreover, I prefer to keep ‘queer’ separate. Sometimes in this dissertation I will employ the more common capital letters for this acronym, depending on how it is reported in a particular study (usually as LGBT without ‘I’).

***Heterodissident and Heteroflexible*** (look under *queer*).

***Heteronormativity*** relates to all those social norms and rules that perpetuate heterosexism in many different ways. In education, for example, the exclusion of any lgbt individual in school textbooks and discussions, and the insistence of always showing ‘typical’ heterosexual families is an example of heteronormativity. Unlike homotransphobia, which is intentional in nature, heteronormativity is often subconsciously reproduced in textbooks, images and discourses and often goes unnoticed, which is why it may cause more damage than homotransphobia.

***Heterosexism*** is the belief that (cis) heterosexual persons are superior to all other sexual identities. Being heterosexual does not necessarily mean being heterosexist. In fact, often subconsciously, through social discourses and behaviour lgbt persons may also support heteronormativity.

***Homotransphobia*** is more commonly known as ‘homophobia’. I prefer the more inclusive term ‘homotransphobia’ to include all types of discrimination towards lgbt persons (*lesbophobia, biphobia, transphobia and intersexphobia*). In this dissertation, I alternate ‘homotransphobia’ with ‘homophobia’ because the latter is the term adopted in most of the previous studies I have analysed and was also employed in the pilot study and in the first course given in English of this thesis. Homotransphobia as discrimination towards lgbt persons can take many different forms or shades, from a denial when dealing with it, to more aggressive and violent manifestations. Often, repeated exposure to homotransphobic behaviour produces a psychological response called *interiorised homotransphobia* in lgbt people, which is a set of negative opinions, attitudes and behaviours towards lgbt persons acquired over time by the same lgbt persons and not deconstructed (drawn on *Schoolmates - Homophobic Bullying at Schools*, 2008: 14<sup>2</sup>). Homotransphobia should be considered a social injustice.

***Intergender*** (look under *queer*).

***Intersex/intersexual*** is a general term used for a variety of conditions in which a person is born with a reproductive or sexual anatomy that does not seem to fit the typical definitions of female or male. For example, a person might be born appearing to be female on the outside, but having mostly male-typical anatomy on the inside. Or a person may be born with genitals that seem to be in-between the usual male and female types, or a person may be born with mosaic genetics, so that some of their cells have XX chromosomes and some of them have XY. (From ‘Intersex Society of North America’: [http://www.isna.org/faq/what\\_is\\_intersex](http://www.isna.org/faq/what_is_intersex)).

***Queer*** in this dissertation is often used as an umbrella term to include all lgbt persons (Jagose, 1996) as well as those who feel socially marginalised due to their sexual and gender identity and orientation. *Queer*, as usually employed in queer theory, is also a fluid term that does not constitute a particular fixed social identity, which contributes to its complexity. In this dissertation, the term queer includes *genderqueer* individuals who do not recognise themselves as ‘she’ or ‘he’ (‘ze?’); *genderfluid* (or *fluid*) people who move between genders and their gender is not something that they or anyone can pin down and define; *intergender* people who feel in between the binary genders of feminine and masculine and sometimes may be a mix of both and other times feel more one or the other; *pansexuals* who are attracted to, and interested in all types of people whether they define themselves as having a fixed sexual identity or not, as well as *asexual* individuals (not

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<sup>2</sup> <http://www.educacionenvalores.org/Schoolmates-bullying-and.html>

interested in sexual acts) and *agender (non-binary gender)* people. *Heterodessident* people are (cis) heterosexuals who do not accept their privileged role in society as something ‘natural’ and find it unjust, thus they could also enter the queer rubric. Finally, *heteroflexible* people recognise themselves as straight but with a queer sensibility, which make them consider experiencing bisexuality. For a more extensive definition of queer see Chapter II-1.

*Sex* is normally intended as part of biological and chromosomal factors that define a person’s sexual characteristics (female, male, intersex). In my work, neither sex nor gender are always binary (male or female) but open to various possibilities. For poststructuralists, sex can also be considered a social construction like gender.

*Sexism*, or *gender category oppression* (Rands, 2009), is prejudice, stereotyping, or discrimination, more typically against women, on the basis of sex/gender. Sexism towards women is also called *misogyny* and towards men *misandry*.

*Sexual orientation* is normally defined as a continuum that develops between two extremes: pure heterosexuality on one side and pure homosexuality on the other (based on the Kinsey scale of 1948<sup>3</sup>). In this study it refers to an instinctive emotional and physical attraction to a determined person. For example, a trans person female to male (FtM) might be attracted to either men or women or transgenders, and depending on their choice of words they might consider themselves either heterosexual or gay (or lesbian).

*Transgender* in this dissertation has been simplified to mean a person who wants to transition from female to male or vice-versa; that is, a person who feels better identified with the opposite gender than that assigned to them at birth. Transgender persons might start hormone therapy or not, and might undergo genital reconstruction or not. Transgendered in its more common use in English usually also includes transsexual and even intersexual persons; however, I prefer to keep transgender and transsexual separate and use the more inclusive word ‘trans’ for both.

*Transsexual* is a person whose gender and sexual identity diverges from their biological sex so strongly as to make them desire or consider genital reconstruction surgery. They usually take hormones to become more ‘male’ or ‘female’. So, the main difference from transgendered persons is the genital reconstruction surgery, or even better, how they define themselves, giving them the freedom to adopt the identity they most desire. Transgenderism and transsexuality nowadays are still considered pathologies and mental disorders almost all over the world.

*Trans persons* in this study are all those who are or have been in sexual or gender transition. Thus, it includes both transgender and transsexual persons. Trans can also refer to transvestites (cross-dressers, drag-queens/kings); however in this dissertation as an inclusive term it mainly refers to both transgender and transsexual persons. Some trans persons prefer to call themselves *trans feminine* or *trans masculine*, others *trans women* or *trans men*. MtF means male to female, whilst FtM, female to male. Certain trans persons refuse to describe themselves as ‘gay’ or ‘lesbian’ as they had never experienced these identities before the transition, although they might use these terms to describe their sexual orientation (including ‘heterosexual’).

With the term *gender nonconforming minors/people* I refer to individuals who do not express or show a defined binary gender role and may (or may not) be or become trans or any other gender and sexual identity.

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<sup>3</sup> <http://www.kinseyinstitute.org/research/ak-hhscale.html>





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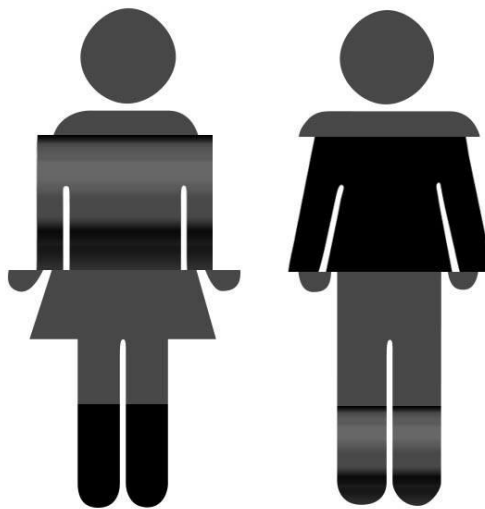
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**UNIVERSITY OF GRANADA**

Stefano Barozzi

**TEACHER TRAINING  
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Designed by Mario Esknazi



# I Introduction

## 1 Background to the study: Research topic and focus

I have been an English and Italian-language teacher for many years during which time I have taught mainly adults in private education in Britain, Italy and more recently in Spain. During my learning process as a foreign language student and my teacher training experience, sexual and gender identities, apart from ubiquitous heterosexuality, were never shown in textbooks and never mentioned in class. This made me feel out of place because I did not identify myself with those mainstream (hetero)normative people present in the teaching materials and discussed during lessons. Although I had a lot to say about sexuality in general, I was never given the opportunity to do so nor did I feel ready to confront this silenced issue in the classroom.

As an example, when I was in London learning English years ago I was asked by my teacher whether I preferred blonde or dark haired women as a follow up question after a coursebook activity. I did realise straight away that the question was a habit, that the teacher assumed that we were all cis-heterosexual (an example of heteronormativity). After a little reflection, my reply was: “Most of my friends are women and I don’t care about their hair colour”. The teacher giggled a little and blushed but could not face the issue. Silence is a very strong political position which is difficult to counteract when we do not possess enough empowerment and training.

Most foreign language coursebooks I have used as a teacher, in my view, explicitly show sexist and heterosexist images and comments, which contribute to maintaining the status quo and a socially accepted heteronormativity. Apart from imposing heterosexuality on the students, some of these coursebooks even show violence against animals as part of ‘our’ culture, which I personally find offensive. This puts me in a dilemma: should I discuss this with my students? Would they understand?

Moreover, as an English-language teacher, I have experienced many occasions in which LGBTI and queer issues came up spontaneously during the lessons and I had to deal with them. In one instance, a group of teenagers (aged 14-17) had to discuss what a best friend meant to them. One boy said that a girl could not be his best friend because she is a girl; a girl added that it might be possible to have a boy as a best friend, but she would prefer a girl. Thus, a simple talk on friendship was enough to trigger discussion on gender and

sexism, and one thing leads to another. In fact, another girl commented: “Why do gay men have ‘codes’”? To which I asked what she meant by ‘codes’. She replied: “Ways of behaving, moving, looking at each other, talking, that they only understand themselves but that I’ve noticed myself”. So I said: “Don’t straight people have ‘codes’”? And everybody in the class responded: “No! Our behaviour is natural”. To which I commented: “So, why are all the boys here wearing trousers and not skirts and have short and not long hair? And why do ‘straight’ boys generally approach ‘straight’ girls differently and vice versa?”. They all believed that these were natural appearances and behaviours, whilst gay behaviours were considered deviant. We ended the class with a very lively discussion which left most of them perplexed and in the following lessons if there was any opportunity to discuss sexuality issues they would grasp it. These students, just like most students, were eager and needed to talk about sexual identities and were happy to do so in a critical way. On this occasion, the issue came up spontaneously but was actually initiated by the students. As educators, can we really ignore and perpetuate discrimination and false (often biased) ideas or is it our duty to address issues of basic human rights and non discrimination based on gender and sexual identities? It is my belief that training on gender and sexual identity issues in education is necessary if we want to counteract homotransphobia, heterosexism and cissexism as forms of social discrimination and injustice by generating knowledge and better understanding.

My motivation to carry out this work is paramount: not only am I interested in the issue, but I also feel moved by a social responsibility; and I am aware that it is a delicate (and thus avoided) subject to deal with in education and in all other social spheres, even nowadays and probably all over the world. Driven by my will and commitment for a more equitable world is the *raison d’être* for this thesis.

This dissertation is an integrated two-fold piece of work: on one hand *research* (a pilot study) and on the other *training* (two training courses). Research was mainly conducted to implement and organise the training courses, although training was also part of the research process itself. The idea of offering training courses on gender and sexual identities in education started to take form in 2010 after I presented my Master’s dissertation (Barozzi, 2010) at the Faculty of Education of the University of Granada, in Spain. In fact, its main research result was a request from the participants, pre-service primary school

English-language teachers, to be trained on how to treat gender and sexual identity issues<sup>4</sup>. The pilot study for this dissertation includes the research I presented for my MA and another project with in-service primary school English-language teachers, which produced similar results.

As a consequence, I offered two teacher training courses on gender and sexual identities at the same university faculty. The first, in English, was given to a group of (mainly) pre-service English-language teachers, both at primary and secondary school level. The second, in Spanish, was offered to pre-service and in-service teachers, as well as university students of different educational disciplines. So, from the very limited scope of primary education and English-language teaching, I expanded my study to include general Spanish education, which I consider a natural progression. As a matter of fact, I was asked by some teachers and students in Granada if I could offer a training course in Spanish, since they did not know enough English and wanted to learn how to deal with sexual identity issues in different subject areas and educational levels.

However, at the beginning of my research I was confronted by attitudes I found surprising, which clearly summarise the research problem. First of all, at least four EFL<sup>5</sup> colleagues asked me why I wanted to treat sexual identities in EFL since, according to them, it was not relevant to English-language teaching (in ESL see Nelson, 1993). Secondly, one primary and two secondary school teachers in Granada told me that they had never experienced any case of homotransphobia in their schools and that it was a problem of ‘the past’. This was also confirmed by some university students who believed that homotransphobia was treated appropriately in education. I suggested they keep their eyes open and, to my surprise, after only a couple of weeks the three teachers admitted having heard of cases of homotransphobic bullying in their school and that they would try to do something about it, like organising activities to make students and school staff aware of homotransphobia and its devastating effects. Thus, there are signs of interest from some educators despite their lack of training and fear of confronting the issue. Nonetheless, there are few studies on sexual identity issues in education in Spain, and practical courses on how to treat these issues are even scarcer, both in English and in Spanish.

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<sup>4</sup> Hanauer (2007) criticises the tendency to discuss queer identities in English-language education as ‘issues’ (problems), which is often the case. However, the use I make of ‘issues’ in this dissertation is related to themes and situations.

<sup>5</sup> EFL: English as a Foreign Language; ESL: English as a Second Language

As shown above, the main research problem reflects denial of as well as indifference towards the issues from teachers and students alike, who also told me that dealing with gender and sexual identities was not relevant to their profession. This kind of denial and indifference is as dangerous as heteronormativity and homotransphobia since it cannot lead to any action, thinking that it is not necessary to intervene, and in some cases teachers, educators and students insist that other problems are more relevant, relegating homotransphobia once more to the last place on the list of social injustices and discriminations to be addressed in education, where it is not normally discussed at all, and thus contributing to its silence and invisibility.

Essentially, this work aspires to finding solutions to the extended homotransphobia and heterosexism present in Spanish education. Therefore, it is a case of educational intervention-action research as well as primary research collecting new raw data from the pilot study and the two training courses. It is mainly inspired by queer theory, although critical and transformative pedagogies, as well as fuzzy set theory applied to sex and gender<sup>6</sup> in the course given in Spanish, have been taken into account. Like some past research in the field (see Chapter II-2), it aims at progressing and advancing towards equity<sup>7</sup> in education for all people, especially those who feel or have been marginalised due to their sexual identity or orientation. However, one of the innovations in this research is that the participants of the two training courses had to create new queer pedagogical materials as part of the final course objective. After having read literature based on similar courses, I realised that none of the courses examined produced new teaching materials as part of their programme and final objective, adding originality to my study.

Fundamentally, this is pragmatic research, mainly based on practical work. The theory exposed in this study was used as a vehicle to organise the courses and was obviously discussed, but not very extensively, especially in the course given in Spanish, as I wanted the courses to be principally practical training and not just notions. I believe theory must coexist with practice, but finally it is practice, through workshops and class discussions, that is the most important element in a training course.

Moreover, in between the courses and my PhD research, I offered talks and workshops on sexual identity issues in Granada (Spain), Padua (Italy) as well as in Chiang Mai and

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<sup>6</sup> This theory will be termed 'Sex and gender fuzzy set theory' in this thesis and will be explained in Chapter II-1.3

<sup>7</sup> For the meaning of in/equity and in/equality see Chapter II-1.2



Bangkok (Thailand) in diverse social spaces, which I will discuss in the final chapter of this dissertation. All these experiences have helped me develop and shape this study.

However, it took me almost five years to complete this work as I had to organise and give the mentioned courses and participate in events related to my research, collect all the materials and the data, analyse them, and come to some conclusions. In addition, as a standardised requisite, before submitting my dissertation I had to publish an article accepted by the University of Granada in a national (Spanish) or international Journal, which I did in 2014 (Barozzi and Guijarro Ojeda). I also had to support myself financially by working as an English and Italian-language teacher in a private language school in Granada, which restricted the time I had wanted to dedicate to this dissertation.

In addition, it has been complex to write this thesis because it is mostly based on qualitative research analysis, where the voices and contributions of the participants were essential and had to be taken into consideration individually. Thus, the participants' accounts (and mine) and how they are told are fundamental contributions to this dissertation. In fact, qualitative writing should involve telling an interesting and captivating story, as Holliday (2007) puts it:

Qualitative writing becomes very much an unfolding story in which the writer gradually makes sense, not only of her data, but of the total experience of which it is an artefact. This is an interactive process in which she tries to untangle and make reflexive sense of her own presence and role in the research. The written study thus becomes a complex train of thought within which her voice and her image of others are interwoven. (p. 122)

Since this study is mainly qualitative, the researcher ('I') has been the main "measurement device" through the means of interpretative analysis, understanding and discussion, as stated by Miles and Huberman (1994: 7). Talking about my experience in form of narrative is very important in order to understand my work as Freeman (1996) firmly believes that teachers' narratives should be taken seriously into account because they express "the vital substance of what teachers know and how they think" (p. 101).

## **2 Justification and significance**

The main justification for this research, as explained in the previous section, was born from the results of the pilot study in which participants requested training on how to treat gender and sexual identity issues in English-language teaching in primary education (see Chapter IV). The second justification is the existing inequity in education for LGBTI persons and the devastating effects of homotransphobic bullying that are analysed in section 2.1 below.

The third justification is related to the gap I found during my investigation: the lack of programmes for teachers on LGBTI issues in Spanish education.

I would also like to justify why this study is written in English, given its idiosyncrasy (Granada, Spain). The main reason is that both the pilot study and the first training course were conducted in English, therefore for consistency reasons I have kept English as the language for this dissertation, translating into English the contents of the second training course that was given in Spanish. Moreover, English is also the language used in almost all the queer literature that this thesis has benefited from. In addition, as pointed out by Pérez Sanchez (2007), most contemporary queer studies are written and read in English, with the result that works written in other languages are not usually considered by mainstream Anglophone queer scholars who might be only familiar with English. Last but not least, my mother tongue is Italian, and although I did my PhD research in Spain, I am more familiar with English than Spanish.

With regards to English-language teaching in relation to the pilot study and the first training course of this thesis, it is important to recognise that English has become one of the most important school subjects throughout the world; nowadays, it is considered the *lingua franca* that enables billions of people to communicate; nevertheless queer identities are consistently omitted in EFL and ESL education (Thornbury, 1999; Nelson, 2009). Additionally, English is the second most widely spoken language in the world, and the first as a foreign or second language learnt worldwide. Nonetheless, English is not powerful because of its linguistic characteristics or because it is widely spoken worldwide, rather it is due to its economic and political status (Crystal, 1997). Robinson and Jonas Díaz (2006) remind us that: “Anglophone countries, such as the United States and Britain, . . . dominate global communication technologies, finance, trade and means of production” (p.107). It is however the first time in human history that a *lingua franca*, in this case English, has become globalised and spoken almost all over the world. Admittedly, it is also the first time that non-native English-language speakers, who actually learn and speak English (including myself), have outnumbered native English-language speakers. Similarly, Spanish is recognised to be the third most widely spoken language in the world. Its popularity and power may increase if the economies of the South American Spanish speaking countries grow as expected. Thus, this research deals with two training courses on gender and sexual identity issues given in two of the most important and powerful languages of the world. Moreover, bilingual schools have risen in Asia, Latin America and

Europe at a tremendous speed. In fact, English is the most studied foreign language in China and in Spain there is currently an educational project which aims at creating bilingual schools (Spanish-English) in all its territory by law.

As for English-language education and queer issues, since the early 1990s, there has been growing interest in pedagogical implications of poststructuralist theories of gender and sexual identities within the teaching of a foreign or second language, particularly in English Language Teaching (ELT) (drawn on Nelson, 1999: 371 and 2009: 4). There is also an apparent growing interest in including queer and lgbti identities in teaching materials and curricula in all subject areas. However, I could not find sufficient material to support part of my research in relation to ELT and queer issues, “for there were few, if any, resources offering guidance in dealing with the intriguing teaching dilemmas that arose with regard to sexual identities” (Nelson, 2009: xiv).

To justify this research even further, particularly in relation to English-language education at primary school level, I have analysed some EFL textbooks adopted in state-run primary schools in Granada and noticed how heteronormativity was present in nearly every unit of the coursebooks examined and how lgbti persons and any reference to gender and sexual identities (apart from heterosexuality) were totally absent (e.g. Evans and Gray, 2003; Blair and Cadwallader, 2009; Papiol and Toth, 2009). Yet queer linguistics and pedagogy can find space in almost all subject areas, particularly in foreign language teaching since it deals directly with (socio)linguistics, cultural and social studies. Naturally, this can be applied to almost any subject area, as demonstrated by the training course of this dissertation given in Spanish.

As I will show in this research, sexual identity issues are not normally considered in the Spanish national education system, particularly at primary school level and in private Catholic schools, thus it would be relatively safe to admit that heteronormativity and homotransphobia permeate the Spanish education system. Among all the possible issues that can be discussed in class, (homo)sexuality is definitely the most avoided, and talking about lesbians and gay men is still taboo in most parts of the world. In fact, teaching materials and textbooks do not explicitly show or include queer persons, and everything related to people is strictly heterosexual. Yet in a country like Spain where marriage and child adoption have been legalised for same sex couples since 2005, it seems illogical and outdated that queer identities are almost never mentioned and discussed in education.

With this study I would also like to demonstrate that the general belief that young children are asexual is a myth. Herdt and Boxer (1993) studied over two hundred Chicago boys and girls and discovered that most remembered their first same-sex attraction before their tenth birthday, but awareness of difference among possible ‘lesbians’ and ‘gays’ often occurs earlier, at the age of four or five. Moreover, Colleary (1999) argues that teachers should integrate queer issues into their primary school curricula, as it would offer possible queer students, as well as all the others, “one further opportunity to participate more fully in their school community, thus increasing their own sense of self-worth and achievement and significantly decreasing their chances for isolation, academic failure, or suicide” (p. 153). These and other reactions generated by homotransphobia will be discussed in more details in the next section, since the effects of homotransphobic bullying play a fundamental role in the justification of this study.

## **2.1 Effects of homotransphobic bullying in education**

As evidenced by the studies which I will present in this section, in the education industry, lgbti and gender nonconforming adolescents are at much higher risk of attempting or committing suicide than their heterosexual counterparts. Gender nonconforming children start to struggle at an early age when homotransphobia is perceived (Robinson and Jones Díaz, 2006), hence the need to take action in education as early as possible.

In 1995 the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services reported that lesbian and gay youths are two to three times more likely to attempt suicide than other youths, and they accounted for 30% of all completed suicides. Kissen (2002) argues that not much attention has been paid to training teachers on how to deal with homotransphobia at school and little has been done to integrate sexual diversity into the teacher education curriculum. Bochenek and Brown (2001) remind us that homotransphobic harassments in schools have devastating effects on gender nonconforming youth: depression, alcohol, drug abuse, becoming homeless, engaging in risky sexual behaviours and suicide. Their results show that most teachers remain silent and do not possess the right preparation and training to face homotransphobia, and often behave indifferently. On the same line, Petrovic and Rosiek (2007) observe that many research studies have proved that “LGBTQ youth face harm in quite straightforward and overt ways. These students are subjected to verbal, physical, and emotional abuse” (pp. 203-204). They also report a research study

undertaken by the US organisation GLSEN<sup>8</sup> (2005) which confirms that the effects of homophobic harassment on students lead them to alcoholism, drug use, poor academic performance, skipping school, or dropping out entirely. In addition, Petrovic and Rosiek (2007) argue that: “Overt harassment is only one cause of these striking statistics. To this must be added the effect of the malignant neglect of homosexual students’ inner needs in a homophobic school culture” (pp. 204-205).

Furthermore, Meyer (2007) underlines the harmful effects of homophobia and heterosexism in education together with an escalation of violence in terms of bullying and harassment. In her view, bullying has often been analysed in isolation as acts of teasing or violence instead of a form of enforcing the norms of our culture. Meyer (2007) also claims that this behaviour supports a social hierarchy in which marginalised sexual identities are easy and ‘socially accepted’ targets:

This form of school violence is closely linked to the problem of homophobia and sexism in schools and has resulted in several court battles over how families, students, and teachers who do not conform to traditional notions of heterosexual masculinity and femininity are allowed to participate in schools. (pp. 16-17)

Moreover, Cahill and Theilheimer (1999) recognise that children’s feelings about homosexuality cannot be taken lightly as children who might be queer and grow up with negative perceptions about homosexuality are at great risk of physical and psychosocial dysfunction, including a very high rate of suicide, running away from home because of family rejection and conflicts, with half of those who run away from home engaging in prostitution to support themselves (Besner and Spungin, 1995). As I have tried to show in this dissertation, Cahill and Theilheimer (1999) claim that homophobia affects every one of us:

Homophobia affects children who grow up to be straight or gay. It results in discrimination, both subtle and overt. Homophobia restricts interactions between men, between women, and between men and women. Homophobia can lead to harassment and, possibly, violence, such as the fatal attack on Matthew Shepard<sup>9</sup>. Schools can change all this by affirming children’s experiences and helping children become activists for a fair society. (p. 41)

In Europe, including Spain, research has found similar results about the effects of homophobia on young students. The European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights

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<sup>8</sup> Gay, Lesbian & Straight Education Network: <http://www.glsen.org/>

<sup>9</sup> Matthew Shepard, a university student at the University of Wyoming (U.S.), was brutally murdered for homophobic reasons by two young men on 16th October 1998. He was tied to a fence, pistol whipped senselessly and left to die in the freezing cold. He was discovered eighteen hours later and died from his injuries six days later at the age of 22.

(FRA) released a report in 2009 which alerts us to the rise in homophobia in the European territories. In the educational context, it demands that all member states offer school programmes which include sexual orientation issues and in which lgbt(i) people are represented with respect and dignity. It also requires protection for children against bullying for homophobic reasons and advocates adequate information for people of different sexual identities. More recently (2014), the same European organism (FRA) declared, after a study conducted with 6700 self-identified trans people over the age of 18, that 46% of the respondents had suffered discrimination or bullying based on their transgender and sexual identity. Whilst in Spain a study conducted by FELGTB<sup>10</sup> (2013) underlines the failure of the Spanish education system in its attempt to stop homotransphobic bullying in schools (see Chapter II-2). Most cases of homotransphobic bullying are not reported with the result that bullies feel safe to act and the bullied feel totally unprotected. Stronger worldwide, European and Spanish legislation for the prevention and condemnation of homotransphobic harassment, bullying and abuse in education is therefore necessary and urgent. Thus, I consider these pioneering training courses in Spain to be the first step in countering homotransphobia, heterosexism, cissexism and gender binarism in the Spanish education system. Training pre-service and in-service teachers and educators is paramount to achieving this goal.

### **3 Research purpose and questions**

#### **Research objectives**

I have identified two primary objectives and five specific ones.

#### **a) Primary objectives:**

- To demonstrate the need to train educators and student teachers on how to treat sexual identities and non-binary gender in education.
- To contribute to social and institutional change in favour of lgbti equity through EFL and general education by offering the participants of the training courses latent empowerment<sup>11</sup>.

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<sup>10</sup> FELGTB stands for *Federación Estatal de Lesbianas, Gays, Transexuales y Bisexuales* (State Association of Lesbians, Gays, Transsexuals and Bisexuals). Link to report: <http://www.felgtb.org/rs/2157/d112d6ad-54ec-438b-9358-4483f9e98868/671/filename/informedefensor-17m13.pdf>

<sup>11</sup> See Chapter II-1 for an explanation of latent, active and transformative empowerment (Bedford, 2009).

**b) Specific objectives:**

- To make the research participants aware of the inequity that exists in the educational system and in society at large in relation to non heterosexual identities.
- To learn strategies and take action in order to counter gender binarism, homotransphobia, heterosexism and cissexism in education.
- To create new queer pedagogical materials in English and in Spanish.
- To justify the need to transcend the classroom and academia towards real and more comprehensive social change.
- To demonstrate that homotransphobia and heterosexism affect everybody, not only lgbti and queer persons.

**Research questions**

For the pilot study I have formulated a hypothesis (a more quantitative research technique). As for the training courses and the research study as a whole, I have employed open-ended research questions (a qualitative technique), which serve to reinforce and justify the purpose of this study by means of in-depth discourses. I have identified one main research question and three sub-questions.

**Hypothesis for the Pilot Study:**

- Training in gender and sexual identities will be found necessary by the participants for their professional development.

**Main research question:**

- In what ways does this research contribute to social and institutional transformation in favour of lgbti and queer equity in education?

**Sub-questions:**

- a) How did the study participants' initial perception of the problem change during the research and training process?
- b) In what ways did the participants on the training courses receive sufficient teacher empowerment in order to foster lgbti and queer educational equity?
- c) In what ways did the participants of the two training courses consider this type of training important?

## **4 The structure of the dissertation**

This thesis is divided into six main chapters. Chapter I was analysed above and includes this section.

Chapter II is dedicated to the literature review and is organised into two main parts. The first is related to the theoretical framework where I discuss queer theory, critical and transformative pedagogy, as well as sex and gender fuzzy set theory. In the second part I explore previous studies on gender and sexual diversity in education. Firstly, I briefly analyse Spanish legislation on lgbti rights; secondly, I discuss some previous studies on homotransphobia and sexual identity knowledge. Then, I analyse gender and sexual identity issues in children's education with special attention to gender nonconforming minors. In the second part of this chapter, I also look at sexual identity studies in relation to English-language education, and finally, I consider some studies on training courses in gender and sexual identities.

Chapter III focuses on the methodological approach I have applied to this research. It comprises the research paradigms, the role of the researcher, instruments and data collection, data analysis methods and ultimately, the research validity.

Chapter IV describes the pilot study. It is organised into two projects on queer issues undertaken in Granada. The first is a research study with pre-service primary school English-language teachers and the second with in-service primary school English-language teachers.

Chapter V analyses the training process in which I discuss in detail the two training courses on gender and sexual identities given at the University of Granada. The first, in English, aims at pre-service primary and secondary school English-language teachers. The second is offered in Spanish to pre-service and in-service teachers, as well as university students, of different educational levels and disciplines.

Chapter VI recapitulates all the findings from this research. In this chapter I discuss personal practical achievements during my PhD research, I analyse the limitations of the study, followed by a section dedicated to the course participant empowerment. Then, I discuss the concluding comments in which I give evidence for the research questions and purpose. Finally, I consider some suggestions for future research studies, followed by the references, a summary of this dissertation in Spanish and the appendices.



## II Literature review

This chapter is organised into two parts. In the first one I will discuss the theoretical framework that helped me shape this dissertation. I will mainly analyse queer theory, but notions of critical and transformative pedagogy, as well as sex and gender fuzzy set theory, will be also discussed. It is crucial to explain that these are the theories discussed in the research and in the training courses, although sex and gender fuzzy set theory was presented only in the second training course in Spanish. Therefore, the following texts are similar to the theoretical texts I used for both courses when I introduced the theory in the classroom. It is an important element in this dissertation because they are not abstract theoretical notions that helped me better understand the problem of this dissertation, rather they are the backbone of all the ideas that were born from this work and were specifically used in both training courses as part of the theoretical as well as the practical programme. That is why they have to be discussed here and when I make references in Chapter V to the theories presented and studied in the classroom for each course I will not indulge in giving theoretical explanations since the most important theoretical elements will be analysed in this chapter.

The second part of the chapter will be dedicated to gender and sexual diversity in education, focusing first on Spanish legislation with regards to lgbti rights. This will be followed by studies on homotransphobia and sexual identity knowledge among primary and (mainly) secondary school students, especially in Spain. Gender and sexual identity studies on children's education will be then examined paying special attention to the situation of gender nonconforming minors. After that, I will discuss some important studies on ESL/EFL education which can be related to the pilot study and first training course in English (but also to the course in Spanish) of this dissertation, and finally, I will mention a few studies on training courses in gender and sexual identities in education.



# 1 Theoretical framework

## 1.1 Queer theory

The term *queer* originally meant, and still does in certain contexts, ‘strange, unusual’ and was a term of homophobic abuse similar to *faggot*. It was used as slang for homosexual men, mainly in the States up to the early 1990s; it is still considered by certain people as a pejorative term. It was employed academically for the first time in 1991 by the Italian-born academic and theorist Teresa de Lauretis. Jagose (1996) offers a general explanation of the term as follows:

In recent years ‘queer’ has come to be used differently, sometimes as an umbrella term for a coalition of cultural marginal sexual self-identifications and at other times to describe a nascent theoretical model which has developed out of more traditional lesbian and gay studies. (p. 1)

The acronym *lgbti* that I have been using throughout this dissertation is the umbrella term that Jagose mentions above, including all individuals that feel socially marginalised for their sexual or gender identity. It is therefore a categorical term which can be problematic due to its multivalent meaning. Judith Butler (1994), one of the promoters of queer theory, affirms that “normalizing the queer would be, after all, its sad finish” (p. 21). Hence, queer is open to many possibilities and discussions, it cannot represent any specific and clear-cut identity category, although it can also be used to regroup all -culturally made to be-subordinate sexual identities.

Nevertheless, queer theory is often related to lesbian and gay studies and it could be considered its direct institutional transformation (Jagose, 1996). Lesbian and gay studies are quite recent in history too; in fact, queer theory has often been criticised because it began in the early 1990s when lesbian and gay people’s rights were not completely established in ‘Western’<sup>12</sup> society, thus, according to certain lesbian and gay activists, contributing to their disappearance, especially lesbian and feminist studies, giving space to a ‘neutral’ gender (‘queer’) which might be read as a synonym of ‘masculine’ (drawn on Jagose, 1996). Yet it should be recognised that most of influential queer thinking comes from lesbian feminists. In reality, queer theory stems from postmodernism and especially from poststructuralism and feminist poststructuralism of the early 1990s, notably in the

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<sup>12</sup> I write ‘Western’ in inverted commas because we tend to consider ‘Western’ certain countries which are not in the western (and usually northern) hemisphere, like Japan or Australia. This view is also shared by Boellstorff (2005). The term is usually employed to mean ‘powerful and rich’.

USA (see 1.1.1 below). The main use I have made of queer in the training courses is an inclusive term which apart from discussing LGBTI persons and all who feel marginalised for their gender and sexual identity, also and especially problematises (cis) heterosexuality.

Jagose (1996) reminds us that queer theory is resisting the model of stability, which claims heterosexuality as its origin, when it is more likely its effect (p. 3). Moreover, as expressed above, queer theory problematises heterosexuality because of its social hegemony<sup>13</sup>, which is a “dialectical relationship enabling those in power to maintain power, while apparently giving the people exactly what they want” (Davis, 2004: 47). This approach could be very useful in education since it enables students to conduct more inclusive discussions and to question the social power and privilege of heterosexuality rather than only discussing subordinate sexual identities in an uncritical way without challenging power relationships in society (Foucault, 1976; in ESL see Nelson, 2002).

In Nelson’s view (2002), an expert in queer issues within ESL, from a teaching and learning perspective, there are many advantages to considering sexual identities as culturally readable acts rather than universal essences (p. 47). Sexual identities can in fact be regarded as interactive daily ‘performances’ (Butler, 1990) where the focus is not on what people are, but rather on what they say and do (‘observable behaviour’, Nelson, 2002: 47). Furthermore, Nelson (2002) asserts that “the notion of ‘performativity’ makes it clear that sexual identities are not universally accomplished but may be produced or ‘read’ in different ways in different cultural contexts” (pp. 47-48; drawn on Livia and Hall, 1997). Another important component of queer pedagogy is that it problematises all sexual identities by adopting a universalising approach which

may actually be more ‘inclusive’ than simply validating subordinate sexual identities, because it allows for a wider range of experiences and perspectives to be considered. It may also be more practicable, since teachers or trainers are not expected to transmit knowledge (which they may or may not have) but to frame tasks that encourage investigation and inquiry. (Nelson, 2002: 48)

Furthermore on the notion of queer theory, Jagose (1996) observes that “demonstrating the impossibility of any natural sexuality, it calls into question even such apparently unproblematic terms such as ‘man’ and ‘woman’” (p. 3), which are strongly associated with heterosexuality as argued by Judith Butler (1990) and also echoed by Monique Wittig (1992), a French feminist and writer, who, during a feminist and lesbian conference

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<sup>13</sup> *Cultural hegemony* is a term coined by Antonio Gramsci, an Italian Marxist, theoretician and politician at the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

admitted that lesbians are not women. Wittig abhorred the idea of being referred to as a 'women's writer', in fact she preferred to call herself a 'radical lesbian writer' instead.

Queer has always been significantly anti-homophobic; thus, queer can be applied to education, since homophobic abuse and harassment (verbal and physical) is likely to be one of the principle causes of bullying from early childhood education onwards, as argued in this study.

Identities are highly social complexities which could be used to accommodate some individuals, but through a critical eye, are often imposed on us by social norms. Almost nobody seems to question the 'heterosexual' identity (and to a lesser extent also 'homosexual') of 'man' and 'woman', categories of identity which perfectly fit the heteronormative gender binary system of our society. However, there is a reasonable number of people who have sex, at times or often, with people of the same sex but do not want to identify themselves as 'gay, lesbian or bisexual'. They usually say they are 'heterosexual', which is the identity they feel more comfortable with, being the sexual identity which is considered most 'normal' and accepted as 'natural' by our society, and this should lead us to reinvent who/what we are on the basis of what we do without having to accept socially imposed labels. The terms 'woman' and 'man' can also be complicated for all those people who do not fully identify themselves as such in the socially imposed gender codes and roles, such as physical appearance, clothes, discourses, behaviours, social roles, etc.; and this can obviously also be applied to women and men who define themselves as heterosexuals. The gender binary system has contributed to making the life of trans people even more difficult, especially for those who are not interested in a full transition, because by law, in Spain and in almost all other countries, one can be either male or female, and other claims of new forms of genders are not legally accepted.

On the history of queer theory, it is widely recognised that it started during the Aids<sup>14</sup> crisis of the late 1980s and early 1990s in the 'Western' world which made certain lgbt activists realise that there were some people (mostly men) with Hiv who did not identify themselves as gay (drawn on Jagose, 1996). Thus, paradoxically, for queer activists the Aids epidemic served also to better understand that 'lesbian' and 'gay' rubrics were

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<sup>14</sup> I prefer to write 'Aids' and 'Hiv' rather than the more common 'AIDS', although often written as 'Aids' in English nowadays, and 'HIV', because even if they are acronyms, they have a strong stigma attached to them, especially Aids. The capital letters stand out almost aggressively in a text. My intention is to show that the capital letters reinforce the social stigma and therefore should be avoided. Also, I believe that the term Hiv should be used to replace Aids nowadays, as Hiv is the (retro)virus which causes the infection, unless it is a recognised case of the Aids syndrome.

cultural identities: one could be more attracted to one sex-gender or to others, or could only be attracted to one sex-gender or to others, but not everybody would accept being part of a fixed social identity and being recognised as such. In medical terms, nowadays the use of the term ‘men who have sex with men’ (MSM) is quite common, to avoid using the word ‘gay/homosexual’ for men who do not consider themselves as such or because they sporadically have sex with other men. In my opinion, even if MSM is a more neutral and generic term, it implies that men who have sex with men are a type of risk group, which, according to ‘Western’ medical statistics, might be the case. Nevertheless, there are fewer published statistics on heterosexual people who contracted Hiv in our ‘Western’ world, which seem to insist on the high infection of heterosexual women without taking into account that these women were most likely infected by heterosexual men. Furthermore, at the beginning of the epidemic, Hiv/Aids treatments were not studied on women, contributing even more to men’s social hegemony, as demonstrated by a study carried out in the US by Higgins, Hoffman and Dworkin (2010). According to these authors, men who have sex with women have remained a “forgotten group in the epidemic<sup>15</sup>, almost entirely unaddressed in HIV prevention programs” (p. 1). Another European study, undertaken in 2013 by Avert<sup>16</sup>, shows that sexually transmitted Hiv infections were almost equal in heterosexual people and in homosexual men (or MSM). Nonetheless, heterosexuality is never mentioned as a risk, even if heterosexual women are considered more at risk but they never appear in a hypothetical ‘heterosexual risk group’; simply, they are addressed as risky for being women, on the basis that they are easier receptors of the virus than heterosexual men, failing to recognise once again that these heterosexual women were almost surely infected by heterosexual men who do carry the virus. The high social stigma attached to Hiv/Aids all over the world, including our ‘Western’ countries, is so rooted that people who have the power and privilege in our cultures, notably white heterosexual men, cannot be included as a risk group and do not want to be part of it either. The consequences for the heterosexual population in general have been catastrophic, because there is not enough information nor prevention for (cis) heterosexual people who might feel safe because they are not recognised as a ‘risk group’ and therefore do not usually take the Hiv test. As a result, many cases of infected heterosexual people, both women and men, are

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<sup>15</sup> Exner TM, Gardos PS, Seal DW, Ehrhardt AA. HIV sexual risk interventions with heterosexual men: the forgotten group. *AIDS Behav* 1999;3(4):347–358

<sup>16</sup> <http://www.avert.org/european-hiv-aids-statistics.htm>

diagnosed when the infection is already advanced and dangerous to control, especially for heterosexual men, as claimed by the UK Health Protection Agency in 2013<sup>17</sup>, whose report found out that 67% of heterosexual men are diagnosed with the Hiv infection late.

As a form of comparison, in Brazil (Daniel and Parker, 1993), as well as in the African continent, for example, Hiv is not so much related to homosexuality, rather it is considered a sexual infection because most of the infected people are 'heterosexual' or have frequently heterosexual sex, but it is never claimed as a heterosexual 'disease' (it is in fact an infection), because heterosexuality cannot be problematised and discussed as part of a 'risk group', as described above. In the United States, Aids only started to be taken into account seriously in the 1990s, despite all the efforts made by associations like ACT UP, only when it was perceived to be affecting the general population (Jagose, 1996), as demonstrated by the US film *A normal heart* (Ryan Murphy, 2014). Yet categorising people into 'risk groups' is still normal practice and will surely continue to be so, since Hiv and Aids bear a social stigma which has never been properly dealt with. Nonetheless, as indicated by Jagose (1996), activists all over the world have pressed for a rethinking of the Hiv transmission in terms of 'risk practices', like unsafe sex and the sharing of needles, and not in terms of *minoritised* 'risk groups', which were already marginalised social groups, such as gay men, trans women, prostitutes (both males and females), drug users and migrants; even lesbians were considered a risk group by certain social sectors.

The shift here, in the case of sexual transmission, is from clear-cut sexual and social identities (gay men; migrants) to risky sexual acts or behaviours. In fact, this is what queer theory promotes: that the accent should be put on the acts or 'performances', and not on the cultural identity; in other words, for poststructuralists, like Judith Butler and Michel Foucault, identities are not socially constructed facts but rather cultural and discursive acts. For all these reasons, queer theory claims to have been born as an answer to the Aids crisis of the late 1980s and early 1990s.

Without doubt, sexual identities are very difficult to describe due to their complexity. Is it possible to be homosexual or heterosexual without ever having had or intended to have sex? And what about peoples in different parts of the world where same-sex sex acts are common, but who are not divided into fixed sexual identities, are these people to be considered homosexual? And in some other parts of the world, especially in the past, there

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<sup>17</sup> <http://www.ibtimes.co.uk/national-hiv-testing-week-fifth-unaware-diagnoses-524136>

were societies in which the gender binary system was not common and they accepted and recognised three or more different types of genders. This leads us to the still ongoing debate between essentialist and constructionist positions. As Jagose (1996) points out:

Essentialists assume that homosexuality exists across time as a universal phenomenon which has a marginalised but continuous and coherent history of its own. Constructionists, by contrast, assume that because same-sex sex acts have different cultural meanings in different historical contexts, they are not identical across time and space. . . . ; moreover, they would also argue that ‘identity’ is not a demonstrably empirical category but the product of processes of identification. (pp. 8-9)

The constructionist position was examined essentially by the French historian Michel Foucault in his book *Histoire de la Sexualité I, La Volonté de Savoir* (1976), in which he described the modern concept of homosexuality arising from a desire to see sexuality as a fundamental aspect of our identity, of who we are. Foucault told us that before the 19<sup>th</sup> century, homosexuality (referred to as ‘sodomy’) was regarded as a criminal act in most European countries. In his own view, from the 19<sup>th</sup> century ‘homosexuality’, through medical and psychological discourses, was considered a disease and a deviance from ‘normal’ sexuality, and stopped being associated with certain sexual acts becoming part of a person’s ‘identity’. Thus making it easier to denounce and arrest even perceived homosexual people on the basis of their ‘identity’ and not on their actions or feelings. Thus, suddenly, one’s private life became a matter of interest. Sexuality also became fundamental to interpret one’s personality, one’s character and one’s behaviour.

According to Foucault, before the 19<sup>th</sup> century (homo)sexuality was not mentioned or debated publicly. As a result, calling the ancient Greeks bisexual or homosexual is a misunderstanding, because such terms can only be applied to modern history, and their ‘bisexuality’ or ‘homosexuality’ was most probably related to their social and class status, to their power and privilege. It was in fact common and socially accepted for middle and upper class men to have sex with young male slaves; however, it was also common and accepted to write love poems and show love between men and to a lesser extent between women, as in the case of Saffo. In addition, as demonstrated by El-Rouayheb (2005), in the Arab-Islamic world from 1500 to 1800, love between two men was diffuse in society and accepted in their literature. These examples precede the modern notion of ‘homosexuality’ and clarify Foucault’s position as a constructionist. He even considered ‘sex’ to be more of a social construct than sexuality, and sex and sexuality have been utilised to distribute



certain types of power; moreover, he alleged that where there is power there is always resistance, and in my opinion, hope and transformation.

On the other hand, essentialism has “the tendency to see one aspect of a subject’s identity (often the visible parts) and make that representative of the whole individual” (Robinson and Jones Díaz, 2006: 28). This knowledge is achieved through cultural binaries (in oppositional thinking) which are often perceived to represent ‘common sense logic’, of which Robinson and Jones Díaz (p. 28) give some examples: boy/girl; men/women; white/black; straight/gay; adult/child, and these are just a few of the existing binaries which are often constituted by a power hierarchical relationship (stud/slut): the first identity normally possesses a status of power and superiority over the second identity.

Essentialists claim that some people are born homosexual and this has been used to guarantee human and civil rights for homosexuals; on the other hand, the constructivist position that homosexuality might be culturally acquired has been used by homophobic groups to denounce that homosexual orientation can and should be corrected, and this is the highest risk constructivists might challenge (drawn on Jagose, 1996: 9). Perhaps, in my opinion, constructivists should state that identity as such is a social construction, whilst sexual attraction and orientation might be instinctive and possess some biological components. This is also supported by some trans activists (Serano, 2007; Pérez Fernández-Fígares, 2012), who claim that gender identity is not only culturally constructed, but it bears strong biological fundamentals especially in the case of trans persons, since the need for gender-sex transition has existed throughout history and all over the world, regardless of cultural origins. Obviously, in places where different genders are welcomed and accepted, transgenderism has flourished more commonly, for example in Thailand, where I have recently experienced it.

On the origin of homosexuality (drawn on Jagose, 1996: 12-17), other theorists, like D’Emilio (1983), argue that it started with capitalism, with the free-labour system in the USA; another view is that of Jeffrey Weeks (1977) from Great Britain:

Homosexuality has existed throughout history, in all types of society, among all social classes and peoples, and it has survived qualified approval, indifference and the most vicious persecution. But what have varied enormously are the ways in which various societies have regarded homosexuality, the meanings they have attached to it, and how those who were engaged in homosexual activity viewed themselves. (p. 2)

However, female homosexuality does not occupy the same historic positions as male homosexuality in the discourses of law and medicine, in fact in various countries of the

world female homosexuality has been and still is ignored, and even if in penal terms this might sound advantageous for lesbian women, it also contributes to making them even more invisible.

In our present culture we generally understand homosexuality to be a derivative or a less evolved form of heterosexuality (Jagose, 1996). Yet critical and queer theorists argue that since the term ‘heterosexuality’ was coined after ‘homosexuality’ (in Austria in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century), heterosexuality is therefore a derivative of homosexuality, with obvious consequences. Thus, a homosexual person cannot exist without a heterosexual person, and vice-versa. In fact, Jagose (1996) observes that: “Heterosexuality, then, is equally a construction whose meaning is dependent on changing cultural models. As a descriptive term its provenance is historical, no matter how often it lays claim to universality” (p. 17). Recognising and discussing heterosexuality as a social and historical construction can be very challenging in education where instead of trying to discuss sexual minorities as an act of social inclusion, (cis) heterosexuality could be problematised and critically analysed as a social construct to maintain and control heteronormativity and thus support homotransphobia, as has been discussed in this study. Heterosexuality has always been regarded as natural, pure, and unquestionable; it is considered unproblematic and does not require explanation. Both heterosexuality and homosexuality (to a lesser extent) have been naturalised in the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Yet it is still difficult to think of them as categories with their own histories, as pointed out by Jagose (1996):

To denaturalise either homosexuality or heterosexuality is not to minimise the significance of those categories, but to ask that they be contextualised or historicised rather than assumed as natural, purely descriptive terms. . . . Much is invested culturally in representing homosexuality as definitionally unproblematic, and in maintaining heterosexuality and homosexuality as radically demonstrably distinct from one another. Yet modern knowledges about the categories of sexual identification are far from coherent. (p. 18)

Queer theory has received many critiques and contestations. As mentioned earlier on, for some, it is ambiguous and neutral which can deconstruct or even render more invisible some identities (especially lesbians), whilst for others it reinforces homotransphobia by stating that identities (lgbti) are not natural but socially constructed, underlying that sexual orientation might be considered a choice and thus making lgbti persons more vulnerable and easier to attack (drawn on Jagose, 1996: 101). However, Butler (1990) points out that “The deconstruction of identity is not the deconstruction of politics, rather, it establishes as political the very terms through which identity is articulated” (p. 148). In an interview

given in Barcelona in 2008<sup>18</sup> she explained that at the beginning the queer movement started as anti-institutional and has always been critical of ‘normalisation’; for Butler, one does not have to become ‘normal’ and, for example, get married to be legitimate. She describes ‘queer’ as an expression which means that we do not have to show a ‘sexual/gender identity card’ before, for example, taking part in a meeting. Thus, cis-heterosexual and bisexual persons can join the queer rubric, as long as they do not feel identified with imposed social roles and labels (e.g. what is culturally expected of a lesbian or straight person or gay man).

In Jagose’s view (1996), the redeployment of the term queer as a figure of pride (just like ‘dyke’ for lesbians) is a powerful act of cultural reclamation, thus removing its old homophobic meaning. Nonetheless, some lesbian and gay activists think that the queer position is too politically naïve and idealistic to work efficiently. They argue that queer theorists, ignoring the real life difficulties of power and day-to-day activism, will not be able to achieve anything from their somehow privileged academic environment (Jagose, 1996). A position supported by Steinberg (2000), who believes that queer pedagogy had never really been tested in the classroom, and which I would like to disprove in this thesis.

Yet queer theorists have no interest in discrediting lesbian and gay’s achievements and identities; rather queer theory is evolving by discussing and questioning the power and privilege of our heteronormative culture, thus distancing itself from certain normative claims made by earlier lesbian and gay activists (drawn on Jagose, 1996). On the same lines, for poststructuralists like Jacques Derrida, identity could be a trap. According to them, away from the traditional philosophical discourse, queer theory tries to reconstruct the subject without falling into the trap of identity.

On the other hand, queer theorists and activists sometimes criticise certain lesbian and gay discourses which (re)claim the necessity of forming fixed couples, same-sex marriage and being normalised for the general public’s eyes, thus reinforcing heteronormativity socially and legally, and these heteronormative discourses are continuously sending a message that living as a fixed couple is the best alternative. This may be to promote procreation or social control, but it denies the possibility of living as a single person or in other types of ‘family’ groupings being valid. Undoubtedly, this (hetero)normative message has a stronger impact on LGBTI persons because in the vast majority of the

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<sup>18</sup> <http://w2.bcn.cat/bcnmetropolis/arxiu/en/paged39d.html?id=21&ui=7>

countries of the world same-sex marriage and child adoption, for example, are illegal and this can add to their frustration when not recognised and accepted as ‘normalised’ citizens like everybody else. Furthermore, the pressure that society imposes on adolescents to be straight, to have sex and to be in a couple, reinforces the difficulties some lgbti persons having in ‘coming out’ and confronting society as a whole, which results in isolation, desperation and a terrible loneliness, especially marked in old age.

In my opinion, people should understand that we can all be unique and accepted for ‘what we are and what we do’ by achieving the same human rights and social equity, without having to follow (hetero)normative rules. Rather, lgbti persons should try to create a new space for discussion, where they could achieve the same rights and social equity without following the rules dictated by social norms. For example, without the need to get married but, only if this implies that they can obtain the same rights as individuals or as a couple or as a group of people, and this could be applied to dissident heterosexuals too.

In this study, lgbti and queer identities are used to simplify notions. However, it is important to state that each individual is different and peculiar from another, even if they recognise themselves as being part of the same clear-cut category, as reported by Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick (1990) who illustrated five axioms (pp. 22-48). Sedgwick believed that firstly, it is incorrect to assume that identities can be recognised as part of a group of individuals within a culture, because people are different from each other. Secondly, feminism can provide the basis for anti-homophobic analysis; thirdly, lesbian and gay male sexualities can be studied as corresponding or compatible phenomena. In her fourth axiom, she objected to the binary notion of ‘nature versus nurture’ as a distorted idea in itself and suggested an alternative approach to avoid the dilemma of essentialism versus constructivism, that is, a *minoritising* and a *universalising* view. In other words, her message is that sexuality is relevant to everyone (*universalising*), not only to lgbti persons (*minoritising*), as confirmed by the participants in the training courses of this dissertation. In her final axiom, she considered, as I discussed earlier in this thesis, whether past same-sex activities can be read as comparable to, or even related to, same-sex activities today, which is still a contested point in queer historiography nowadays. Sedgwick proposed that any history of sexuality should aim primarily at denaturalising the present, rather than the past. Her axioms could be easily applied to education as they awaken critical thinking and awareness of how our culture appears to be the way we perceive it be.

Often, transgendered and intersexed people are not included in traditional lesbian and gay studies. However, their 'sexual identity' and social history have a lot in common with lesbians and gays; trans identities are nowadays more visible and there are laws in a few countries which support legal sex reassignment surgery that are usually in favour of trans people's rights. Unfortunately, in my own view, in other countries like Iran, for instance, genital reconstruction surgery is very common and legal but many of these supposedly trans persons are forced to start hormone replacement therapy and to be operated on in order not to be classified as homosexuals, which is in reverse illegal in Iran and punishable by death<sup>19</sup>. This reaffirms and reinforces heteronormativity and imposed gender binarism, so that everyone must be recognised only as heterosexual men or women.

However, intersexed people are still more of a taboo subject than lesbians, gays, bisexuals or trans and are almost never mentioned, even in queer theory. Yet their personal lives and conditions can be considered quite queer. Cheryl Chase (Hegarty and Chase, 2000), an intersexual person and founder of the Intersex Society of North America ('ISNA'), highlights her (or 'hir') experience, familiar to many intersexed people: feelings of shame about one's body, medical secrecy and misinformation, and a lack of appropriate healthcare, particularly psychological support. She/ze argues that female pain has been devalued, and operations have been renamed to serve political ends ('clitorectomy' has become 'clitoroplasty'). Chase also criticises the traditional medical treatment of intersex babies which had surgically prevented any form of possible homosexuality on purpose, like, for example, forced sex reassignment surgery for 'gays' and 'lesbians' in Iran. The Intersex Society of North America has learnt valuable lessons from the lesbian, gay and more recently queer rights movements about the power of activism to stimulate institutional change. In fact, Chase recognises intersexuality as a transgressive difference that should be part of the queer rubric.

### **1.1.1 Queer theory within poststructuralism**

It is evident that queer theory developed from previous important and fundamental movements. Different understandings of homosexuality were discussed in the early homophile movement which was born in Germany around 1870 (drawn on Jagose, 1996), where Magnus Hirschfeld was one of the most influential defendants of gay and trans

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<sup>19</sup> <http://www.bbc.com/news/magazine-29832690>

people's rights in Germany, gay liberation (e.g. Harvey Milk in The States in the 1970s), lesbian feminism (Adrienne Rich, Monique Wittig, Audre Lord, just to name a few) and, finally, queer theory. All these movements, unlike for example critical theory, were especially created to support lgbt(i) and queer persons' rights.

Queer theory was born from poststructuralism and pleads continuity with previous gay liberationist and lesbian feminist movements but with quite a different view and, according to Jagose (1996), could be considered a part of critical theory. As emphasised by Jagose (1996), poststructuralism (stemmed from postmodernism) was adopted by North American academics to refer to the works of French philosophers and critical theorists of the mid 20<sup>th</sup> century. As mentioned above, the Hiv-Aids crisis, through the intense discussion of sexual practices, as opposed to sexual identities, spawned the queer movement in North America. "The theories of Althusser, Freud, Lacan and Saussure provide the post-structuralist context in which queer theory emerges" (Jagose, 1996: 79). Poststructuralists have been fundamental for the evolution and analysis of queer theory; some of the most important figures are Michel Foucault, Jacques Derrida, Judith Butler, Michael Warner and Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick. In Spain, two among the most prominent Spanish queer figures are Paco Vidarte, who was the first to introduce queer theory academically in Spain, and currently the feminist philosopher Beatriz Preciado. Queer people rebel and act against homotransphobia and cissexism; these provocative queer identities interrupt the conventional, heteronormative and gender binary system of our 'Western' culture.

For Foucault (1976), as discussed earlier on, sexuality is a discursive production and not a natural condition, and marginalised sexual identities are produced by the operations of power, more than being simply victims of it. According to Butler (1990, 1991 and 1993) and in agreement with Foucault (1976) both sex and gender are socially constructed and are created by relations of power: "Identity categories tend to be instruments of regulatory regimes, whether as the normalizing categories of oppressive structures or as the rallying points for a liberatory contestation of that very oppression" (Butler, 1991: 13-14).

Queer as a poststructuralist theory has always been considered academic, but it has also developed outside academia. The already cited context for queer in this sense is the network of activism generated by the Hiv-Aids epidemic, when queer offered a rubric for political intervention (drawn on Jagose, 1996: 93). Not only was queer understood as a response to the Hiv-Aids crisis, but also to the growing homotransphobia from the public reaction to Aids (Jagose, 1996: 93-94, drawn on Creed, 1994). In this context, queer

activists included gays and lesbians in their struggles for equity and human rights as well as bisexuals, trans and intersexual persons, sex workers, people with Hiv, health workers, and families and friends of all these diverse persons (Jagose, 1996: 94).

Robinson and Jonas Díaz (2006) discuss the feminist poststructuralist approach, which demonstrates that knowledge is partial and constituted within discourses as well as identities and individual subjectivities which are “negotiated, shifting, complex and contradictory” (p. 16). In line with Foucault and Butler, they analyse the concept of power as a process operating through social discourses, practices and negotiations among individual subjects at both institutional and every day levels in society. Feminist poststructuralists also view individuals as active agents in their lives, rather than being passive receptors. They also agree with other poststructuralists that social inequities have been formed and perpetuated by means of social discourses built through history and culture which are accessible to anyone; childhood is also considered a socially constructed concept made available historically and culturally through social discourses. As a form of reaction, poststructuralist feminists, according to Robinson and Jonas Díaz (2006), believe that transformation is possible through deconstruction, as well as *reflexivity*, which is “the critical awareness that arises from a self-conscious relation with the other” (McNay, 2000: 5), which I also employed in my methodological approach. Like Butler (1990), Robinson and Jones Díaz (2006) clearly criticise the concept of ‘woman’ as a term which does not usually recognise and include the differences among women according to their ethnicity, sexuality, social class and so on. They claim that the term ‘woman’ is synonymous with a middle-class, white and heterosexual woman, with all her personal perspectives and experiences. This can be also employed to the term ‘man’, which is also socially constructed to serve heteronormative purposes.

As for language, essential to this dissertation, Robinson and Jones Díaz (2006) affirm that discourses are constituted in and within language: “Language is a significant marker of identity, and identity is inextricably linked to the ways in which we understand others and ourselves” (p. 107). They argue that language is critical for the formation of our subjectivity, the way we are, our experience, identity, perception and knowledge; basically, our ways of being and living are all effects of language and the culture related to a particular language or languages, sub-languages, regional variations and dialects. Nonetheless, language is not, as some purist linguists might suggest, a stable and unquestionable essence. Consequently, our subjectivity, like language, is never fixed and

always unstable (Robinson and Jones Díaz, 2006), as we tried to prove especially in the course given in Spanish where we agreed on the use of inclusive and non sexist language in Spanish, which was welcomed and easily employed by the course participants (see Chapter V-2.4).

## **1.2 Critical and transformative pedagogy**

Perspectives of critical theory discussed by Robinson and Jones Díaz (2006) draw principally on Bourdieu's theory of social practice. Bourdieu, a French sociologist and cultural theorist, analysed the cultural reproduction of inequality through educational customs which reproduce power and privilege for children whose home and cultural practices differ from conventional educational pedagogy (drawn on Robinson and Jones Díaz, 2006: 111).

On the other hand, transformative pedagogy is the term adopted by Bedford (2002, 2009) to express critical theory through pedagogical and societal transformation. It stems from critical theory, which was also used by Freire (1970), Horkheimer (1976) and Giroux (1997) and which "aims to create critical consciousness and to promote an analysis of the processes of mindset construction. Its methodology addresses inequity and discrimination by deconstructing stereotypes and prejudices" (Bedford, 2002: 138).

Critical theory is usually considered a social theory whose intent is to criticise and change society, without trying like previous theories to understand and explain society, but rather to understand how the world in general works taking into account all power relations. It aims to explain why society has become as it is at a specific historical time and can be applied to practically all major social sciences, including education. In order to be considered critical, it must be practical and it should aim at improving social inequities. Queer theory could also be part of the critical and transformative theory rubric as both aim at social and institutional change.

According to Guba and Lincoln (2000), critical theory is part of five paradigms of inquiry: positivism, postpositivism, critical theory, constructivism, and participatory: "The principle categories of these paradigms are the ontological (the nature of reality and what is knowable), epistemological (the knower/known relationship) and methodological (knowledge seeking process) assumptions" (Bedford 2009: 49).

In the case of the training courses of this dissertation, transformative pedagogy partly intends to make queer and LGBTI identities more visible in education and in teaching



materials, but its main objectives are to teach how to treat sexual identity issues in education and to transform our schools into safe spaces for lgbti persons, in which, homotransphobia, heterosexism, cissexism and the gender binary system, should be critically discussed and fought against. Bedford (2009) observes that transformative pedagogy aims at a real social change, by transforming education in favour of lgbti rights through pedagogical interventions such as problem solving activities. It is considered democratic and participatory; it involves listening, dialogue, reflection and action. Moreover, it often transcends the classroom and tries to involve participants with the area in which they live and to problematise the differences existing in our culture in order to reach a more equitable society. This was successfully implemented in the second training course given in Spanish where we contextualised our pedagogical process to reflect reality outside the world of academia (see Chapter V-2).

As in critical theory, transformative pedagogy shares similarities to queer pedagogy because both consider sexual identities to be socially and historically constructed; therefore, for both pedagogies it is fundamental to deconstruct homotransphobia, heterosexism and cissexism in education through *desocialisation* (Bedford, 2009: 49). Both pedagogies also criticise the hegemonic role of (cis) heterosexuality, the gender binary system and the power relations that exist in our culture, allowing certain identities to be privileged (e.g. cis-heterosexuals) and others to be subordinate (e.g. lgbti and queer identities). These oppressed categories of identity are made to be subordinate by their oppressors who often use their powerful and privileged position to admit that it is natural in our species to have oppressors and oppressed (e.g., men and women) and as a result, many oppressed categories of people think that they cannot do anything to change their fate.

Both pedagogies also share the idea that ‘neutrality’ and ‘truth’ do not exist, as each person is unique and does not possess the same power as others, and truth is always socially, historically and culturally constructed, so that it cannot be neutral or universal.

The methodology of the two the training courses presented in this thesis privileged *emic* (insider) over *etic* (outsider) knowledge, and reinforced the concept that subjective knowledge and truth can only be recognised in a specific and locally constructed social reality (Bedford 2009: 51). In this case, the social and historical idiosyncrasy was represented by Granada and the south of Spain. That is why the voices of the participants of the training courses and their knowledge were essential, and their active involvement

was fundamental for the effectiveness of the courses. In fact, before introducing any theoretical notion we had a class discussion on the issues to be covered, which helped me understand the participants' knowledge of queer issues and what I needed to discuss in more or less detail. Furthermore, in most of the activities employed in the courses, the participants had to give their opinions, confront themselves, use their knowledge and intuition, and for the participants of the course given in English it was also an opportunity to improve their language skills.

Both queer and transformative pedagogies aim at social change, however, as previously expressed, queer theory has often been criticised as being too academic and theoretical, whereas transformative pedagogy claims to be more pragmatic as it values practice over theory. Nonetheless, in my work I have engaged with queer pedagogy as a type of transformative and critical pedagogy, thus in my study queer pedagogy served to transform education in order to show that queer theory is not only theoretical, academic and difficult to implement in real practical pedagogical situations but that it can also be put into practice. Another important consideration in favour of queer theory is that it has dealt with sexual identities since its formation in the early 1990s, whilst critical theory at first sometimes neglected the need to address educational issues such as homotransphobia and heterosexism on the basis that they were considered problematic; yet multiculturalism has the tendency of viewing sexual and gender identity issues as problematic even nowadays (Bedford, 2009).

Notwithstanding, the critical and transformative pedagogy utilised by Bedford (2009) in the GLEE Project was aimed almost exclusively at LGBTI/queer persons and issues, hence the great influence of that project on my dissertation and training courses which, like the GLEE Project, were based on participant-centred pedagogy and experiential learning. The queer and transformative pedagogies used throughout the training courses were adapted to suit all levels in education, from early childhood education to adult education, with an emphasis on the first training course in English-language teaching and primary school level. In both training courses, I employed useful material from the GLEE Project (GLEE, 2002; Bedford, 2009) and explained fundamental terminology adopted by Bedford. For example, we analysed the difference between *inequity* and *inequality*: equity takes into account disadvantages and power relations, whilst equality aims at reaching uniformity without paying attention to oppression and diversity. Thus, being equal does not necessarily imply being equitable. Moreover, equality tends to be assimilated into the

mainstream in which we are all equal, whilst equity values difference stressing that each one of us is different and that every one of us deserves the same rights and justice (Bedford, 2009). This is why throughout the courses we favoured the terms *inequity* and *equity* instead of the most commonly used *inequality* and *equality*.

In the classroom, as a pedagogical method, we also applied the process of *deconstruction*, which Robinson and Jones Díaz (2006) describe as: “A process of critical analysis that focuses on investigating the cultural and political meanings hidden in texts, which are representative of broader social relations of power” (p.181). The process of deconstruction unveils the mainstream messages and hidden meanings that particular texts (and movies, adverts, etc.) want to convey. In the course given in English we deconstructed some English-language school textbooks and uncovered most of their heteronormative aspects. Whilst in the course given in Spanish we analysed and deconstructed different school textbooks from early childhood education to adult education, including special needs education, and in these textbooks queer identities were never present, while heteronormativity ruled all of them. Moreover, deconstructing the language that we used every day in the classroom was an important instrument to understand how power relations are built and operate in our daily lives. During the process of deconstruction in the classroom we detected imposed cultural binaries; we identified the discourses which certain thoughts and ideas wanted to promote and asked ourselves why these values were imposed on us. We also explored how some identities are discussed or shown (or not) in the texts and images, thus understanding the cultural messages we are supposed to receive. By doing so, we could also figure out who were the privileged subjects (e.g. cis-heterosexual white, middle class men and to a lesser extent women) and who were not (e.g. queer identities) and we got to understand how these assumptions worked and how they had been normalised to the point that most people think of them as ‘natural’ (drawn on Robinson and Jonas Díaz, 2006).

In both courses we also discussed LGBTI educational intervention paradigms, which were historically represented and provided in the US by Griffin and Ouellett (2003): Silence (1920-1970), which denies LGBTI identities and teaches about the mainstream; Safety (1980-2002), which teaches for the othering, for LGBTI persons, where discourses are usually organised into *we* (cis heterosexuals) and *they* (LGBTI/queer identities); Social justice (2003 onwards), which can be divided into an Equality approach with a focus on equal rights (in this case for LGBTI persons), and a Critical approach based on empowerment and societal

transformation, disrupting and questioning heteronormativity and homotransphobia (adapted from Bedford, 2009: 31-35). In both courses we employed the social justice approach based on equity and transformative pedagogy. As I found out in my research, most schools in Spain seem to keep silent on gender and sexuality issues; although some use the safety approach, but almost none through a queer and critical perspective.

In the courses we also discussed three forms of empowerment identified by Bedford (2009: 58): latent, active and transformative. Latent empowerment is a feeling of having received enough information, motivation and drive to be able in the future to take action to change social injustice. It is latent because action has not taken place yet. The participants of the training courses of this study received latent empowerment in the classroom. Active empowerment is a feeling of having the means, motivations and drive to take action although the desired transformation has not taken place yet; like some of the participants of the training courses who took queer action in their schools and teaching practices; transformative empowerment is a feeling of having enough strength, motivation and drive to take action and reach the desired transformation. The latter could happen if education included lgbti issues in its curricula and sexual and gender identities were normally discussed at all levels in education; hopefully, the participants of this study will stimulate this type of transformation, through a process starting from training courses like those of this dissertation. This would depend on participants and educators contributing to this transformation in their professions, by educating students, teachers, headteachers and parents/guardians and by proposing more inclusive educational laws for everyone. Alliances both inside and outside education are fundamental if we want to reach the desired objective. Lastly, in the courses the role of the transformative teacher (drawn on Bedford, 2009: 60) was also analysed: transformative teachers discuss queer issues and take transformative action in order to achieve an education system capable of including and discussing sexual identities in the school curriculum.

### **1.3 Sex and gender fuzzy set theory**

Kim Pérez Fernández-Fígares, prominent trans activist from Granada, collaborator with the University of Granada and retired secondary school ethic and history teacher, affirms that the basis of fuzzy set theory applied to sex and gender started to take form in the State Feminist Congress of Cordoba, in Spain in the year 2000. During the congress, from a dialectical necessity for a new presentation of transsexuality in the Spanish feminist

movement, outside any possible external theoretical pressure, Kim Pérez, as a trans woman, raised this question: “Have I got the right to be here?”, which obtained the provocative answer by Pérez herself that all women presented in the Congress should be actually considered ‘more or less’ women or approximately women. And by questioning this assumption, the other women were asked to define some parameters of femininity and to see whether they comply with them and, according to these parameters, decide who should stay and who should leave the congress.

The concept of ‘more or less’, which was born at first as a blurred idea, for Kim Pérez has become part of the criteria belonging to fuzzy sets as defined by Lofti A. Zadeh in 1965 in mathematical language. These fuzzy sets differentiate themselves from the closed ones, whose criteria answer to ‘yes’ or ‘no’, and they can be applied to various fields to measure some realities. Their application to sex and gender starts from the hypothesis that concepts like ‘men and women, masculine and feminine, homosexual and heterosexual’ are in reality fuzzy sets, open, all defined by a ‘more or less’, and not by a ‘yes’ or ‘no’ which is systematically related to a gender binary system. Following Pérez Fernández-Figares’ view (2012), it is possible, for example, to translate Kinsey’s rating scale of heterosexuality-homosexuality organised into seven grades, into a fuzzy set system in which there are no separations, but a systemically quantifiable ‘more or less’.

This new theoretical vision was presented by Kim Pérez in the new State Feminist Congress in Granada in 2009, which was part of other non-binarist contributions, especially the *transfeminist* movement, which represented, surprisingly for Kim, one third of all the congress presentations. In the vocabulary that this theory offers for sexual and gender identities, there are biological fuzzy sets, referred to as ‘more or less’ of cerebral androgenisation, and therefore behavioural, during pre-natal age; and biographical fuzzy sets, referred to as ‘more or less’ of maternal/feminine or paternal/masculine identifications. Using this vocabulary, we can describe people who are more or less masculine, more or less women, more or less intersex, more or less ambiguous, more or less *homoheterosexuals*, independently of their phenotypical or visible sex. “This non-binary view could also question the interpretation of the word ‘trans-sexual’ as a ‘step from one sex to another’, which might be preserved with a new meaning of ‘transition between sexes and genders’” (Pérez Fernández-Figares, 2012: 294. The translation from the Spanish is mine). The first time that such a theory was part of the pedagogical contents in an academic environment was in the training course given in Spanish of this dissertation.

According to Kim Pérez, this is the first theoretical formulation coming from the transsexual matrix, from a central, not marginal, position of transsexuality and transgenderism. It serves to better understand some realities in social theory and practice.

Most contemporary gender penal codes divide people into a binary system (man: yes or no; woman: yes or no) forcing on us strict gender roles; the rest are ignored or marginally treated or even worse, criminalised, imprisoned and executed as it still happens in some countries. However, Kim reminded us in class that we all find ourselves in a place within a system of transition (+/-), in other words and on these terms, transgenderism or gender transition is much more common than is normally perceived.

Following this theory, Kim Pérez argues that pure men and women do not exist, and people find themselves more or less close or far from both, in a single gender system. She also believes that there are biological reasons for this which are innate in each one of us, although she insists that it is necessary to think about personal biography and environmental culture in order to understand the resulted identities from one particular culture; and because of this, identities are not fixed, they vary, they transform themselves, in other words they are not essential, but rather historical. Therefore, sex and gender fuzzy set theory shares some similarities with queer and critical theory, although sex and gender fuzzy set theory is also preoccupied with the biological and biographical aspects of each individual and caters especially for those trans identities who cannot accept their situation as purely socially constructed.

During the course, Kim told us that she was often confronted with the generalised idea that sexuality serves for reproductive reasons using as an excuse other animals, notably mammals, and claiming that their sexual encounters are consumed only between a male and a female of the same species, thus underlying that homosexuality is not natural. She reminded these people that in nature there are many more different forms of sexualities that we can possibly imagine, including diffuse hermaphroditism and change of sexual organs during the life of certain species (especially fish, jellyfish and gastropods). However, the most extraordinary case is that of the bonobos<sup>20</sup> (a type of chimpanzees), being mammals and sharing approximately 99% of their DNA with humans. Bonobos are a peaceful species, they tend to share everything they own, they live in a matriarchal society, and most importantly, they have a special way of resolving conflicts: they engage in sexual acts

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<sup>20</sup> <http://www.psmag.com/nature-and-technology/bonobos-have-sex-with-everyone-are-awesome-may-hold-key-to-our-past-59956>

with each other regardless of their sexual partner(s). Basically, they apply, in human terms, heterosexual, homosexual, bisexual, pansexual sex, including orgies, as a form of avoiding violence. Pérez is convinced that humans share many characteristics with the bonobos and that we could learn a lot from them as they might be more closely related to us than the usually scientifically claimed, and more violent in nature, chimpanzees.

Also, during the Spanish course and in relation to our culture, Kim gave an explanation of what she means by *gender code*: of penal origins, sometimes written, it constitutes the variable backbone of each society, because, historically, the sex-gender division of work was the first social structure. Its penal character can be observed in a series of transgressions and serious sanctions, which can start from derision to social bullying, expulsion from the family, school or work, and in some past and present cultures, the perceived ‘transgressors’ might be jailed or sentenced to death. One example of gender code in our ‘Western’ society is how men are supposed to be dressed: a man wearing a skirt would be laughed at and probably insulted, even more if he is a boy. The gender code, and its subsequent gender roles, affects everybody in each society, especially gender nonconforming people and trans people who might not feel free and safe to express themselves publicly. Kim, as a solution to our gender binary code, suggested the creation of a ‘bill of gender rights’ which was appreciated by all the course participants, but which, so far, has not been introduced into Spanish legislation.





## 2 Gender and sexual diversity in education

### 2.1 Spanish legislation on lgbt rights

Given the idiosyncrasy of this study I will concentrate almost solely on the most important legislation in Spain (for more details on Spanish and worldwide legislation see Penna Tosso, 2012). Sexual orientation, personal identity and individual differences in education are protected by the Spanish Constitution (1978) and educational legislation (2006). Article 27 of the Spanish Constitution advocates fundamental rights and freedom in the development of human personality and the national education law (2006) affirms that education is the most adequate means of respecting all differences. As for the Statute of Andalusia (2006), it is relevant to mention article 14 which pertains to the prohibition of discrimination for reasons of sex and sexual orientation; article 35 is about respecting sexual orientation and gender identity; and article 37 supports education as a place to counter sexism, xenophobia, homophobia and warmongering. The Law of Education of Andalusia (2008) includes the principles of the Andalusian education system underlining the necessity for coexistence and respect for cultural diversity as well as sex and sexual orientation.

The Spanish Marriage Law of 03/07/2005 modified the Spanish Civil Code to extend the right of marriage to homosexual couples with exactly the same rights as heterosexual couples, including child adoption. At that time, in modern history, Spain was the third country in the world – just before Canada and after the Netherlands and Belgium - to concede same sex marriage, which in Spanish is much more nicely termed *matrimonio igualitario*; ‘Marriage equality’ was in fact the term used in Ireland for civil marriage for gay and lesbian people in 2015, so hopefully the English language will one day also drop the word ‘sex’ and adopt a more appropriate one like ‘equal, equitable or equality’. However, it is only since 2006 that Belgium has approved the adoption of children for homosexual married couples, so Spain is in fact the second country in the world after the Netherlands (2001) to legalise both same sex marriage and adoption, and I am quite certain that the majority of the Spanish population is not aware of this.

New Spanish educational laws have been implemented since 2013 (LOMCE<sup>21</sup>), one in particular is worth mentioning, which was passed in Andalusia in 2015, as it demands

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<sup>21</sup> Link in Spanish: <http://www.mecd.gob.es/educacion-mecd/mc/lomce/inicio.html;jsessionid=41C32D01A4C1FF20EACA2BAF7DF63DB2>

more recognition and protection for lgbt persons and gender diversity in education<sup>22</sup>. Moreover, in Catalonia in 2014, a progressive law against homophobia was enacted, which is considered one of the most advanced and pioneering in the world<sup>23</sup>.

In addition, since 2007, all over Spain trans people can change their gender and name following a two-year period of psychological and medical attention and without having to go through sex reassignment surgery, but they can only go to one specialised health unit in every Spanish region, meaning that some of them need to travel long distances just to receive their hormone therapy or for a simple blood test. Unfortunately, psychologists and physicians all over the world still consider transgenderism (and transsexuality) a mental disorder and pathology, as was the case for homosexuality in the recent past. The only country in the world, to date, that allows people to change their name and gender without going through medical, psychological and legal attention is Argentina (since 2012; for Malta and Australia read below). Nonetheless, a similar law to the Argentine one was passed in Andalusia in July of 2014, which also includes the possibility of administering hormone replacement therapy to trans minors during puberty as well as giving trans people the chance of going to local health centres for hormone and psychological therapies, but only on request since the law has abolished the mention of pathology and mental disorder for trans persons, therefore medical and psychological attention are no longer an obligation. Although this law is progressive as it despathologises transsexuality and gives more rights to trans identities, there is a risk for trans persons not to be properly followed psychologically, if needed, as they were in the past. Trans persons in Andalusia can now claim basic rights like being followed by specialists during their transition, especially for medical reasons - the main unit in Malaga (in Andalusia) has been maintained for genital reconstruction surgery -, and also by psychologists, but only if they find it necessary. At the moment, since the law was passed, there is no specialised medical and psychological attention outside the main health unit in Malaga in Andalusia (which has also reduced its services for trans persons), that is, because of decentralisation, which was needed, doctors and psychologists in local health centres do not currently possess enough information and training on how to attend to trans persons. In medicine, like in the majority of other disciplines, trans persons' issues are often neglected and avoided; as an example, in the

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<sup>22</sup>Link in Spanish: <http://www.juntadeandalucia.es/boja/2015/96/1>

<sup>23</sup> <http://www.gaystarnews.com/article/spains-catalonia-region-passes-worlds-most-pioneering-laws-against-homophobia041014>

Faculty of Psychology of Granada there is not a single subject, course or Master's degree that includes trans persons' issues. As a result, one of the main objectives of the *Association of Gender Identities* ('*Academia de Identidades de Género*') of Granada, that Kim Pérez founded and of which I am a member, is to try to fill this gap by offering training courses in all specialised sectors since now there is a demand for it by law. Hopefully, trans' voices will be heard and understood and things may change soon and specialists might be able to assist trans persons on request, after having followed specific training programmes, in local health clinics under the public (state-run) health system.

Regarding intersexual persons, there is no specific legislation in Spain. The common procedure of early surgery in the past, keeping when possible just one of the two sets of genitals and removing the other, has somehow changed and now both parent(s)/guardian(s) and doctors tend to wait before taking any drastic decision, unless necessary for the health of the new born. Yet some doctors and parents decide to intervene surgically, to avoid facing the problem in the future and in order to follow binarism, as the new born in Spain can only be masculine or feminine. In Germany there has been a possibility of choosing a 'neutral' gender for intersexual babies since 2013, but once the baby needs to be legally registered parent(s) can only decide for male or female, therefore it is a very disputable law since it puts the parent(s)/guardian(s) under pressure to decide between the forced gender binarism since the neutral gender is only accepted at birth. However, in 2014 the High Court of Australia recognised a gender-neutral choice for adults<sup>24</sup>.

Naturally, intersexuality comes in many variations, still nowadays in our 'Western' world it is considered a shame and taboo, and in medical terms a pathology, as discussed above, practically almost all over the world. Daniel García, a member of the *Association of Gender Identities* of Granada published an article in Spanish in 2014 in *El Diario*<sup>25</sup> in which he denounces 'genital-normalising surgery' as a crime against humanity in accordance with the International Statute of Rome of 1998. November 8<sup>th</sup> is the date chosen to celebrate Intersexual solidarity day by commemorating Adélaide Herculine Barbin (the imposed name was Abel), an intersex person who committed suicide in Paris in 1868 at the age of 25. Recently, in 2015, a pioneering and ground-breaking law for the rights of trans and intersexual persons was adopted in Malta which allows people to choose

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<sup>24</sup> <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/australiaandthepacific/australia/10738405/Australias-top-court-recognises-gender-neutral-sex-category.html>

<sup>25</sup> [http://www.eldiario.es/contrapoder/Dia\\_Solidaridad\\_Intersexual\\_6\\_321677856.html](http://www.eldiario.es/contrapoder/Dia_Solidaridad_Intersexual_6_321677856.html)

their own gender based on self-determination and prohibits the so called ‘normalising’ surgeries on the new born<sup>26</sup>.

Despite the progressive legislation in Spain analysed in this dissertation and in relation to English Language Teaching, EFL publishers (from Britain) are wary of depicting homosexual family units or queer individuals in English-language textbooks for Spanish primary education, because children, among other reasons, are deemed to be ‘asexual’ and too young and naïve to ‘understand’ the issues involved (Herdt and Boxer, 1993). Furthermore, primary school EFL textbooks (e.g. Evans and Gray, 2003; Blair and Cadwallader, 2009) are permeated with heteronormativity and thus do not encourage queer inclusion or discussions. This could be said of all subject areas, educational levels and publishers.

In both state-run and to a lesser extent private and religious (usually Catholic) Spanish primary and secondary schools, sexual identity issues may be addressed through cross-curricular themes which are supposed to promote social themes and issues of non discrimination. These themes, though optional, can be discussed in class by any teacher in any subject area. The problem with cross-curricular themes is that they are not part of the explicit curriculum, so teachers do not feel the pressure and the need to use them in their teaching activities. However, in 2006, a controversial subject was introduced which was part of the explicit curriculum for both primary and secondary schools, which was called ‘*Educación para la Ciudadanía y los Derechos Humanos*’ (‘Education for Citizenship and Human Rights’) and was taught both in the last two years of primary school and in secondary school. Although only a few publishers included notions of sexual orientation, there was a strong opposition to the subject, mainly from the most conservative sectors, including politicians, but also parents and the Catholic Church who consider talking about homosexuality as a kind of moral imposition which should be taught by parents and not teachers. As a result, when the Spanish conservative party won the general elections in 2011, the teaching of this subject was drastically reduced in favour of general ethics and the Catholic religion (not compulsory, it is up to parents of minors to decide), and the mention of homosexuality disappeared from most textbooks. This explains the taboo related to sexual issues which still permeates Spain, or better, its conservative sectors, and their willingness to transform a social and human right into a political matter, as happened

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<sup>26</sup> <http://www.lgbt-ep.eu/press-releases/malta-adopts-ground-breaking-gender-identity-gender-expression-and-sex-characteristics-law/>

in the past - and still now - with different ethnicities, gender and sexism. Thus, things can drastically change with a shift in politics. In fact, the Spanish conservative party tried to abolish same sex marriage, however the Spanish Constitutional Court in 2012 decided to maintain the current law based on reasons pertaining to civil rights and non discrimination. This proves that ‘progress’ is not linear in time, but might shift according to changes within specific cultures. I therefore believe it is essential for all pre-service and in-service teachers to realise that Spain has fairly strong legislation in favour of lgbt(i) people compared to the rest of the world and they need to know how to implement it. This can be achieved through teacher training programmes on how to treat sexism, homotransphobia, heterosexism and cissexism in education.

## 2.2 Studies on homophobia and sexual identity knowledge

In recent years enough research has been undertaken to understand the gravity of homophobia and heterosexism in education as well as (the usual lack of) sexual identity knowledge among secondary school students and teachers, in Europe, including Spain and also in the rest of the world where a few studies also include primary school education. In most of the studies that I will analyse here, transphobia and cissexism are not mentioned, that is why I will use the more common term ‘homophobia’; likewise, I will write the acronym LGBT in capital letters only when it is mentioned in quotes. Intersexual people are never included in the discourses; whilst trans identities are scarcely discussed. For the studies carried out in Spain and written in Spanish, I translated the titles into English.

In Europe, *Schoolmates - Homophobic Bullying in Schools: a Guide for Teachers and School Personnel* was written with the support of the European Commission in 2008<sup>27</sup>. It is aimed at secondary school teachers, personnel and students, and it was a joint project between Italy, Poland, Spain and Austria, where questionnaires on homophobia were distributed to both students and teachers. The results of this survey show, as normally expected, that female students and teachers are more likely to try to prevent homophobic bullying and they are also the ones who try to intervene when these cases occur. Only about 40% of respondents stated that their school is safe for a gay or lesbian student. More than one respondent out of three, but in Italy and Poland the percentage reaches a mere 45%, declared that they hear homophobic words and epithets (corresponding to the English

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<sup>27</sup> <http://www.educacionenvalores.org/Schoolmates-bullying-and.html>

‘fag’, ‘faggot’, ‘dyke’) all the time or often in their school. Targets are usually male students who do not follow their socially imposed gender code and role. Male students are also those who mainly use offensive language and hate speech targeting mainly male homosexuals, but the percentage of especially male teachers is also worrying, reaching nearly 5% in Italy. Almost half of the respondents admitted witnessing in the previous school year at least one episode of violence against a gay student or a male student perceived as gay, much less towards lesbian students or those perceived to be lesbians.

As for Spain, a broad research study promoted by FELGBT and carried out in 2007, was called *Attitudes towards sexual diversity among adolescents of Coslada (Madrid) and San Bartolomé de Tirajana (Gran Canaria)*<sup>28</sup>. All public secondary schools contacted accepted to take part in the research which used surveys on issues about ‘knowledge of and behaviour towards LGBT people’ distributed to the students, but all the private schools contacted (two of which were Catholic) rejected the project on the basis that it was not ‘relevant’ to their school. It is important to remark that this is one of the first studies in Spain of this kind and the language used in the questionnaire related more to sexual preference than identity. The surveys were issued to students, aged between 11 and 19 and the results show a rise of homophobia in most of the schools; in fact, most pupils admitted that they would not tell anybody if they were homosexual. Unsurprisingly, trans people resulted to be the most rejected in the schools and the majority of the students thought lgbt schoolmates would feel more at risk with their schoolmates than with their family, friends and teachers; teachers seemed to ignore the issue entirely. Most students believed that if they were lgbt they would not receive almost any support from their school peers. Some boys answered that homosexuality should be forbidden and gay men should be killed; one student out of three overtly declared to be homophobic, again, the vast majority were boys. Two thirds of the boys who declared being attracted to other boys suffered homophobic harassment; one in five had been hit; three out of ten experienced exclusion: three more times than those considered heterosexuals, who suffered harassment mainly for being perceived as gay. Religious students resulted to be more homophobic, as well as students born outside Spain. On a brighter side, almost half of the students would support schoolmates with a homosexual family and girls would accept this and understand it much

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<sup>28</sup> [https://www.google.es/search?q=informe-actitudes-adolescentes-lpgc-ante-diversidad&oq=informe-actitudes-adolescentes-lpgc-ante-diversidad&aqs=chrome..69i57.4061j0j9&sourceid=chrome&es\\_sm=93&ie=UTF-8](https://www.google.es/search?q=informe-actitudes-adolescentes-lpgc-ante-diversidad&oq=informe-actitudes-adolescentes-lpgc-ante-diversidad&aqs=chrome..69i57.4061j0j9&sourceid=chrome&es_sm=93&ie=UTF-8)

better than boys. Sexuality issues were rarely mentioned at school, yet 55% of the respondents would like to know more about it and the majority of the girls commented that they would learn better about gender issues if their teachers were lesbians or gays.

In this research, most parents believed this type of study to be essential for their children and approved of it because they admitted not having the correct means to treat these issues at home. This is a positive point for the purpose of this research, since one of the main worries of the pre-service and in-service teachers in both the pilot study and in the training courses was facing parents' reactions.

As the results of the study show, students, as well as teachers, are generally ignorant about lgbti persons and issues; there is a lack of positive references. Educating about sexuality and gender is still considered taboo and should be critically discussed before secondary school, because adolescents already demonstrate that they possess knowledge and (mis)information, most of the time in the form of myths and biases. The study conveys that the majority of the sample students seemed to accept sexual minorities, but a worrying 30% admitted being homophobic. All these results underlie the necessity of training pre-service and in-service teachers to treat gender and sexual identity issues and to counter homophobia in education, from the first year of primary school or even earlier.

The other Spanish research analysed in this section was undertaken by Gallardo Linares and Escolano López (2009) at the Faculty of Education of the University of Malaga (Spain). It is definitely a valuable piece of research because it can be easily applied to the Faculty of Education of the University of Granada, which could share similar results. In the preface of this project the authors wrote in Spanish (the translation is mine): "Just when heterosexual teenagers learn to socialise, lesbian and gay teenagers learn to hide themselves" (p. 6).

Teachers and students were selected according to the subject areas which could best fit lgbt issues and were interviewed to check their knowledge of queer issues and especially whether they discussed them in their subject area. The researchers obtained precise data about knowledge of lgbt issues among students and teachers in the academic year 2007-2008. The results indicate that in most subject areas, gender, sexism and feminism are discussed relatively well; lgbt identity is only briefly mentioned as a minority status; family is stereotyped; legislation only deals with general human rights; social psychology addresses prejudice and stereotyping and lgbt people are almost never discussed. Other relevant results from primary school teachers are the following: teaching sexual issues is

optional; gender is discussed briefly and sexism is seldom mentioned; lgbt identities are dealt with briefly as part of sexual minorities; homosexuality is mentioned but lesbianism is almost invisible; transsexuality, surprisingly, seems to be slightly better discussed. Family is only represented as heterosexual and ‘traditional’. Little history on sexual identities is taught, but they do teach about inclusive language, stereotypes and social prejudice and these teachers argue that sexuality issues at primary schools should be taught by experts and professionals and not by teachers through cross-curricular activities. This particular result coincides with one of the participants of the first training course in English, who, at the beginning of the course, believed that these issues should be treated by external experts. This implies that teachers and educators should not be responsible for addressing sexuality issues at school for their lack of training or because of the taboo these themes still represent in education.

The results of the students’ questionnaires (from various subject areas) showed that more than 40% admitted not being able to deal with or even discuss homosexuality in a classroom situation. The percentage rose to a mere 64% when they admitted not being able to deal with trans issues; 92% of the students said to have received very little information on lgbt issues and almost half of them thought that bisexual students need help to find out their ‘real’ sexual identity. On a brighter side, the majority accepted family diversity, even if they did not consider family a single person with no children. They said they had received good information about gender and sexism, less about the history of feminism, and almost nothing about heterosexism, heteronormativity and the history of lgbt movements and generally, they acquired more information about sexual and gender issues on their own than academically, reflecting the results of the adolescents from the previously analysed Spanish study. Pedagogical strategies to counter homophobia were not generally addressed, teachers pointing out that they had no training in this issue. Another important datum in this research is that nearly 87% of the students thought that gender and sexual identity topics proposed in the questionnaires should be deeply studied as part of the university curriculum.

More recent Spanish research, which I have already mentioned in the Introduction, is the study written in Spanish and carried out by FELBT in 2013<sup>29</sup> called: *Bullying (and risk of suicide) due to sexual orientation and gender identity in schools: Failure of the*

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<sup>29</sup> <http://www.felgtb.org/rs/2157/d112d6ad-54ec-438b-9358-4483f9e98868/671/filename/informedefensor-17m13.pdf>



*education system*. State-sponsored research targeting youth from the age of 12 to 25 who define themselves as lesbian, gay or bisexual (or other non heterosexual identities), who have suffered homophobic bullying at school. As a quantitative sample, 653 people were evaluated through a survey in different Spanish provinces; as qualitative data, six youth, who suffered homophobic bullying up to the point of thinking of committing suicide, were interviewed.

The main results convey that 57% of homophobic bullying starts between the age of 12 and 15; 49% suffered from it daily or frequently; 90% from a school mate (normally a boy) and 11% from a teacher. 42% never received any type of support in their school, and only 19% were helped by teachers. 82% never informed their family about their discrimination, of those who did (18%), 10% were discovered by their family members. 73% were supported mainly by their mothers, whilst 27% did not receive any support from their family. This homophobic bullying has generated in the victims feelings of humiliation (63%), impotence (60%), rage (59%), sadness (59%), incomprehension (57%), solitude (53%), vulnerability (50%) and isolation (50%). Furthermore, 43% of the survey respondents had thought of committing suicide, 35% of them had even planned their suicide and of these 35%, 40% had tried to commit suicide more than once. In other words, according to the results of this report, 17% of youth who suffered school homophobic bullying has attempted suicide. The conclusions of this study clearly show that the Spanish education system has failed to prevent these tragic situations, further justifying my work.

### **2.3 Gender and sexual identity studies in children's education**

Given the fact that the whole of the pilot study of this dissertation and partially also the training courses deal with primary school education and early childhood education, it felt adequate to concede a separate section to sexuality issues in children's education.

One of the most common questions I am asked when I mention the subject of my research is: "Do you think it is appropriate to talk to primary school pupils about sexuality?". Indeed, I believe that more than appropriate it is necessary, as primary school children already possess much (mis)information about sexual minorities (made to appear so by social rules) and queer issues which need to be readdressed and reformulated. The following studies come mainly from the USA where there is enough research on homophobic issues in primary ('elementary') schools, whilst in Spain, to my knowledge, it

seems to be very scarce. I will employ the more common words homophobia and homophobic as they have been utilised in these studies.

Kevin Jennings (1999), former executive director and founder of GLSEN, claims that antigay prejudice starts as soon as kindergarten and becomes more manifest among children, and sometimes teachers, at primary school. Elementary school teachers hear homophobic epithets or name-calling from children all the time. “That’s so gay” has become one of the most common utterances among school pupils, but children do not even know the meaning of the word ‘gay’, and when asked they usually say it is a “bad thing” (Jennings, 1999). If these thoughts are not readdressed, children might grow up hating queer people and harassing them verbally and physically. Unfortunately, “the hatred and attitudes they express are not the exception, they are the rule.” (Jennings, p. x). Jennings also reminds us that children learn prejudice from different sources, mainly the school, but also the family, media, religious institutions and so on. However, it is in the school where they spend most of their time between the age of 5 and 16 or more. Thus, the school environment becomes fundamental for confirming their prejudice or fighting against it. Also, I consider it necessary to understand that talking about sexual identities is not the same as talking about sex and most importantly, as mentioned before in this work, primary school pupils often talk about sex and sexual identities in the form of stereotyped people and myths. Sears (1999) adopts the word ‘queer’ to define *all sexual outsiders and dissidents* - as I often do in this dissertation - and he believes that queer theory can create elementary classrooms that “challenge categorical thinking, promote interpersonal intelligence, and foster critical consciousness” (p. 5). He also argues that diversity is a human hallmark and it is evident at elementary school in all its different facets, except when related to sexuality and gender, where pupils must follow their ‘imposed’ gender role and codes. In addition, he stresses that:

Although sexual identity is constructed within a cultural context, the predisposition for sexual behavior is biologically based. . . . The precise biology for the ‘cause’ of homosexuality has not been found (some identical twins were not of the same sexual identity). (p.7)

As Sears (1999) suggests, the question for educators who intend to teach queerly is not what causes homosexuality, which in my view is not necessary and can even be ‘dangerous’, but what factors produce homophobia and heterosexism which impede queer people to live their sexuality easily and freely. Moreover, Meyer (2007) asserts that children learn to perform their gender roles and learn very early that it is not the biological

sex that communicates one's gender to the rest of the society; rather it is what we wear, how we talk and how we behave that will identify ourselves as male or female. These 'choices' are learnt through codes that are taught to children, and all individuals are constrained by these gender codes. Sears (1999) emphasises that homophobia and heterosexism are acquired early in life and serve a variety of functions. Thus, it is important to affirm that since children have learned homotransphobia and heterosexim they can be educated out of them.

Another myth that Sears (1999) analyses is the 'innocence' of childhood, which, he considers a "fictive absolute" (p. 8). He believes that in the schooling industry "desire has been masculinized and innocence institutionalized" (p. 9). However, as the film *It's Elementary: Talking about Gay Issues in School* (Chasnoff and Cohen, 1996) shows, sexuality discussions among pupils are very much present in elementary school classes, but most of the times teachers are not aware of this. Moreover, Sears (1999: 10-12) wants to challenge another assumption: 'Heterosexual families are first'. He points out that fewer than one in four students come to US schools from a home occupied by both biological parents, in fact, most come from differently constructed family units and he asserted this in 1999, which makes me assume that family units nowadays are even more varied. He also argues that queer families cannot be erased from the curriculum because they exist in real life; at the same time it is important to avoid typical stereotyped representations of queer families and also to avoid showing negative images of them. He suggests using in primary schools some of the many children's books which present queer-positive characters and themes; during the training courses some queer children's books were analysed, such as Fine (1989), Sachar (1993), Richardson and Parnell (2005), and Luxuria (2009). Furthermore, Kathy Bickmore (1999) gives her reasons why sexuality should be discussed in elementary schools as follows:

Elementary schools are places where young people's identities are formed, as individuals and as citizens. . . . The first reason to discuss sexuality in elementary school is that it is already present in students' lives. Assumptions about children's 'innocence' regarding sexuality are outdated. Given the amount of (mis)information about gender relations and sexuality that flows freely these days in public spaces, media, and peer groups, elementary educators could not prevent children from acquiring sexual information even if we wanted to do so. (p.15)

The already mentioned documentary *It's Elementary: Talking About Gay Issues in School* (a follow-up for its 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary is called *It is Still Elementary*, 2007) was filmed in 1996 in six U.S. elementary and middle schools and it "provides evidence that

many young children know a lot more about homosexuality and gender questions than adults might predict” (Bickmore, 1999: 15). The movie clearly demonstrates that primary school children possess knowledge that is incomplete, partly inaccurate and/or negative, and partly neutral, all of it incomplete (Bickmore, 1999). Children in the movie recognise words like *gay* (and other words) as slurs or put-downs, often without knowing their real definitions. They also recognise that ‘family’ is not only that formed by one mum, one dad and one or more children. Moreover, it shows children listening to lesbian and gay singers, and teachers can freely say these artists are gay, and they ask the pupils whether they want to know simple details about a well-known lesbian or gay man. The documentary is a milestone in the development of pedagogical discourse in primary and secondary school teacher training on lesbian and gay identities and was widely enjoyed by the participants of both training courses.

In addition, Garvey (1984) recognises that “the practice of teasing a playmate by mislabelling his or her gender is common by age three or four” (p. 196); and Rofes (1995) argued that homophobic harassment and name-calling has become common by elementary school. The Hiv-Aids epidemic analysed in this chapter and the resurgence of religious fundamentalism have made homophobia more public and lgbti persons more vulnerable. Moreover, Rofes (1999) demonstrated that explicit sex education does not lead to increased sexual behaviour of any kind. On the contrary, it does not seem to have any effect on one’s sexual orientation, and children can learn about safe sex practices. Nonetheless, Rofes (1999) argued that it is very difficult to produce strong evidence about teaching and discussing homosexuality at primary school, because the topic is more than often censored and considered taboo.

Questions of sex, gender and queer identities can perfectly fit into the primary curriculum in a number of areas. In literature, gender identity and sexuality are inescapable, as well as in social studies and in foreign language education. Yet queer issues are almost totally avoided at primary school level. However, Bickmore (1999) claims that discussing sexuality with primary school pupils is rather risky, but necessary, if we want them to develop their own personal and political lives (p. 20). It is therefore essential that primary school pupils learn to face conflicts and sensitive issues since even pre-school children have some capacity for understanding and dealing with conflicts. In Bickmore’s view, properly organised sexual education, including queer issues, can provide a great opportunity for children to build their own autonomy and confidence in order to deal with

difficult situations, different viewpoints and to make decisions. “Otherwise, we abdicate responsibility for children’s safety and their inclusion in democratic society, leaving them to sort through unreliable sources of information on their own” (1999: 21).

Furthermore, teachers should learn to accept and respect difference and learn to listen to their pupils’ knowledge and points of view, which are always interesting ‘queer’ pedagogical opportunities, and compare them with the rest of the class. It is not a matter of finding out who is ‘right’ or ‘wrong’, rather it is a pedagogical activity in which pupils and students are asked to critically think about why and how such and such are made to seem superior or inferior. Teaching must awaken curiosity, criticism and originality in pupils (Britzman, 2005). Following this view, queer theory advocates the involvement of the students in decision-making procedures and aspires to create solutions to problematic situations facilitated by their teachers who, in turn, should promote inquiry and discussions (Nelson, 2009).

However, it is commonly believed that children are vulnerable beings who need protection; this opinion often sees homosexuality as a risk and not as an option. There is in fact a world-wide spread myth that homosexuality is linked to child sexual abuse, often termed ‘pederasty’ or ‘pedophilia’ erroneously<sup>30</sup>. We frequently hear discourses given by religious authorities and some politicians who, instead of condemning child sexual abuse *per se*, accuse the men who commit ‘pederasty’ of being ‘homosexual’. First of all, child sexual abuse does not have anything to do with sexual orientation and identity, and secondly, some studies suggest that sexual violence and abuse of children is more than often perpetuated on girls than on boys<sup>31</sup>. The men who sexually abuse young girls all over the world are never accused of being ‘heterosexual’. It is a typical case of hypocrisy promoted by heteronormativity. Moreover, male gay primary and secondary school teachers, also in early-childhood education, are often viewed as ‘dangerous’ by some sectors of our society as they are thought to ‘molest’ little boys just because they are gay or perceived as such; but nobody seems to question a ‘heterosexual’ male teacher who might take advantage of young girls. And let us not forget that many cases of child sexual abuse

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<sup>30</sup> I prefer to use the term ‘child sexual abuse’ to ‘pederasty’, which normally refers to ‘sexual activity involving a man and a boy’, and ‘pedophilia’, which normally refers to ‘sexual feelings towards children’, as the two terms are confusing and thus used erroneously often on purpose.

<sup>31</sup> [http://psychology.ucdavis.edu/faculty\\_sites/rainbow/html/facts\\_molestation.html](http://psychology.ucdavis.edu/faculty_sites/rainbow/html/facts_molestation.html)

occur inside a 'typical' heterosexual family (see footnote 31). It is therefore incredible how we can be easily manipulated by our cultural biases, especially from the media, as a way to learn to fear otherness.

On the importance of a democratic and participatory elementary school system, Bickmore (1999) concludes that:

By confronting conflict in an open and caring manner, elementary teachers can create social spaces in which a wide range of children (and ideas) are accepted, and thus enabled to contribute their gifts to the community. Thus the children may learn, as developing citizens, to question the categories and rules that have formed them, and to create a new world with more democratic space for all. (p. 22)

Robinson and Jones Díaz (2006) affirm that parts of our society strongly object to discussing these topics with children. Many early childhood educators in their research study viewed children as asexual beings who are “‘too young’ and ‘too innocent’ to comprehend or think critically about what they consider to be ‘adult issues’, such as difference, power, ‘race’, and sexuality” (p. 7). An observation that has been proved wrong in my research.

Could primary school lgbti and queer teachers be really open about their sexuality? Eric Rofes was an openly gay man teaching at an elementary school in the US. In one of his studies (1999), he analysed the impact that eight of his previous elementary school students had on his overt homosexuality. His pupils were aged 11, 12 and 13 at the time he taught them, and he contacted them some twenty years later. He wanted to know how they truly experienced having an openly gay teacher, and how this would affect them in the long term. All of the eight students who answered his questionnaire described themselves as heterosexual. Rofes' reaction to this news was ambivalent: on the one hand, he was confirmed that being an openly gay teacher (and activist) does not influence a student's sexuality; on the other, he felt somehow disappointed to know that he could not help some of his potential queer students to become freely queer; yet the number of participants to his research study was quite limited.

Rofes considered school safety and conflict management practices important, as well as formal curriculum topics in which include lgbti issues. It is definitely easier to do so in a school context in which bullying, gender-based harassment and heterosexism are addressed. However, Rofes wanted to prove that the opposite can also be true: where there is extreme violence against homosexuals there might be a reaction for the creation of schooling social movements in favour of inclusiveness. The results of Rofes' surveys were

quite surprising because all of his former students (boys and girls) felt positively altered by the experience of having had an openly gay teacher. Apart from a better understanding of sexualities in general, the former students reported a good relationship to political activism and social movements, as commented by one of them: “Having an openly gay teacher taught me to be receptive to diversity and about the complexity of human beings. . . . I think it would benefit all children and society if they had openly gay teachers” (1999: 92).

Often, primary school teachers talk about little boys’ ‘girlfriends’, and little girls’ ‘boyfriends’, thus bringing sexuality into the classroom through the assumption that all children are heterosexual. Yet enough research has been carried out to prove that sexual pleasure starts at birth or even in uterus, while sexual orientation appears to be formed by a complex interplay between biological, social, and psychological situations (Derman-Sparks, 1987). However, sexual identity and orientation are never discussed with children, whilst they often learn about their ‘race’, gender, and other social and personal characteristics. However, some children know a lot about sexual orientation and take diversity for granted. Cahill and Theilheimer (1999) remind us that teachers must be ready to use children’s perceptions of their world and integrate gay and lesbian issues into the curriculum. Children can learn about queer issues from what their teachers do and do not do, that is, from both teachers’ knowledge and ignorance. Cahill and Theilheimer (1999) offer some suggestions on how to help teachers treat queer issues at elementary school level; first of all they believe that teachers should:

Respond to children’s questions directly, as ignoring a child’s question is disrespectful for the child. Delve into the meaning of the child’s question by asking further questions . . . Answer as clearly and honestly as possible . . . As children talk about their views, teachers should elaborate and elucidate. Have group discussions to use children’s different perspectives . . . Continue to listen and observe carefully to learn what children have understood. (p. 44)

In order to implement these very useful suggestions, primary school teachers should also adopt school materials which are adequate for children, some books can give examples of gay/lesbian families; and teachers could tell children about the queer people they know or have known about.

Another important aspect to take into account is inclusive language which plays a very important role for educational equity in schools: teachers need to make simple alterations to some forms, such as using ‘family member/s’ instead of mother and father, which can make everyone feel welcomed. Teachers and educators can teach all inclusive/non sexist language and acceptable definitions, thus countering homophobic language and together

pupils and teachers can criticise the heteronormative representations around them. However, as mentioned various times in this thesis, to achieve this, teachers need allies such as other colleagues or pupils' families, especially because these issues concern everybody.

Colleary (1999) carried out a doctoral thesis on teacher understandings about gays and lesbians in the elementary social-studies curriculum. As an example, most teachers of his study did not know about the *bardache*, a feminine male who was seen as a third spirit and thus venerated by Native American cultures. But in social-studies textbooks the *bardache*, or any similar topic, is never mentioned. It is quite clear that there are not enough resources to help teachers look at diverse sexuality issues. Nonetheless, it often depends on the teachers, as queer topics could be easily brought up when dealing with families and relationships. Moreover, in the study of US history, Colleary observes that discussing gay and lesbian movements as part of US civil and human rights achievements could be easily attained in a school environment. Unfortunately, he also points out that it is much easier for teachers to remain silent than facing the discomfort, which is more often than not the case. This could also be applied to Spanish education since the lgbt movements have achieved important civil recognition in the recent history of human and civil rights in Spain and thus should be included in school textbooks.

Another example of how to treat (homo)sexuality issues at primary school is given by Pallotta-Chiarolli (1999) who thinks that children raised 'queerly' can contribute to the sharing of their knowledge with their schoolmates. She wrote a lovely account about her daughter, Stephanie, when she was a child and lived with her mother and her gay friends. Stephanie participated in Sidney's Mardi Gras (Gay Pride Parade) when she was seven and she would talk in her classroom about her gay 'uncles' (her mother's gay friends) and about the great time she had during the Mardi Gras. Sadly, she also learned to experience death with some of her mother's friends who died from Aids-related diseases in the early 90s. Stephanie was 'queerly raised' and learned from a very early age that sexuality is not fixed and that heterosexuality is only one of the various possibilities. She is a clear example of how children can educate other children about queer issues and identities.

To sum up, all these research projects and theories have underlined the need to challenge the excluding heteronormative 'they' in favour of the inclusive queer 'we' and the patriarchal 'he' in favour of the feminist 'she'. Moreover, more vocabulary is needed for gender nonconforming minors/people, trans and genderqueer people who may not refer



themselves as either she or he, like the already mentioned third neutral singular person pronoun ‘ze’ (*zir* and sometimes *hir* can be used instead of her/his)<sup>32</sup>, thus disrupting the gender binary system.

According to Robinson and Díaz (2006), sexuality as part of social (in)justice continues to be excluded from most early childhood educational programmes suggesting that “there is still a long way to go from ‘tolerance’ to respect” (p. 9). Moreover, they recognise the danger of the notion of being ‘the same’ that they heard from some early childhood educators in their study as it might reflect the singularities associated with the dominant culture. The discourse of ‘we are all the same’ came up frequently in the pilot study and also in the two training courses of this dissertation. I did warn the participants about the risks of this assumption, as it does not take into consideration difference as an important social value and especially does not recognise the social and political differences and privileges in terms of power, human rights and injustices existing in our culture, which are social characteristics that children need to think critically about in order to understand.

### **2.3.1 Gender nonconforming minors**

Sedgwick (1990) observed that understanding and accepting sexual diversities is fundamental for everybody and not only for a minority of people. She stressed that the cultural heteronormative binarism (heterosexual/homosexual; boy/girl) might restrict, for example, the lives of young boys who would like to wear a dress and behave like girls, but refrain from doing so because they are familiar with the consequences of breaking the social gender code.

Kim Pérez Fernández-Fígares (2010, 2012) suggests that sex and gender nonconformity is part of the continuous variability of nature, which, according to her, allows for a better adaptation and evolution of the species. She prefers to use the term ‘sex and gender nonconforming minors’ or ‘sex and gender variant minors’, because children’s personal evolution is so fluid that we cannot really talk about them in terms of homosexual, bisexual or transgender, even when their appearance and attitude is clearly non cis-heterosexual; thus, we should always attest to a voluntary transformation of their original behaviours. The principle that must be applied is that of the reversibility of decisions. In this case, Pérez Fernández-Fígares (2012) refers to sex as the biological element, including sexuality,

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<sup>32</sup> <https://genderneutralpronoun.wordpress.com/>

whilst gender is cultural and social, a distinction that Robert Stoller, a US professor of Psychiatry at the UCLA Gender Identity Clinic, made in 1968 based on trans people's experiences.

Variant (or nonconforming, as I prefer) gender behaviours do not have a definite cause. Pérez Fernández-Figares (2010) believes that they might be caused by a difference in the cerebral *androgen action*, which might produce more feminine brains in XY people or similar to the masculine in XX people. Being a transsexual woman, Kim Pérez affirmed in class that biological aspects shape trans people's lives to the point where they could account for up to 30 or 40% in the need for transition. This is echoed by the work of Serano (2007), who has often criticised queer theory for not taking into consideration, especially at first, trans persons' biological history, claiming that if it was only a cultural choice trans persons would not go through all the difficult processes in our transphobic and cissexist society and it would be easier for them to 'choose' to be either gay, lesbian bisexual or straight.

Pérez Fernández-Figares (2012) also insists that the problem of lack of information on gender nonconforming minors in education must be addressed, and that such information should be made available in every school, to help avoid the severe bullying, repression and to hide themselves, a sufferance that is believed to be higher than that of gay and lesbian pupils. In education she proposes a series of questions for the pupils which were also asked to the participants in the Spanish course: 'Shall we repress or shall we convince gender nonconforming minors to repress themselves, or shall we let them free? Can gender nonconforming pupils dress the way they desire in their schools and could they be called by the name they identify with, both by the teachers and in school documents (registers, notes, etc.), even if outside the school only their legal names and gender are recognised?'. These questions are the first simple elements to make other pupils and teachers aware of the difficulties that gender nonconforming pupils have to face in early childhood education. In the provinces of Granada and Malaga (Spain), four gender nonconforming minors have been followed by Kim Pérez in four different schools since 2006, three of them with excellent results as both school personnel and pupils accepted their change of name and gender, whilst one school forced the gender nonconforming minor to maintain the name and gender received at birth.

But what could be done in order to prevent the discrimination based on gender nonconformity? Kim told us during the course that the school head's support is

fundamental together with an adequate application of the Andalusian law that guarantees the respect to diversity. In addition, both school management and teachers should reach a supporting position, possibly helped by an adequately trained person(s). She also argued that pupils' tutors should be especially careful about these three forms of bullying: from other pupils, from teachers and from pupils' family members. Students' and teachers' bullying could be fought against by showing for example the film *It's Elementary: Talking about Gay Issues in School* (Chesnoff and Cohen, 2006) or other activities employed in the training courses of this dissertation, using critical thinking through real life examples. In order to do so, pupils and especially teachers need to be trained to recognise gender nonconforming minors as integral part of their society.

Furthermore, Kim reminded us during the course that it is usually a boy who tries to behave like a girl or wants to dress up like a girl who gets the strongest and most negative reactions and punishment. This is because the boy is breaking the gender code and 'his' gender role, and 'he' is perceived as behaving like a girl. In other words, what is considered feminine is believed to be inferior in our 'Western' culture unless shown by girls or women, who are still considered gender minorities anyway. Masculine girls can also suffer bullying and isolation, but probably slightly less than feminine boys (a good example is the film *Tomboy* by Céline Sciamma, 2011).

Often, headteachers and educators perceive gender nonconforming students as gays or lesbians, rarely as transgendered. However, their sexual orientation has often nothing to do with their desire to escape the rigid social norms imposed on them. In fact, we should not assume that, for example, a feminine gender nonconforming boy is attracted to boys, since only the minor would know about their sexual orientation. Parent(s)/guardian(s) need to be trained to love their children whatever sex-gender they choose to be. Once parents accept their child they should not be forced to accept, for example, that their previous girl is now a boy, or vice-versa. The whole process is much more complex and cultural gender binarism does not help parents understand it. A gender nonconforming minor might not want to become the gender of their opposite sex/gender; they simply feel more at ease being either more feminine or more masculine. Of course, some might turn out to be trans persons, some gays or lesbians or genderqueer or straight. Nonetheless, the fact that they break their imposed gender code is not always linked to their sexual attraction. In fact, most of the time in their behaviours, sexual or sexualised roles are not important, rather

what is more relevant is how they look, what they do, and how they are perceived by others (drawn on Pérez Fernández-Fígares, 2012).

It is possible that gender nonconforming minors need psychological attention, but only if requested, since their transition should be considered natural, as it has always been with many other individuals throughout history. However, it is important that good psychological care should be made available for both gender nonconforming minors and their parents/guardians on request.

Pérez Fernández-Fígares (2012) also asserts that parents/guardians of some gender variant minors (who might become trans) should wait until their children experience the first signs of puberty before deciding to fulfil their wish for taking puberty inhibitors and starting hormone replacement therapy (also called ‘cross-sex hormone therapy’), as some of these teens might change their mind during puberty or later on. Nonetheless, in Kim’s view and in accordance with the US Endocrine Society, if the minors really display a necessity to be recognised as the other gender than that received at birth, then it is recommended for them to take puberty-blocking drugs at the first sign of puberty, because this therapy is totally reversible, whilst, according to the same Endocrine Society, cross-sex hormone therapy after puberty is only partially reversible. Kim told us in the course that it would be advisable especially for MtF minors to experiment their natural hormonal changes for a short time, before their voice and their masculine aspect cannot be reversed, and then decide if it is indispensable to suppress their process of puberty. Otherwise their parents/guardians or doctors/therapists would decide for them and they might regret it afterwards during hormone replacement therapy. Kim also told us that there is a high degree of hormone therapy withdrawal among very ‘feminine’ boys who might end up enjoying being ‘feminine’ without wanting to acquire a feminine body or without undertaking genital reconstruction surgery and castration, which should be postponed as much as possible since they are totally irreversible. This is why, according to Kim, these minors should wait to experience the first signs of their masculine puberty before taking any decision. For FtM trans persons the situation is different, as the changes in their voice and the desired masculine aspect can be acquired even after puberty through hormone replacement therapy.

On the other hand, trans minors can face serious social stigma if they do not take puberty blockers and undergo hormone replacement therapy during puberty. For example, a boy who wants to be recognised as a girl, who does not start receiving anti-testosterones

and female hormones (e.g. estrogens) during puberty, will end up having a deeper voice, which will be a reason for discrimination in our binary society. Yet there are other trans feminine persons who are not interested in changing their voice as they think this is society's problem and that everybody should be free to choose the way they look and their own ways of talking, behaving and being, otherwise we will always fall into the binary system's trap.

As a pedagogical suggestion, Kim Pérez proposes to the pupils/students in general, and also to the course participants of this research in the classroom, to write about their opinion on hormone replacement therapy during puberty and then hold a class discussion on the topic (first in small groups). As reading examples, she recommends the article which appeared in the 'Mail Online' in 2011, called *Why I let my son live as a girl: Mother of boy who returned to school in a skirt bravely tells her extraordinary story*<sup>33</sup>, as well as some more articles on gender dysphoria.<sup>34</sup> More videos and real case studies of gender nonconforming minors were discussed in both training courses, especially the one given in Spanish.

Kim also reminded us during the course that studies carried out in the 1970s and 1980s have shown that gender nonconforming children can rarely become cis-heterosexual in adulthood, most of them recognised themselves as homosexual and a few as transgender/transsexual (Zuger, 1978; Devenport, 1986). However, in her and also my opinion, it is difficult to be sure that those who recognised themselves as homosexual were in fact homosexual; they might have been trans instead and might have chosen the easier path, as homosexuality is more accepted than transsexuality in our society. In fact, Pérez Fernández-Fígares (2012) argues that:

Transsexuality remains absent in Spanish academia, and not enough attention is given to the voices of trans persons (segmental) or to those who are non-binary (general). To avoid treating transsexuality academically, not to include it in general education, to ignore it and not talk about it is to allow latent or existing homotransphobia to subsist in our culture, which is intensively present in our classrooms. (p. 302. The translation from the Spanish is mine)

In order to change this situation, Kim is convinced that it is necessary for LGBTI educators to come out of the closet as a liberatory act and hopefully gain respect from both students and colleagues.

<sup>33</sup> <http://www.dailymail.co.uk/femail/article-2038392/Why-I-let-son-live-girl-Mother-boy-returned-school-skirt.html>

<sup>34</sup> <http://www.huffingtonpost.co.uk/news/gender-dysphoria/>

## **2.4 Sexual identity studies in EFL/ESL education**

I also consider this section important as the whole of the pilot study and the first training course of this dissertation were dedicated to EFL education and queer issues.

There are some research studies worldwide in the field of gender and sexual identities in foreign language teaching, but very few in Spain. The importance of treating sexual identities within foreign or second language education is often underestimated by language teachers and people in general. There is a recognised belief that gender and sexual identities have nothing to do with foreign and second language education, especially at primary level. Nonetheless, as has happened in my own experience as an English-language learner and teacher, in EFL/ESL education issues pertaining to sexual identities, which are almost always exclusively heterosexual, are often present, and possibilities for queer discussions arise continually, not to mention that among students (and teachers) there are often queer individuals. Teachers and educators should never assume that their students are all heterosexual, just like students should never assume that their teachers are all heterosexual.

Cynthia D. Nelson, Australian, could be currently considered the expert in queer issues within English-language education. Although her studies pertain to adult education and ESL (1993, 1999, 2002, and 2009), they can be easily applied to my own research in the field of EFL and sexual identity issues (training course in English) and general education (training course in Spanish). She also published a book specifically on sexual identities in English-language education (2009). In one of her articles (1993) she discusses some typical attitudes from English-language teachers towards queer issues in ESL, like assuming that ‘we are all the same’, and others discussed below, failing to recognise the omnipresent heteronormativity in ESL/EFL education, which does not allow LGBTI teachers to come out and who often feel obliged to hide many of their life experiences. Yet Nelson criticises that sexual identity issues are often present in the classroom as these are probably some of the most popular questions students ask their teachers (after “What does ‘it’ mean?”, of course): “Are you married? Do you have a boyfriend/girlfriend? Do you want a boyfriend/girlfriend? - Do you want to get married? Do you want to have children?” If the teachers are queer or do not define themselves as clear-cut heterosexuals, they would find it uncomfortable and difficult to answer these questions unless they are overtly queer, which is not often the case. On the other hand, most (cis) heterosexual teachers talk about their sexual identity openly with their students: they talk about their boyfriend or girlfriend

to say what they did over the weekend, or the married person they live with, or their children. Instead queer teachers tend to hide their life experiences very often, as Nelson (1993) puts it: “I de-gay myself all the time. I remove myself, my friends, my family, my community, my culture from the picture” (p. 146). She also reminds us that queer students can only discuss queer issues if they feel it is safe to do so and she adds that the situations for lesbians might be more difficult as it is not always easy to find each other due to both sexism and heterosexism that lesbians have to face in education. Nelson’s colleagues admitted being silent about gay issues as they do not possess enough knowledge to deal with them. Straight teachers (and often, for fear, also queer ones) rarely bring up queer-related issues and they do not criticise the absence of anything queer in the curriculum and school materials. However, Nelson believes that teachers do not need to know who is gay or lesbian, but rather evaluate the content in their courses and methodology in terms of their effectiveness with their queer students. Lgbti students should feel safe in the classroom; they should be comfortable with the different activities; they should have opportunities to express themselves authentically, spontaneously and confidentially, as stated by Nelson: “It is our responsibility to give *all* of our students a good education” (1993: 148). Apparently, teachers could only discuss sexuality issues if they felt secure about doing so; as a consequence, queer teachers need allies with all other teachers, school principals and personnel, especially because, as I have been showing in this thesis, homotransphobia and heterosexism affect everybody. Furthermore, it can be more difficult for certain lgbti teachers to bring up the subject because it might provoke fear of rejection and vulnerability in them.

Nelson also wrote an article (2002) about the utility of queer theory in ESL teaching in which she states that the aim of queer theory is not to accomplish inclusion but to facilitate inquiry in the form of questions and open discussions in the classroom, a pedagogical strategy used in both my training courses. She asserts that an EFL/ESL perspective on queer issues in education

may be useful to educators, trainers, social service practitioners, and others who are not themselves language teachers. . . . Also, the focus on communication and culture that typifies ESL classes is of central importance across a range of educational contexts. (p. 44)

Recognising sexual identities as cultural behaviours can be very useful in ESF/EFL where social interactions can be new and different for the students in a particular (Spanish) culture or subculture. Nelson, through the lenses of queer theory, recognises sexual

identities as ‘performances’ (Butler, 1990), which are interpreted differently in different contexts. Here, in Spain, for example, two men holding hands usually reflect an act of love and affection (as in a gay couple), whilst in several Muslim countries two men holding hands can be just friends or relatives (drawn on Nelson, 1999: 382). Pupils can learn about this diversity and examine it, which is perfectly applicable in a multicultural educational context, like the Spanish one in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. This can be applied to any field of education, not only EFL teaching. Nelson (2002) also reminds us that in terms of teaching and learning:

Problematizing sexual identities does not mean presenting them in negative ways. On the contrary, it makes it possible to explore how acts of identity are not necessarily straightforward or transparent but can be complex, changing, and contested. It also acknowledges that, for a myriad of reasons, not everyone relates to a clear-cut identity category. (p. 48)

So, students and teachers can learn the purpose that certain identities hold and how they function; furthermore, problematising all sexual identities may be more ‘inclusive’ than just legitimising ‘subordinate’ ones, because it offers more possibilities for learning about and dealing with different experiences and perspectives, and straight identities would be also discussed and problematised, thus rendering the discourses more debatable and interesting to everybody (a *universalising* view). Furthermore, problematising all sexual identities can avoid the separation between ‘us’ (heterosexual people) and ‘them’ (queer people), which tends to isolate ‘subordinate’ identities and make them ‘invisible’ and ‘problematic’ in education.

Also, Cynthia Nelson (1999) discusses the use that people make of the term ‘tolerance’ arguing that aiming for tolerance presupposes intolerance, and inclusion may serve to reinforce a minority status. This aspect was not only discussed during the focus group of the first research of the pilot study, but also in the training courses where participants understood the risk of using the word ‘tolerance’ towards people (‘them’) who are considered subordinate, because it might serve to further isolate minority groups.

The ‘Western’ gender binary system, e.g. hetero/homosexual, masculine/feminine or bourgeois/proletariat, is related to cultural patterns of thinking and living and should be discussed in order to understand the relations of power and privilege that cohabit language and knowledge. In fact, one single person possesses multiple identities - often self-identified, sometimes imposed - which should always be taken into account, especially in a pedagogical context. Unfortunately, some identities are made to seem natural because,



due to social pressure, they ‘must’ be naturalised. In addition, Nelson (1999) admits preferring the term ‘sexual identity’ to ‘sexual preference’ because the latter is related to a choice, and to ‘sexual orientation’, which is considered innate.

As for EFL textbooks and teaching materials, Thornbury, an English-language teacher in Spain, admitted in 1999 that he only knew a few EFL teachers who felt represented by the values shown in EFL textbooks. He particularly criticises the total absence of any queer references in EFL coursebooks, which he believes should be transformed in order to be more self-identifiable, an opinion I wholly endorse. These textbooks only pay attention to form (Grady, 1997), which for Thornbury, is of course safe and it sells. He also asserts that in Spain

it is a requirement that coursebooks for use in schools incorporate a cross-curricular focus and deal with themes (*temas transversales*) such as human rights and sexual equality. Moreover, publishers issue their writers with detailed guidelines as to how to ‘help guard against sexual and racial stereotyping and to encourage the use of inclusive language wherever possible’ (to quote from just one of these guidelines). (p. 15)

But in reality, according to his and my experience, sexual identities are never mentioned in EFL textbooks. Nonetheless, some efforts have been made to make women and women’s roles more visible and variable in EFL textbooks. Some EFL coursebooks also show people of different ethnicities, ages and limited physical ability, but sexual minorities are still invisible (drawn on Thornbury, 1999: 15). EFL publishers never mention sexual orientation and therefore “coursebook people are never gay” (Thornbury, 1999: 15). Moreover, Thornbury argues that the word *gay* never appears in any EFL textbooks (at least up to 1999, but not much has changed since); yet it is certainly one of the most frequently uttered and used words in the English language and has also been adopted by most languages around the world, like Spanish. Thornbury wonders why queer issues are invisible in EFL textbooks given the relatively high percentage of gays and lesbians in EFL/ESL education, and why queer teachers are so invisible about their invisibility. He argues that EFL subculture seems anti-gay, or more likely, embarrassed or afraid of tackling this ‘delicate’ issue; he also criticises ‘the myth’ that homosexuality and education cannot mix. Furthermore, he observes that all minorities should be visible; but since publishers ‘can’t include’ overt gayness, he suggests they consider some covert signs to show at least a little interest in the matter. These are some examples of covert signs proposed by Thornbury: “How about a few same-sex flatmates? Unmarried uncles? Holiday postcards from Lesbos or Sitges? Two women booking plane tickets together?

Two men sharing a restaurant table or doing the dishes?” (1999: 16). He also suggested including famous ‘out’ celebrities like K.D. Lang, Ricky Martin, Martina Navratilova, Oscar Wilde, etc. However, Nelson (2009) recognises that “commercially produced teaching materials began to incorporate references to lesbian or gay characters or concerns (e.g., Clarke, Dobson and Sillberstein, 1996; Folse, 1996, which included an entire unit about gay and lesbian issues; Thewlis, 1997)” (p. 4).

Nelson (2009) also criticises that some of the earlier works presented gay themes as controversial (e.g. Rooks, 1988). Yet there some textbooks, as mentioned by Nelson above, that for example show a boy whose two parents are two men (Clarke, Dobson and Sillberstein, 1996) or include two men living together and where homophobia is described as a type of social discrimination (Thewlis, 1997). Nonetheless, these few examples do not suffice for teachers who intend to use EFL coursebooks, especially for primary school education, since there are too few queer exceptions confirming the heteronormative rule. Thus, primary school teachers and teachers of all educational levels and subject areas must find ways to integrate queer themes in classroom interactions, in the form of games, role-plays, articles, novels, songs, grammar exercises, personal narratives, short stories, films, short videos, and so on. Some EFL pedagogical activities will be offered in Chapter V-1.

#### **2.4.1 Queer pedagogical implications in English Language Teaching (ELT)**

Nelson gives some examples (1999: 381-382) of ‘pedagogies of inquiry’ based on queer theory in which gender roles and sexualities could be exploited in a grammar exercise about modal verbs (and the use of the continuous form) in ELT and which I adopted as an example in both training courses. One of these sentences used by an ESL teacher during a class discussion on gays and lesbians in the US, whilst Nelson (1999) was observing the class, was: *Those two women are walking arm in arm*, which triggered these answers from the students: “They could be loving each other. They could be lovers. They could be lesbians. They can be very friendly. They could be mother and daughter. They could be sisters” (p. 371). I find it particularly interesting to notice that some of them mentioned that the two women could be lesbians. This is a very good pedagogical opportunity started by the teacher with the collaboration of her students. Had the sentence been *That man and that woman are walking hand in hand*, surely nobody would have said ‘They could be heterosexual’, most of them would have said ‘They are a couple, husband and wife, lovers’. This is to prove, once again, that heterosexuality is taken for granted and does not

need to be mentioned. Another situation presented by the teacher was: *How about two men, 30 years old, walking down the street, they're brothers. Holding hands, yes or no?* (p. 381). The responses from the students from different countries of the world were diverse, depending on their cultural and social background, and on their experiences, although at the beginning some of them felt surprised because later they admitted that it was the first time that gays and lesbians were mentioned in that class (p. 381). In the end it was recognised by most that in the US these two men could not be brothers, but rather a gay couple, although one student from Morocco underlined that in his country two men holding hands are not read as an act related to 'sex' (p. 382). These questions and situations usually make students think critically about what people see and interpret according to their own culture and experience. This discussion was started in a natural way and by doing so they also practiced the modal verbs and their use in conjunction with the continuous form (e.g. 'They must be loving each other; they might be fighting', etc.). In fact, in this instance the teacher first introduced the grammar as a vehicle to discuss gay and lesbian issues on purpose, which I find very effective.

Moreover, Nelson (1999) claims that: "Queer theory shifts the focus from gaining civil rights to analysing discursive and cultural practices, from affirming minority sexual identities to problematising all sexual identities. Pedagogies of inclusion thus become pedagogies of inquiry" (p. 373). 'Pedagogies of inclusion' were discussed by Britzman (1995) with the aim of introducing "authentic images of gays and lesbians" (p. 158) into the school curricula, to which Nelson (1999) criticises the limitations of this proposal:

How is a 'lesbian' to be represented in curricula or materials? Which characters or characteristics will be included, which excluded? If these representations come only from the target culture, are they sufficiently inclusive? Will teachers, teacher educators, and material developers have the knowledge to be able to include sexual minorities? Will students consider such inclusions relevant to their own lives and to their needs as language learners? After inclusive references are made, what happens next? Who decides? (pp. 376-377)

According to Nelson, pedagogies of inquiry help recognise that sexual identities could be important to many different people for many different reasons because they do not only examine subordinate sexual identities but also the dominant one(s). Also, gender and sexual identities are social identities that have to be considered an integral part of the learning process and what students think and say must always be taken into account as their truth is part of their personal experience.

Moreover, Nelson (1999) reminds us that all sexual identities are interrelated and not separate; that discussing heterosexuality without discussing homosexuality is like trying to discuss ‘men’ without mentioning ‘women’. Furthermore, she stresses that one of the most important learning implications is to unveil heteronormative discourses for pedagogical purposes. So, when situations of homotransphobia or heterosexism arise in the classroom, teachers should deal with them, should take advantage of the pedagogical implications and discuss the situations with the pupils/students, as often discussed during the training courses and in the group discussion of the first project of the pilot study of this thesis. Thus, condemnation of homophobia *per se* is not enough; pupils and students must understand and critically think why it is a social injustice. Pedagogical opportunities can be used to discuss moments of confusions which might be expected when dealing with sexual identities in all pedagogical areas (Nelson, 1999).

As for student materials and research publications, Nelson (2009) finds it important to raise these questions: “Does the text portray a monosexual version of the world? Or are diverse sexual identities represented? What values or assumptions are evident vis-à-vis sexual identity? Does the text address a sexually diverse readership?” (p. 218).

In addition, primary and secondary school EFL teachers can use materials which have been adapted to the children’s level of English. They could re-write and re-interpret some stories or fairy tales, for example, transforming the main ‘heterosexual’ characters (e.g. a prince and a princess) into two men or two women and then discuss the children’s reactions and impressions of the tale, by asking them, for example, if the tale could be possible, why and why not, thus also discussing different forms of love. Other authentic pedagogical materials, which deal with queer issues for primary and secondary school EFL learners, could be films (or excerpts with subtitles in English), easy-reading novels, short-stories, songs, games, adapted articles, and so on; as demonstrated by the participants of the course given in English. Obviously, it is important, whenever it is possible, for pupils and students to learn and have fun at the same time. Nelson (1999, 2009) as well as Guijarro Ojeda and Ruiz Cecilia (2011) stress the importance of a ‘learner-centred’ language education and recognise that teachers’ and learners’ social identities are a fundamental aspect of everyday interactions in the context of families, schools, communities, leisure activities and workplaces.

Some other international studies that helped me shape my training courses and which look at sexual identities bias within foreign language teaching are, for example, those

conducted by De Vincenti, Giovanangeli and Ward (2007), Hanauer (2007), Ndura (2004) and Courtney (2007). Whilst in Spain, Guijarro Ojeda (2006) gives some examples on how to use queer issues and activities in EFL education. More examples of pedagogical implications of gender and sexual identity issues within EFL education are presented in most of the activities used in the training course given in English of this dissertation (Chapter V-1).

## **2.5 Studies on training courses in gender and sexual identities in education**

In Europe, the GLBTQ Educational Equity (GLEE) Project (Bedford, 2009), a major influence on this dissertation, was funded between 1999 and 2002 by the European Union (EU) and was created to fight against homophobia and heterosexism in education, among other types of discrimination. Through an international training team, the GLEE Project developed a Leadership Training Course for European school teachers (GLEE, 2002; Bedford, 2002 and 2009). The research project - published as an academic dissertation by Bedford in 2009 - needed three important elements to reach educational transformation: research, training and curriculum development. The importance of this project is that, unlike most research in the field, it is grass-rooted, focusing on initiatives through locally contextualised teacher facilities (Bedford, 2009). Its main goals were to:

Raise awareness of the extent and destructive effects of homophobia and heterosexism on all members of the school community. Develop strategies to combat heterosexism and homophobia in school policies, practices and curricula to create a safe learning environment for all. Work towards combating all forms of discrimination. (GLEE, 2002: 11)

It provided training courses in Europe that empowered in-service secondary as well as primary school teachers to help create safe and supportive schools for LGBT students and staff. It did not deal with EFL, but with a range of different subject areas, although the Leadership Training Course for European teachers was given in English. “Overall the aim of the research was therefore to evaluate the possibilities and limitations within the GLEE Project to foster teacher empowerment and promote GLBTQ educational equity” (Bedford, 2009: 17). I used part of the structure of the Leadership Training Course of the GLEE project to shape the training courses, as well as some of the practical activities (GLEE, 2002) during the training courses, often modified to suit my study.

There are several educational projects and LGBT organisations all over the world that offer training courses on how to treat gender and sexual identity issues and homophobia in education; the following are just some of the few examples we can find worldwide in

English: ‘Stonewall’, ‘School Out’, ‘Rainbow Teaching’ and ‘Educate and Celebrate Project’, in Britain; ‘Gala South Africa’ in South Africa; ‘Belongto’ in Ireland; ‘GLSEN’ and ‘Project 10’ in the USA; also the United Nations Human Rights Council offers guidance about discrimination towards LGBTI persons<sup>35</sup>; Diversity training on sexual orientation and gender identity issues is also offered by the US Human Rights Campaign, whilst a course on queer pedagogy is given by the project ‘Peer to Peer University’ (P2PU) also in the US. Other similar international associations offer courses on how to deal with homophobia, sexual orientation and gender identity in various languages (for example, ‘Arcigay’ and ‘Mario Mieli’ in Italy and ‘Aibai’ in China). In 2013, a twenty-hour course on juridical aspects related to sexual orientation and gender identity was offered for the first time in Italy at the University of Trento. Regrettably, Italian universities as a whole rarely integrate gender and sexual identities in their curricula.

In addition to these international associations and courses, I have read some articles on how to teach queerly which have been of some influence for my study, such as those of Bryson and de Castell (1993), Ford (2004) and Pino and Blazek (2011), to name just a few. There are also anti-bias courses and anti-bias seminars all over the world; one example is the German one called *Anti-Bias-Werkstatt*, which counters discrimination also on the basis of sexuality and gender through social biases and prejudices. This pedagogical anti-bias approach is open to all different types of discrimination and it is a constant development process.

In Spain there is the already mentioned ‘FELGTB’ organisation, the most important Spanish organism for the defence of LGBTI rights, which assembles various LGBTI Spanish associations. In 2013 it published a research study in collaboration with the Complutense University of Madrid available on-line on how to teach sexual identity issues from early childhood education in Spain<sup>36</sup>, which offers various pedagogical examples on how to counter homophobia in education. Moreover in Spain, there are also pedagogical magazines, like ‘*Cuadernos de Pedagogía*’, whose issue of October 2014 was dedicated to arts and sexual diversity, showing pedagogical examples on how to counter homophobia and accept sexual diversity in education through different forms of arts. In addition, a research thesis undertaken by Penna Tosso (2012) in Spain, deals with the possibility of

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<sup>35</sup> <http://www.ohchr.org/EN/Issues/Discrimination/Pages/LGBT.asp>

<sup>36</sup> <http://presentacionidyc.blogspot.com.es>

training secondary school teachers on sexual and emotional diversity, whose main result showed a lack of knowledge of and information about sexuality issues and a request for these teachers to be trained on these issues, thus confirming the importance of training all teachers in education, which is a priority in my dissertation.

The above are all good examples on how to use queer pedagogy and how to offer training courses on gender and sexual identity issues in education. However, I consider the training courses offered in this dissertation to be essentially innovative and necessary due to the fact that they were given in a Spanish university, thus they entered academia in Spain, and were mainly practical courses aiming at queer social transformation in education starting from the University of Granada. Moreover, the training courses in this dissertation produced new knowledge and queer pedagogical materials easily applicable to all educational disciplines and levels both in English and Spanish.





### **III Methodological approach**

#### **1 Research paradigms**

As expressed in the Introduction, this research is qualitative, although some quantitative techniques have been used to analyse the data which emerged from some parts of the instruments used in this work. This type of mixed-method approach served to facilitate my work in the search for answers. In fact, one method can increase the strength of the other, thus improving the validity of the research. This study is comprised of a pilot study and two training courses. Piloting is usually considered an essential part of quantitative research; however, in this case it served to justify the implementation of the training courses through both quantitative and especially qualitative research techniques.

I adopted a mainly action research paradigm since one of the thesis' primary objectives is to contribute to social change through training educators and university students on how to treat sexual and gender identity issues in education. Action research is closely associated with research and teaching, and hence with the researcher and the teacher (Dörnyei, 2007: 191), who, in the case of this study, was the same person. Moreover, practical activities, like those employed in the training courses, and the introduction of change into the schooling and social system are fundamental characteristics of action research (Burns, 2005). Dörnyei (2007) reminds us that there are not many action research studies available and there was a gap to fill, at least up to 2007. The biggest source of inspiration for my study on action research was the already mentioned work undertaken by Bedford (2009), who affirms that action research is related to critical theory and it is about activism for social justice and educational change in practice (p. 71-72).

Action research can be grouped into different categories; within my work I was especially interested in emancipatory action research (Carr and Kemmis, 2005), aiming at empowering the participants of the training courses to take action for “personal, institutional and societal change” (Bedford, 2009: 71). Other action research approaches are also linked to my work, such as critical, participatory, radical and collaborative (Bedford, 2009: 71). As argued by Bedford (2009), “empowering action research is problem-focused, context-specific, future orientated, and involves a bottom-up change intervention” (pp. 74-75, drawn on Hart and Bond, 1995). This statement is strictly related to my research study as I had to find answers and solutions to an initial problem by

challenging inequity and power (Bedford, 2009). The context is specific (University of Granada, Spain), it is future orientated as it aims to continue with research projects of a similar type contributing to a social change, and also to ascertain whether the participants of the training courses used their initial latent empowerment obtained in the classroom to become active and transformative teachers in their profession and in society as a whole. It could also be considered bottom-up, grassroots research in which I had different roles and I was actively involved with the participants in all the research processes. All the seminars and the workshops employed in the courses aimed at action research for a more equitable social change in favour of LGBTI identities. Allright (2005) suggests that action research in education should be called 'exploratory practice' in order to understand classroom events through reflective pedagogical practices like those adopted in my training courses. Furthermore, Richards (2003) asserts that most ESOL (EFL/ESL) teachers are natural researchers who reflect on what they do in the classroom (p. 232). Finally on research action, Dörnyei (2007) reminds us that "the most obvious place to start would be in pre-service and in-service teacher training courses" (p. 194), as is the case in this research.

This work also shares some elements of ethnographic research and, to a lesser extent, grounded theory, case study and applied linguistics research. It is ethnographic because the participants of both the pilot study and the training courses at the time of the research lived in Granada or in other parts of Andalusia, they were all native speakers of Spanish (except for one in the second course), and they all shared similar characteristics in terms of their education and upbringing. Thus, through class discussions, interactions and observation, as well as questionnaires and evaluations, I was able to study the idiosyncratic culture of the participants for between six to eight weeks for each course. This type of approach is also called *naturalistic*, which analyses the social world of a particular group of people as it is.

It was ethnographic when I analysed, in the pilot study and the first training course, primary school education in relation to EFL, and the type of schools in the second project of the pilot study. In addition, during the courses I used participant observation which is usually considered an ethnographic method for data analysis. It could also be considered ethnographic because it is mainly focused on participant meaning and knowledge, which makes it an emic (inside) study. However, it is not the typical ethnographic study in which researchers immerse themselves into a particular culture and group of people to study them. Most likely this work would be considered part of the *ethnomethodology* matrix, whose main interest is to understand how participants (sample groups) construct the social

world they live in, that is, how they create their own reality and not so much what reality is, based on the assumption that ‘truth’ is not a universal essence, but a personal perception of reality. This is more in line with the constructivist epistemology utilised throughout this research, which affirms that knowledge is constructed rather than discovered. So, although I analysed the participants and their social world, I also discovered through their oral and written discourses the type of reality they created around a specific topic, in this case, sexual and gender identity issues in EFL and general education in Spain. It is also partly grounded theory research as new practical and theoretical knowledges were produced during the courses, in particular the participants’ teaching projects and the analysis of fuzzy sex theory applied to sex and gender in education for the first time in an academic context. Moreover, in the data analysis I discovered themes and behavioural patterns which emerged from the participants’ class interactions and observations, as well as from their written and oral course evaluations; these themes and behavioural patterns were typical of those sample groups. This work could also be considered part of a case study research as I analysed a classroom intensively during the two training courses for about six to eight weeks each. Both courses generated new and practical teaching materials which may be useful for future practice. In this sense, as part of a case study matrix, *usefulness* was more important than obtaining general results in a studied topic.

Ultimately, I consider this study to be partially focused on applied linguistics research, especially for the first course given in English where strong attention was given to English-language teaching and learning. In fact, most participants on the course in English took part in it mainly because it was given in English which they practiced and improved. Moreover, language analysis - non sexist, inclusive and queer language - was of paramount importance in all the projects of this work, although this research could be considered more of a sociolinguistic work than purely linguistic. In this matrix, I carried out classroom research as well, as I examined how teaching and learning took place in the training courses through classroom interaction and observation as well as active participation.

To sum up, it is mainly action research in the classroom aiming at empowering the participants of the courses through teacher training programmes. All these research paradigms, notably action research, were chosen as suitable means to answer my research questions, especially in relation to how this work could contribute to aiming at a queer social transformation in education. Also the mixed methods adopted (see section 4 below) in this research helped me reach the desired research objectives through the pilot study and the training process.

## 2 The role of the researcher

I played a variety of roles throughout the research and training processes, therefore I was a multitasking and manifold ‘researcher’. During the pilot study my function as a researcher was to analyse the participants’ responses from their questionnaires, but I was also a moderator and facilitator for the focus group discussion of the first project. As for the training courses, I was mainly a facilitator, and this is what I like to call myself the most, as I was facilitating the participants with theory, materials as well as thought provoking and critical discussions in the classroom. I was seldom a typical teacher or a lecturer, even if I was viewed as such by some of the participants of the two courses, especially the first given in English in which linguistic knowledge was taught throughout the course. However, whilst investigating for this study and taking part actively in the training courses as a facilitator, I realised that I improved my teaching abilities, as expressed by McKay (2006):

For teachers, a primary reason for doing research is to become more effective teachers. Research contributes to more effective teaching, not by offering definite answers to pedagogical questions, but rather by providing new insights into the teaching and learning process. (p. 1)

During the courses I was also an observer, taking notes in the classroom when I could or immediately after each class, trying to remember as much as possible; this was a difficult task as I had to play the role of a teacher, facilitator and observer at the same time. I also considered myself as an active participant in the courses, as I shared my opinions and knowledge with the rest of the class and I took part in some of the workshop activities, as well as one of the participants’ oral presentations. As I was an active presence in the courses, I was not perceived as an intruder (an observer-researcher), on the contrary, participants did not realise they were part of a research study as they came to learn and be empowered, even if I did mention at the beginning of each course that it was part of my PhD research. This active involvement with the ‘students’ facilitated my task and made me forget I was also a researcher. As a matter of fact, at the time of the first training course I did not possess enough experience as a researcher. Thus, I used my teaching and facilitating skills in the classroom, which in my opinion were effective, but also made my role as a ‘researcher’ difficult to carry out, especially because I was the only ‘researcher’ in the classroom and I could not count on assistants (observing and taking notes, for example), apart from the fundamental presence of Kim Pérez during half of the sessions of

the second training course. Nonetheless, I believe that being directly involved in what participants do and say is a viable research practice (Dörnyei, 2007). In the classroom, ‘participant talk’ often exceeded ‘teacher/facilitator talk’, which was intentional as I wanted the participants to be actively engaged with all the learning and training processes.

The role I had outside the classroom was also important as I maintained constant contact with the participants sending them essential information and the theoretical texts by email. I was also an evaluator, as I evaluated the type of schools in the second project of the pilot study and the oral presentation projects of the participants of the two courses together with the rest of the participants. I played the role of interpreter as well, interpreting all the data collected from both the pilot study and the training courses; as an interpreter, I tried to find ways and connections to make the data analysed comprehensible to others (Stake, 1995: 97). In addition, I was often a translator, especially for the Spanish course, interpreting the participants’ written and oral course evaluations in Spanish, whose main ideas and contributions I had to translate into English for this dissertation. Finally, I could also be considered an instrument in the courses, as I was analysed by the participants in their course evaluations.

### **3 Instruments and data collection**

I adopted a variety of instruments which helped me collect the data and analyse them more efficiently. According to Sandelowski (2003), mixed methods, in this case mainly qualitative, serve: “a) to achieve a fuller understanding of a target phenomenon and b) to verify one set of findings against the other” (Dörnyei, 2007: 164). In my study mixed methods research help me expand the understanding of complex issues (e.g. primary school education and sexual identities) through various forms of research triangulation (see section 4 below). Furthermore and more importantly, I agree with Tashakkori and Teddlie (1998) that “the best method is the one that answers the research question(s) most efficiently” (p. 167).

In this work I employed questionnaires, which are usually considered quantitative methods, in both the pilot study and in the training courses. They were all anonymous to maintain the participants’ confidentiality and were used in the pilot study to gather personal information and sexual identity knowledge as well as collect general and more specific data from them at the beginning of the training courses. Some of the survey

questions were typically quantitative, with close-ended questions, but most were open-ended, where each participant could express their responses in a qualitative story-like manner. By doing so, I was able to answer my research questions in a more reliable way, passing from basic, close-ended and specific information (qualitative questions) to vaster, open-ended and particular information (qualitative questions and discussions) through most of the surveys' questions and also through the written and oral course evaluations.

The questionnaire is generally considered as a valuable and time reducing research instrument; it enabled me to collect a large quantity of information in a relatively short time. It was preferred to interviews, which are time consuming and do not offer the same type of anonymity, which is often requested by research participants. Furthermore, it would have been difficult to interview ten people for both of the projects of the pilot study, although interviews can give access to a deeper understanding of the issues and people examined; that is why a follow up group discussion was organised for the first project of the pilot study. Questionnaire items do not have good or bad answers, they simply elicit information from the respondents (Dörnyei, 2007: 103). However, I discovered that each question had to be formulated in a very precise manner, since ambiguous, disorganised and long questions can produce radically different answers. I had to reduce 'double-barrelled' questions (two consecutive questions in one) where possible and avoid my biased knowledge by using, for example, 'might be' instead of 'is/are' (e.g.: Why *might* English-language textbooks be heterosexist? instead of Why *are* ...). As a novice researcher, at first I did not pay attention to the numbers of questions in the survey, their length, their construction and the reaction they could provoke in the respondents. Thus, together with my thesis supervisor, it took me some time to polish all the questionnaires I used for this study. Furthermore, because of the nature of a questionnaire, respondents might answer according to what is considered 'socially acceptable' instead of replying honestly. For example, a crucial question in almost all my surveys asked whether participants considered training on sexual identities important, and almost all the participants replied 'yes'. They also admitted that training was needed. However, how many of these answers reflected what the respondents really thought? In my surveys, to avoid a simplistic and biased 'yes' and 'no' answer, I added a short question like 'Why?' or 'Please, explain'. Nevertheless, in general, survey participants do not pay enough attention even to short double barrelled questions with the consequence that the answers given might not reflect the complexity of what they really think. I therefore agree with Dörnyei (2007):

The problem with questionnaires from a qualitative perspective is that they inherently involve a somehow superficial and relatively brief engagement with the topic on the part of the respondent. Therefore, no matter how creatively we formulate the items, they are unlikely to yield the kind of rich and sensitive description of events and participant perspectives that qualitative interpretations are grounded in. (p. 105)

As a matter of fact, the instruments used throughout this research often formed a continuum of consecutive and interrelated questionnaires and focus group discussions (Dörnyei, 2007: 25).

The second project of the pilot study relied exclusively on a questionnaire in which I gave explanations of some difficult queer terminology at the beginning of the text, since there was not going to be a follow up group discussion. Nonetheless, I am satisfied with the data and information received by the respondents which allowed me to reach some plausible conclusions, especially on their type of school (see chapter IV-2). I also used an initial questionnaire at the beginning of each course on the first day of class to gather general participant information, knowledge of queer issues and reasons for joining the course. The written evaluations for the courses were also in the form of a questionnaire, which, in my view, is the most appropriate written method for evaluating a course together with a class discussion. As shown in the appendices, all the questionnaires used in this study present a title, a brief introduction and a courtesy thank you at the end of the text. The questionnaires which were sent by email were accompanied by a message which contained information on the purpose and significance of the study as well as instructions on how to complete the survey, so that participants could respond with any queries. The questionnaires used in the pilot study and the initial course questionnaires were divided into sections according to specific topics. All written questionnaires used in this project had been positively evaluated and accepted to be used by experts in the area of Education of the University of Granada who also gave me some feedback and valuable advice on how to use them.

The initial course questionnaires were followed by class discussions where we were able to clarify any queries; whilst the written course evaluations were followed by oral course evaluations so that I could receive clearer and deeper information to be discussed with the participants. As mentioned earlier, focus groups are normally used in mixed-method research, as a follow up to usually more quantitative methods; moreover, they generate new ideas and knowledge to be shared with the whole group. Focus group discussions and oral class evaluations are fundamental research techniques especially for

teacher training courses; however, they need to be prepared meticulously in order to be efficiently organised and conducted. The focus group discussion of the pilot study and the oral evaluations of the two courses were recorded, thus providing the necessary data to be transcribed and analysed accordingly.

Class observation and note taking was even harder than conducting focus group discussions and oral evaluations. This is because I was actively involved in the classroom and although I constantly observed and thought, I was also obliged to be on alert to carry out lessons, answer questions, organise the workshops and conduct class discussions. As already discussed, I was not always able to take notes in the first training course as I was the only facilitator in the classroom, but I was able to do so more easily in the second thanks to the presence of Kim Pérez, the other facilitator. Sometimes the lessons were very intense as the classroom environment allowed us to share deep and personal experiences through gender identity formation which in turn consolidated the group's relationships. This intensity is reproduced in some quotations (*low-inference descriptors*) from the participants which are transcribed in this work. It is however a shame that due to obvious circumstances I could not report all that I would have wanted to, especially for the first course in English. Nonetheless, I must admit that this limiting situation helped me with data reduction, which is a requirement in any research study.

As for the teaching methods employed during the courses, they were totally communicative, interactive and participatory, in which I (and sometimes Kim Pérez in the second course) facilitated the participants with all the information they needed allowing them to think critically, first in small groups and then holding class discussions. Workshops (practical activities) were the core teaching method used in the classroom.

Since this study is focused on two training courses, the evaluation methods need to be briefly discussed. I, together with the rest of the participants of both courses and also with Kim Pérez in the second training course, evaluated the participants' oral presentations (given in small groups) based on teaching projects aimed at countering homotransphobia, gender binarism, sexism, cissexism and heterosexism in EFL and general education. The final mark for each participant was based on class participation and mainly on their oral project presentations; participants needed to pass the course with a minimal marking system (equivalent to the British system ranging from 'C' to 'A').

Finally, participants' written and oral course evaluations were essential to understanding, through their critical thinking and discourses, of the importance and validity for such training courses, hence they were indispensable tools for my research study.



## 4 Data analysis methods

Given the variety of instruments used in this research, the data analysis methods were also diverse and, as in all qualitative data analysis, I discovered the relevant data during the process and not a priori. I used *reflexivity* as a data analysis strategy to critically reflect on my own potential biases, values and assumptions; this was important as reflexivity can affect the research process and conclusions. I also applied *relativity* to my analysis as my values of interpretation varied according to what I was analysing in terms of credibility and utility. Hence, I gave my contributions in a personal way, just like any reader of this thesis can interpret and understand the text in their unique way (Stake, 1995: 102-103). *Iteration* was employed too, as I went back and forth between data collection and analysis in a cyclical process.

In the questionnaires employed in this thesis I never applied coding as such as a method because I always tried to analyse the participants' answers in a qualitative manner; however, I used tables for processing the participants' main variables for both the pilot study and the training courses. Moreover, I tried to examine every answer given by each participant, but I also tried to concentrate on the most relevant responses, even if I considered all interventions to be somehow important, apart from very short and ambiguous answers. Being an emic (insider) perspective, my research "is concerned with subjective opinions, experiences and feelings of individuals and thus the explicit goal of research is to explore the participants' views of the situation being studied" (Dörnyei, 2007: 38).

Key issues, behavioural patterns and attitudes, as well as relevant themes that emerged from the class interactions, discussions and course evaluations were highlighted in the text as part of the results of each course. As for the video recorded focus group discussion in the first part of the first project of the pilot study, I concentrated on the key points which had emerged from the previous questionnaire and these points were addressed in a semi-controlled group discussion in which I was both moderator and facilitator and everybody had a chance to talk for about two hours. In Chapter IV-I, I wrote an extensive summary in English of this facilitating group discussion. Analysing a video recording is certainly easier than analysing a voice recording, in which it is difficult to be completely sure of who is talking. Nonetheless, Arksey and Knight (1999) only recommend the transcription of videotapes in exceptional cases and with a specific reason.

The transcription process from the final course recorded oral evaluations was not always simple; yet I did manage to transcribe all the participants' messages, giving voice to everyone. Although transcription cannot capture everything, like body language, including facial expressions and gestures, the intonation of the participants' voices helped me achieve a better understanding. Therefore, my transcriptions were relatively simple; I did not need to polish the texts much, so I kept them as close as possible to the original. Translating the relevant data from the Spanish course from Spanish into English for this dissertation was not too complex either, but if transcribing might not result in giving a full account of what participants' said, translating is even more deceiving as perfect translation of discourses is almost impossible. Nevertheless, I consider my translations into English very close to what the participants wrote and said in Spanish.

During class observation, or more likely after class observation, I reflected on what was discussed in the classroom and I made some overall judgments and took notes about class dynamics and participants' interventions. For example, in the second course, both Kim and I were critical of one of our classes for being too theoretical, although this was 'dismissed' in the next lesson by some participants who enjoyed that class very much, but we also assessed other sessions in which we felt happy about class interaction and the atmosphere in general. The analysis of the classroom narrative notes that Kim and I took during the lessons, especially during the dynamics of the workshops and their outcomes, and during class discussions, was sometimes expressed in the form of quotes from the participants which are reported in certain sessions in the section 'Course syllabus and workshops: Contents and analysis' of the second course in Spanish (Chapter V-2). In this second course, all the interventions were made in Spanish, so I had to translate them into English for this thesis. Whilst, for the first course given in English, I did not manage to recall sufficient participants' quotes in my notes; however, I gathered some of the relevant classroom interventions in the results section together with the emerging themes from the course evaluations (Chapter V-1).

As demonstrated above, I combined different data references to study the same social phenomenon (Dörnyei, 2007). This data analysis procedure is known as *triangulation* and in this work it was used to evaluate if the evidence produced converged. In other words, data source triangulation is needed to check if the phenomenon studied remains the same at other times, in other spaces, or as persons interact differently (Stake, 1995: 112). As forms of data triangulation, I employed multiple research methods which I needed to search for

confirmation of meaning and especially for additional interpretations (Flicks, 1992), as well as theories and perspectives to help me interpret the data even further. Theory triangulation was carried out by comparing queer theory with critical and transformative pedagogy and also sex and gender fuzzy set theory; it was also employed by comparing some of the results of previous research studies (e.g. Bedford, 2009; Gallardo Linares and Escolano López, 2009) with those of this research. I partially used investigator triangulation through the participants of the training courses who evaluated them and also through peer review and with my thesis directors. By using multiple types of triangulation I wanted to be sure that my meaning and interpretation were reliable and easily understood by others.

I reached data saturation and corroboration (agreement) with some of the results from both the pilot study and the training courses, which will be discussed in the concluding chapter of this dissertation. Course participant feedback, as mentioned above, was done through means of class discussions and oral course evaluations with the participants, which served me for verification and insights. Peer review was carried out with two more PhD candidates who shared their qualitative data with me; it was mainly done because I wanted to be re-assured that my data analysis and results made sense to others and to exchange our knowledge and experience. Peer review resulted to be very efficient in my case and an essential part in helping me support and validate the choice I made of data analysis methods of this research. External audit was also used with some professional people in the field of education and sexual identity issues, who were mentioned in the acknowledgments of this dissertation.

Finally, I would like to point out that qualitative research analysis is a work in progress whose final aim is closer to problem generation than problem solution (Schram, 2005). In fact, my research can offer some guidance on how to try to solve a problem by in turn problematising cis-heterosexuality and its hegemonic role in our society. Moreover, most of the qualitative data in my research ‘speak for themselves’ and do not need to be categorised, although some constant and relevant results were described and summarised into emerging themes for the course evaluations, class field notes and discussions. Unfortunately, I was not able to use computer-assisted qualitative data analysis as these programs were not available in my university faculty and, possibly, a computer-assisted analysis might have resulted too complex to apply to my research due to its training nature.

## 5 Research validity

This dissertation is principally based on qualitative research criteria. Bedford (2009) believes that for evaluating qualitative research, credibility and transferability criteria are more important than validity and reliability which are instead fundamental in a quantitative research (p. 205). Moreover, Guba and Lincoln (1985) argue that in any research “since there can be no validity without reliability, a demonstration of the former is sufficient to establish the latter” (p. 316). Whilst Patton (2001) observes that qualitative research findings come from real-world settings where the "phenomenon of interest unfolds naturally" (p. 4). In the case of this research, the real-world settings were those of the participants of the training courses and their relations to sexual identity issues (“phenomenon of interest”) in education in the Province of Granada.

Furthermore, Hoepfl (1997) asserts that qualitative researchers look for illumination, understanding and extrapolation to similar situations. This has been done by comparing my research with other similar research studies notably the GLEE Project (Bedford, 2009) and real case situations of homotransphobic bullying in schools in Granada and others mentioned by the participants during the courses. In addition, our social realities and contexts are in constant change; according to Patton (2001), a qualitative researcher should also be aware of this change and should especially take action in order to solve problems. In the case of the training courses, the growing homotransphobia, the omission of the problem and the lack of proper pedagogical action in Spanish education have given me the reason and motivation to analyse homotransphobia and counteract it by means of teacher training programmes.

For a qualitative study to be credible, researchers should try to demonstrate it and the main instrument to achieve this is the actual researcher (Patton, 2001: 14). I believe that my study is credible as confirmed by the positive course evaluations given by the participants. Furthermore, the qualitative researcher should use valid and credible research methods, like those used in this dissertation. These instruments helped me gather results both from written and oral sources. The written questionnaires and evaluation forms were more specific as they responded to precise questions, whilst the group discussions were freer forms of expression, where the participants could establish more direct contact with the other participants and the facilitator(s). Thus, as revealed by Golafshani (2003), the credibility of qualitative research depends on the ability and effort of the researcher and

“although reliability and validity are treated separately in quantitative studies, these terms are not viewed separately in qualitative research. Instead, terminology that encompasses both, such as credibility, transferability, and trustworthiness is used” (p. 600).

Moreover, Eisner (1991) asserted that a good qualitative study can help us “understand a situation that would otherwise be enigmatic or confusing” (p. 58). I hope that all the efforts the participants and the facilitator(s) have put into this study have served to clarify and understand the situation presented. As for reliability, Stenbacka (2001) reiterates that the purpose of a qualitative study is not reliability as such but rather generating understanding and that “the concept of reliability is even misleading in qualitative research. If a qualitative study is discussed with reliability as a criterion, the consequence is rather that the study is no good” (p. 552).

Consequently, the validity of research is affected by the researcher’s own perception of validity in the study and their choice of paradigm assumption (Creswell and Miller, 2000). As a result, many researchers have adopted, as mentioned earlier on, more appropriate choices in qualitative research criteria, such as quality, rigour and trustworthiness (Guba and Lincoln, 1985; Seale, 1999; Stenbacka, 2001; Davies and Dodd, 2002). Trustworthiness or credibility is what really counts the most in qualitative research, and how we trust the findings of a qualitative study depends principally on the researcher’s ability to make sense of the concepts used, the data collected, its analysis and interpretation. From this perspective, I tried to make the whole process of my research clear and open to critical thinking by the reader.

It is also generally accepted that data trustworthiness is evidenced by *transferability*, *dependability*, *confirmability* and *credibility* (Guba and Lincoln, 1985). Transferability depends on supporting the findings to be transferred to other contexts (different participants, situations, etc.) through comparisons of other studies which yield similar findings. For example, in the training courses of this dissertation queer theory was transferred through practical activities in the classroom. Dependability refers to discovering whether the same results would have been repeated with a similar study. In the case of my research this might be possible, but it is also inevitable that even with similar participants the findings would be somehow different and definitely new. In other words, reliability can only be achieved if the same results of the study were replicated; nonetheless, perfect validity can never be proven (Dörnyei, 2007: 57).

Confirmability is concerned with the neutrality of the researcher’s ideas and biases. In order to avoid my biased ideas, my work was checked by the thesis directors, external

audit and peer review, who helped me reach a consensus on the strategies employed in this work and on the research findings. Finally, to access credibility I needed to focus on the data quality, its analysis, results and conclusions to make them credible and understandable to external readers. Miles and Huberman (1994: 11-12) identified three main strategies of research credibility: data reduction, data display and drawing conclusions, which I used through triangulation in order to enhance the credibility of my research.

Furthermore, constructivist epistemology has been constantly used in this research as it views knowledge as socially constructed which may change in time and place, in line with queer theory. In any qualitative research, the objective is to "engage in research that probes for deeper understanding rather than examining surface features" (Johnson, 1995: 4), therefore I adopted constructivism to reach this aim. In addition, the constructivist paradigm and method triangulation should allow participants in a research study "to assist the researcher in the research question as well as with the data collection" (Golafshani, 2003: 604). In this study, participants shaped part of the evaluation group discussions by asking questions or raising points to discuss with the other participants and the facilitator(s), in both the English and the Spanish course.

Being action research in the classroom, I was especially interested in the feasibility of my study, which in my view has been demonstrated to be applicable and necessary if we want to help contribute to social and institutional transformation in education, and this could be transferred to other possible training courses in gender and sexual identity issues in education. Perhaps the most important achievement of this study is its capacity to generate knowledge and queer pedagogical strategies through the organisation of the courses and their materials, the participants' oral presentations and personal experiences, and the results from the participants' written and oral evaluations. This study also has the capacity to generate new problems and challenges which will be discussed in the future research possibilities (see Chapter VI-5).

## IV The Pilot Study

As already mentioned in this thesis, the research process was principally organised around a pilot study which comprises two research projects on sexual identity issues. One was undertaken by pre-service primary school English-language teachers who were studying at the Faculty of Education of the University of Granada, one of the most prestigious in the area of education in Spain. The other by in-service primary school English-language teachers who were working in different schools, principally in Andalusia.

The two sample groups of the pilot study were ‘typical sampling’ as they all dealt with primary school education and EFL teaching. This might have resulted in generalised answers representing primary school pre-service and in-service EFL teachers in the province of Granada (mainly), yet it is unsafe to assume that the results obtained would have been the same with other similar groups. In other words, these results could be representative of these focus groups, but other comparable participants might have given slightly different responses.

As research instruments, for the first project I used a questionnaire (part one) and a recorded group discussion (part two). For the second project I used another questionnaire which included an evaluation on the type of school the teachers worked in. These research projects were the first studies I undertook for this doctoral thesis. Since it was the beginning of my journey, the queer language I used in both projects was more limited than that employed in the training courses. This is because at first my knowledge of gender and sexual identity language was more limited and I also wanted to keep it easier for the sample groups to understand, therefore I tried to use a more common terminology. In the first project I wanted to find out their knowledge of some queer-related language and issues from a questionnaire, whose results were exploited in the follow up focus group discussion. Whilst in the second project I gave some brief definitions on the questionnaire itself (lgbti, queer, heteronormativity and heterosexism) to facilitate their answers; that is why in this pilot study I did not use terms like ‘cissexual’, ‘pansexual’, or ‘cis-heterosexual’, and I employed the more commonly understood ‘homophobia’ instead of ‘homotransphobia’.

The main objective of this pilot study was to demonstrate the need for training courses on gender and sexual identity issues for pre-service and in-service primary school English-language teachers, even if in my view, its results could be applied to any subject area and

educational level, as demonstrated by both the training courses that I will present in this dissertation (Chapter V). I would like to point out here that the research hypothesis for this pilot study aims at verifying whether the participants would find training on gender and sexual identities in EFL education necessary for their professional development.



# **1 Research study on sexual identity issues with pre-service primary school English-language teachers**

## **1.1 Presentation and data collection**

Six ‘men’ and four ‘women’<sup>37</sup>, all Spanish nationals, agreed to participate voluntarily in the study in the Spring of 2010 and completed the anonymous questionnaire sent by email. In table 1 on next page, ‘women’ are categorised with ‘W’ and ‘men’ with ‘M’. In my learning, teaching and research experience, it is mostly women who follow this type of study and profession, so it was interesting for me to analyse six men’s opinion on the subject. The follow up group discussion was attended by seven out of the ten original participants. Since the thesis supervisor and I could select the participants, we tried to get a balance between ‘women’ and ‘men’; we considered this an important element but absolutely not essential. In fact, this ‘gender balance’ was not possible for the training courses presented in Chapter V.

Data collection and analysis for the questionnaire started immediately after receiving the completed surveys and it took me a couple of months to organise it. The video recorded focus group session was analysed by listening to and watching the two-hour discussion held in Spanish which was recorded onto DVD (Appendix 11, available in printed form of the thesis or on request at the Faculty of Education of the University of Granada). A comprehensive account into English of the most important contributions given by the participants in the group discussion is presented in section 1.3. The translation into English of the participants’ quotes and contributions from both the questionnaire (when they replied in Spanish) and the group discussion is mine. I will next analyse the data collected from the questionnaire (part one) and the group discussion (part two) and their relevant results.

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<sup>37</sup> I consider ‘Women’ and ‘Men’ or ‘Female’ and ‘Male’ gender characteristics enclosed in our imposed social binary system. I use the inverted commas because not everybody considers themselves to be either women or men, or masculine or feminine. For research purpose statistics I have used ‘women’ and ‘men’ or ‘female’ and ‘male’, but always with a critical eye, and when possible, in accordance to how participants defined themselves.

## 1.2 Part one: The questionnaire

The questionnaire (see Appendix 1) was organised into four main sections: A. Personal questions; B. Knowledge of queer issues; C. Sexual identity issues in primary school education; D. Queer issues in EFL primary education.

I formulated some of the questions myself, while others were drawn from different sources and previous international questionnaires, often modified to suit the purpose of my study (Littlejohn, 1992; Harris, Nightingale and Owens, 1995; Herek, 1998; Nelson, 1999).

Except for section A in which I have written a summary, the other sections are presented with each question followed by the participants' responses and my own discussion. Some of the English terminology and concepts used in the questionnaire could have been perceived as difficult to understand. However, it was not my intention to render it complicated, rather, I wanted to assess their general knowledge of queer issues and relevant terminology such as straight, heteronormativity, queer theory and lgbti. Some of their answers were similar, so that I could draw some general conclusions, but others were unique and were also taken into account. The questionnaire was written in English, but participants were allowed to reply either in English or in Spanish in order to express themselves more freely.

### 1.2.1 Data analysis and discussion

#### *A. Personal information*

<b>GENDER</b>	<b>AGE</b>	<b>SEXUAL IDENTITY</b>	<b>RELIGIOUS</b>
<b>1. W1</b>	21	Not fixed. Possibly bisexual	Yes (Catholic)
<b>2. W2</b>	21	Heterosexual	No
<b>3. W3</b>	23	Not clearly defined. Mainly heterosexual	Yes, but not follower
<b>4. W4</b>	23	Heterosexual	Yes (Catholic)
<b>5. M1</b>	25	Heterosexual	No
<b>6. M2</b>	30	Not fixed. Mainly heterosexual	Agnostic
<b>7. M3</b>	30	Heterosexual	Not much
<b>8. M4</b>	31	Heterosexual	No
<b>9. M5</b>	32	Not fixed. Possibly bisexual	No, but spiritual
<b>10.M6</b>	33	Homosexual	No

**Table 1. Participants' main variables**

For this section responses have been summarised. They all stated that they had queer friends or relatives, and their attitude towards queer people was described as positive. In previous research (Hereck, 1998), it was demonstrated that people who do not have queer friends or relatives tend to underestimate homophobia and heterosexism and have more

negative attitudes towards lgbti people. The cohort group showed supportive attitudes towards the issue and therefore the results of this study might reflect this. Their educational background was relatively high since they had all studied at university level.

In relation to their sexual identity, as shown in Table 1, only half of the cohort admitted being purely heterosexual, whilst just one person considered himself to be gay (M6). The other four could not define their sexual identity precisely. The religious participants did not express more negative opinions on sexual identities than the non religious ones. All the participants felt that discussing queer issues at primary school was pertinent to their field of work.

### ***B. Knowledge of queer issues***

#### *1. What do 'queer' (as in queer theory) and 'lgbti' mean? And what are heterosexism and heteronormativity?*

Generally, all the participants understood the meaning of the acronym 'lgbti', although the term intersexual (i) was unfamiliar to eight of them. On the other hand, seven did not know the meaning of 'heterosexism' and 'heteronormativity', only W1, W3 and W4 knew what 'queer' meant in the context of queer theory. M1 and M4 recognised the term 'queer' only as a synonym for lgbti, whilst W4 criticised queer theory as follows:

For me queer theory does not make sense because gays, lesbians, transsexuals, etc. are not actors that play a role during their life and they don't perform their identity as a social construction because, in my opinion, people with different sexualities have always existed, but in the past they were not accepted whilst nowadays, in our democratic society, it is easier for them to be more visible, and that's why there is a polemic against homosexuality.

This statement denotes good critical thinking and may be true to a certain extent. However, in accordance to Butler (1990) and Nelson (2009), I find more useful pedagogically to read sexual identities as social identities that change in time and place which might be easier and probably more appropriate to discuss and apply to primary school English-language teaching.

#### *2. Is it easy to identify someone as gay/straight/lesbian in Spain, in Granada?*

Five participants observed that it is easy to identify someone as gay and a bit less as lesbian, even if they admitted that sometimes these identifications are the result of stereotyping; five argued that they cannot really tell if someone is gay or lesbian, or they can only guess it from their gestures and/or behaviours. Surprisingly, nobody mentioned if it is easy to identify a straight person. This question was asked on purpose, as I wanted to

know whether they would pay attention to the word ‘straight’ and would try to include it in the discussion. It seems a common pattern to avoid talking about heterosexuality when discussing sexual identities, as heterosexuality, according to heteronormativity, cannot be problematised or even discussed. However, educators need to be aware that excluding heterosexuals from gender discourses reinforces their status and subordinates all other sexual identities. The outcome of this answer will be addressed in the group discussion.

### *3. What do you think caused your ‘heterosexuality’?*

This question was created by Martin Rochlin in 1972<sup>38</sup> to mock the typical questions heterosexual people ask homosexual people. Five participants believed that their ‘heterosexuality’ was an imposed social model. The only openly gay participant (M6) wrote: “My imposed heterosexuality was caused by a bad education system and religion”, while W1 and M2 thought that it was due to childhood environment and society in general. Only W4 and M4 believed that their heterosexuality was caused by their attraction to the opposite sex. In this question heterosexuality was made explicit and some of the participants recognised its imposed social role, which could be easily discussed in primary school English-language teaching as part of social identities, as these are easily identified by everyone and do exist all over the world, even if they may be read differently depending on the culture.

## ***C. Sexual identity issues in primary school education***

### *1. Have you ever experienced cases of homophobic bullying at primary school?*

Six participants had witnessed it, but had never experienced it personally. M2 stated that when he witnessed homophobic bullying, teachers’ reactions were always limited to a mild reproach. He also admitted that some parents encouraged homophobia. This was confirmed by W1 who affirmed that: “Teachers and adults in general do not react when faced with homophobic bullying”; M5 felt that this lack of reaction from primary school teachers is based on the fact that they have highly entrenched ideas about traditional gender roles. M1 observed that when he witnessed incidents of homophobia he tried to avoid being bullied and when teachers intervened they reproached both victim and bully. The participants’ responses underline the importance of recognising cases of homophobia and what action teachers should take. For the purpose of this research, it was important for these ten training teachers to be aware of the devastating effects of homophobic bullying in

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<sup>38</sup> <https://libcom.org/library/heterosexual-questionnaire>

education as discussed in the Introduction of this study. M6 argued that victims of homophobic bullying should react and face the problem in order to avoid feeling isolated and attempting suicide. In my view, some of these victims lack the energy and strength to deal with their frustration and desperation. It is therefore necessary for all teachers to be alert to vulnerable pupils, to respect them and empathise with them if they are not psychologically as strong as others, and find ways to help and support them.

*2. Have you ever received any kind of training in how to deal with homophobia at primary school? If yes, where and how?*

Nobody admitted having received any training. Only M2 stated that homophobia was discussed, though superficially, at university. These responses are fundamental as they prove that primary school English-language teachers in Spain generally do not receive any kind of training in how to counter homophobia and heterosexism.

*3. Would you consider this type of training important for your professional development? Why?*

All the participants replied affirmatively, mainly because they did not want to be unprepared when and if these issues come up and also because they considered them as part of human rights and social (in)justice, and thus should be included in the explicit school curriculum. Crucially, their answers confirm the hypothesis I predicted for this pilot study.

*4. Do you think it is easier to discuss sexual identity issues with children or adults? Why?*

Five participants believed it is easier with adults, four with children and for W2 there is no difference. M6 observed that adults are more difficult to ‘manipulate’; whilst W1 objected to discussing sexual identity with primary school pupils as children “would express their family’s views on the subject rather than their own opinions”; this might be true, but, in my opinion, school peer groups can also be very influential. W3 thought that children are unable to contribute to sexual discourses in the same way as adults do, since the latter have more experience; M1 argued that children at primary school do not have sexual impulses or desires and felt that children would accept what the teacher says unquestioningly without a true understanding of the issue. However, as discussed in this dissertation, I believe this is a myth since children are capable of critical thinking on issues related to sexual identities (Chesnoff and Cohen, 1996; Sears, 1999). W4, who worked in a Catholic school at the time she took part in this survey, was concerned about parental reaction and

stated that: “The strong legislation in favour of children’s rights could be used against us by parents at any time”. As partly expected, half of the cohort believed it was easier to discuss sexual identities with adults than children and the same half of the cohort, according to their answers in the questionnaire, perceived children as ‘asexual beings’. However, Sears (1999) reminds us that children *are* sexed beings and Chesnoff and Cohen (1996) demonstrated that they possess critical spirit and are willing to know more about sexual and gender identities. In order to achieve this, all children’s view on the subject should be heard and shared with the rest of the class to promote critical thinking. Furthermore, it is important to highlight that when we treat sexual identities in primary education we do not usually discuss sexual acts, but rather social representations in a specific context.

*5. Would you worry about parental reaction if you considered addressing queer issues?*

Five participants replied affirmatively. However, W3 argued that she would not be worried about it as she felt that parents should be aware that queer issues need to be addressed for educational purposes. W4 was very worried about losing her job due to parental reactions. M1 wrote: “Parents can be more dangerous than children when they complain and some parents would not approve of their children discussing sexuality issues at school”. In my opinion, in order to try to solve this problem, educators should request parents’ permission to address queer issues and involve them in the process, or attempt to persuade those not in favour of discussing these issues in education that homophobia and heterosexism are social injustices and forms of discrimination which, like others, should be dealt with in school from an early age. To do this, I believe that teachers and educators need allies such as colleagues and headteachers as well as supportive legislation.

*6. Have you ever discussed queer issues in a class, with an individual student or with your teachers?*

Seven participants admitted having discussed queer issues at school or university, but only superficially, and five had discussed them with their teachers ‘in a normal way’, which sounds promising. M1 wrote that he brought up the subject with schoolmates and teachers because “I have always been interested in the ‘culture vs. nature’ debate”. In his view, there is a balance between culture and nature which are complementary rather than necessarily opposed. Whilst M2 described a queer pedagogical situation:

During my training period the kids asked me if I had a girlfriend, I said no, I said I had a boyfriend. They told me that I did not look gay. For me this is a way to make them aware, especially because they appreciated and admired me.

Like most adults, most children assume that everyone is heterosexual. However, this participant broke this imposed rule by stating that he had a boyfriend. This queer situation could be exploited pedagogically by asking the pupils, for example, what looking gay and looking straight actually mean. This incident also shows that pupils in Spain have their own knowledge of what is queer and what is not. According to Nelson (1999), English-language teachers should be able to create queer pedagogical opportunities for discussion, like the one just mentioned, rather than merely wait for them to occur.

#### ***D. Queer issues in EFL primary education***

##### *1. Why is (or is not) discussing lgbti issues in primary school EFL education important?*

Everybody believed it to be important, but half of the cohort would discuss lgbti issues only in the last two years of primary school. W1 thought it important to normalise queer issues in primary education because children need to be able to discuss them freely. W3 argued that addressing these issues could prevent future problems amongst the students; M5 believed they should be treated just like other social problems, like abortion. M1 underlined the importance of discussing them in education because they are not normally tackled at home; whilst M4 observed that children need training in how to face sexuality issues whenever these come up, and W4 expressed worries if the school is Catholic. Their answers are in line with what queer theory advocates: inclusion and discussion of queer issues in education in order to make children and educators aware of a social injustice that is not usually mentioned or dealt with. There is a recurrent fear of discussing sexual identities in Catholic schools. Although this is somehow understandable, not all Catholic schools and school staff are against the idea of treating homophobia as a social injustice or dealing with it in different social contexts, thus creating a safe space for discussion. This was justified in the second training course presented in this thesis by a teacher working in a Catholic primary school.

##### *2. Would you integrate lgbti themes and discussions into the existing primary school curriculum for English-language teaching? If yes, how?*

M1 would prefer to do it in secondary education, or in the last two years of primary school. W1 and W2 would also do it from the last two years of primary school using games. W3

would do it as soon as possible in a social context, showing photos and videos. M2, M4 and M5 would address it through cross-curricular themes or when the issue comes up spontaneously; M3 and M6 when discussing family models, whilst W4 would try to avoid it altogether in a Catholic primary school. As demonstrated before, participants seemed very cautious about treating sexuality issues with children; there is a generalised belief that children are supposed to be more aware and ready to deal with the issue in the last two years of Spanish primary school (aged 9-10) or in secondary school. As expressed by W3, I believe there is a need to introduce queer issues as soon as possible as part of social injustice and discrimination, like different ethnicities or different abilities, since it is at an early age that children learn homophobia, and as they learn it, they can also learn to counter it by means of critical discussions in the classroom as demonstrated by Chesnoff and Cohen (1996).

*3. How is 'family' usually represented in a primary school EFL textbook? What vocabulary do children learn? What don't they learn?*

All participants agreed that 'family' is always portrayed as typically heterosexual with mum and dad, and son and daughter, all fulfilling 'traditional' gender roles, thus admitting that primary school EFL textbooks are heterosexist. M3 argued that even young boys are portrayed as attracted to young girls and vice-versa. They also observed that the vocabulary pupils learn reflects this: mother, father, son, daughter, nephew, niece, grandparents, etc. However, M1 went even further by stating that: "Not only does exclusion affect families of homosexual parents, but also other family members, such as step-fathers, step-mothers, ex-husbands, unmarried couples, and single parents, who are not normally considered acceptable or appropriate for discussions with children". I find this remark to be a very interesting and logical. Finally, W2 admitted that "nothing has changed since I was a child, as nowadays pupils learn the same vocabulary in English that I also learnt". Learning new queer terminology from this questionnaire might have made the participants more aware of the heterosexism present in primary school English-language textbooks and the typical vocabulary that pupils learn, which has not changed in current EFL textbooks even if our society has changed. The participants made it clear that a more diverse vocabulary is needed, especially to avoid exclusion. In my opinion, teaching and using appropriate language and queer terminology in EFL education is of paramount importance and should be done as early as possible.



### 1.2.2 Results

I have identified ten relevant themes emerging from the ten participants' responses which will be more deeply discussed in the follow up focus group session:

1) Half of the cohort considered themselves not to be exclusively heterosexual. 2) Intersexuality, heteronormativity, heterosexism and queer were terms unknown by seven participants. 3) Eight out of ten participants believed that their 'heterosexuality' was a social imposition. 4) Nobody had received training on how to treat sexual identity issues in EFL primary school education, and they all believed this type of training to be important for their professional development. 5) Nobody described a straight person, as if the word were invisible in one of the questions. 6) Half of the cohort believed that it would be easier to discuss sexuality issues with adults than children who were somehow considered as asexual beings. 7) Half of the cohort feared parental reactions if they had to treat sexual identity issues in their school. 8) They all believed that discussing LGBTI issues in EFL primary school education is important. 9) Half of the cohort thought that treating LGBTI issues at the beginning of primary school would be problematic. 10) All participants recognised the presence of heteronormativity in EFL teaching materials at primary school level.

Though the participants' answers were generally encouraging, I would have liked to know, for example, the reasons they found this type of training important for their professional development in more detail, since sometimes in a questionnaire people might answer in a biased and 'socially acceptable' way. This answer together with the lack of training that they all expressed is fundamental for this pilot study as it confirms its hypothesis. Another limitation to the use of this questionnaire is that the cohort decided to participate voluntarily and seemed to have already some interests in queer issues. It is possible that another sample group might have given different points of view. However, participants did not seem to possess sufficient knowledge to be able to counter homophobia and heterosexism in primary school EFL teaching and, most importantly, they expressed need and motivation to change this; thus these findings should be considered sufficiently representative.

The questionnaire adopted in this study is just the first step for gathering primary raw data. That is why, as a follow up step, a discussion was held with the same cohort group in order to clarify some of their statements, to debate the ten key issues which had emerged in the questionnaire in more depth, and to discuss a possible application of queer pedagogy to primary school EFL education.

### **1.3 Part two: The focus group discussion**

The participant cohort for the video recorded group discussion consisted of four ‘men’ and three ‘women’, who also filled in the questionnaire. Thus, this is a continuation of the same research, although three of the original participants could not attend the semi-controlled group discussion. It was held entirely in Spanish because participants did not feel confident enough to speak in English and by doing so I managed to gather more reliable information. The key topics discussed in the results from the questionnaire were devised to elicit deeper information from the participants of the group discussion. One participant contacted me after the discussion and told me that she felt uneasy during the focus group as she did not feel comfortable to disclose her sexual identity in front of the other participants. This is probably a limitation to this type of research method, but I was grateful that she made a strong contribution during the discussion.

The focus group discussion was partly controlled as I elicited some of the answers and challenged the participants to deconstruct their ideas and opinions through critical thinking. It took place two months after the reception of the questionnaires in May 2010. As far as I know, it was the first time that a filmed discussion on sexual identities with pre-service primary school EFL teachers was used as a research method in Spain.

#### **1.3.1 Data analysis and discussion**

The seven participants all seemed at ease in front of the camera, especially after some time; Dr Guijarro Ojeda filmed the group discussion while I conducted it. It lasted about two hours (Appendix 11 on DVD, available in printed form of the thesis or on request at the Faculty of Education of the University of Granada).

I started the talk by explaining its main purpose and that I would be making comments and asking some questions related to their answers and main results from the questionnaires. I mentioned that half of the cohort did not consider themselves purely heterosexual. Their sexual identities were not disclosed, despite the fact that the only gay participant talked freely about his sexuality and another man talked about his bisexuality. Four participants were surprised to hear that only half of the cohort considered themselves to be exclusively heterosexual according to their answers in the questionnaire. All the seven participants understood the hegemonic influence of heterosexuality in our culture; yet the term ‘queer’ appeared to be problematic as five participants did not really

understand its meaning as in queer theory. However, everybody understood it as an umbrella term for lgbt persons. Only one participant knew the meaning of ‘intersexual’, who commented that intersexual people are made completely invisible in our society. Another participant argued that sexual identities have always existed in history, which we briefly discussed and partially agreed with, and concluded that identities, as we currently understand them and in line with queer theory, are social constructions that change over time and space (Butler, 1990; Nelson, 2009). During our conversation, sex and sexuality were often confused, so I asked the group whether some people could consider themselves gay or straight without having had any previous sexual contact. They all agreed that this was possible and this partly clarified the fact that sexuality is not exclusively related to sexual acts.

In the questionnaire, seven out of ten participants did not know the terms ‘heterosexism’ and ‘heteronormativity’. During the group discussion these terms were analysed in depth and each participant offered some examples of heterosexism and heteronormativity from their life experience. Eventually, the participants understood the terms, particularly because of their strict relation to sexism. Homophobia was also discussed and was understood by all as discrimination towards and rejection of lgbt persons.

The participants also agreed that heterosexuality is not generally recognised as problematic in our society at large, that it is mostly taken for granted, and never discussed in terms of power relations and social hegemony. I pointed out that in the questionnaire nobody mentioned whether it was easy to identify a straight person in Spain (in Granada). I also commented that six out of ten participants in the questionnaire did not attempt to say whether it is easy to identify lesbians and trans people either, thus reinforcing the assumption that lesbians, trans and intersexual people are still invisible in education. Four participants argued that they found it difficult to discuss and describe heterosexuality because it is considered ‘normal’. Yet they all seemed surprised to hear that the word ‘straight’ was unnoticed in the questionnaire. I said that discussing the hegemonic role of heterosexuality is fundamental for queer and critical theory, since talking only about lgbt persons is first of all exclusive and, secondly, it might not consider the power relations surrounding sexual identities (Foucault, 1976).

When we discussed the question ‘What caused your ‘heterosexuality’?’ from the questionnaire, four participants admitted being surprised by it. They observed that normally people ask what caused one’s homosexuality, but heterosexuality is not usually

problematised. They all appreciated the question because it helped five of them realise that their heterosexuality was imposed on them since birth as a social model. Moreover, six participants agreed that, like the terms 'men' and 'women', sexual identities are social constructions. Therefore, sexual identities were recognised as social constructs, although one participant argued that there is also a natural component (our orientation). Another participant, stating that "the family decides the roles when we are born: girls with pink and boys with blue, etc." was underlying the presence of heteronormativity and fixed gender roles imposed on children. One participant added: "These fixed roles are reinforced at primary school"; whilst another considered homosexuality as 'normal'. However, the other participants recognised that it is not considered as such in our society. As a result, participants were asked what they meant by 'normal' such as in a 'normal family'. One participant observed that "the term 'normal' reflects the values imposed by the Catholic Church". For two others 'normal' meant what is most common. We finally agreed that often the most common things are not considered 'normal' *per se*, but they are made to be the norm. In fact, another participant commented: "It is a case of hierarchy in which heterosexuality is considered superior".

At this stage participants took the floor and five of them believed that sexual identities are viewed distinctively according to one's culture and this could create conflicts in the classroom, due to students' differing religions and cultural origins. I told them that it is important to recognise that conflicts can also emerge in an EFL class (to which they all agreed), and teachers must be prepared to face them. I reminded them that Nelson (1999, 2009) claims that homophobic epithets should be used as pedagogical opportunities. For example, I commented that if a child comes from a culture in which homosexuality is considered a sin, as in most religions, and a crime, as in many countries of the world, we can listen to what they have to say and compare their knowledge and experience with the rest of the class. All participants observed that this could be easily achieved in an English-language class.

One participant argued that "sexual identities should not be discussed at primary school, as primary school pupils are not aware of them and are not interested in the subject". Another participant strongly disagreed with this statement, suggesting that teachers should be prepared to clarify any doubts pupils may have and deal with sexualities by using their knowledge or lack of it. In addition, five out of ten participants in the questionnaire admitted that they were afraid of parents' reactions if they decided to discuss sexual

identities in their class. In this facilitated discussion, four participants said to be concerned about losing their job because of parents' reactions. However, the other three argued that discrimination towards lgbt persons should be addressed at primary school, like any other social injustice, and that it should be part of the school curriculum. One participant commented: "It would be vital to talk to parents about the importance for their children to learn about different sexualities".

During this part of the discussion, six participants compared homophobia with racism and considered that both should be dealt with at school, although three said that discussing homophobia could be more difficult and problematic. In fact, one participant said: "Talking about racism does not affect Spanish parents as their children are and will be Spanish, but discussing homosexuality could be a problem as some parents might think that their children could 'turn gay'". This intervention was ascertainable, because there are particular sectors of our society that believe that discussing homosexuality is part of a 'homosexual agenda' in which students are 'manipulated' in order to be convinced that they may also be or become homosexuals, ignoring the fact that we were all imposed a 'heterosexual agenda' from birth. Furthermore, in the discussion I commented that, for example, white teachers discussing racism are not usually harassed for being white, and men discussing women's issues are not normally harassed for being men, whilst teachers discussing lgbt issues might be harassed by students, colleagues and parents on the assumption that they might be 'gay', as if being 'gay' were a crime. Men, especially if they are effeminate, are the easiest targets, even if they might only be perceived as gay.

If we do not teach that our gender and sexual identities are diverse and they are all acceptable because we are all different, people in general will not understand that variety and difference are marks of human richness.

With regard to sexual orientation or identity, I stressed that the main issue that we need to work on and counteract is the idea that 'femininity' is considered inferior and that 'masculinity', on the contrary, even when expressed by violence, is considered superior, a message constantly reinforced by all possible means in our 'Western' society. I explained that this could cause a crisis of identity when people are perceived to exit the heteronormative matrix, even if they are (cis) heterosexuals, and I especially include 'men' in the discourse, who have to conform to a social role model which has also been imposed on them and that at times they find difficult to accept, often without being aware of it, due

to the power and privilege they have been granted. This explains even further that homotransphobia and heteronormativity affect everybody.

In order to make participants understand that parents might not be always an obstacle, I mentioned a research study undertaken in Spain and discussed in Chapter II, in which parents were contacted beforehand and told about the surveys on sexuality issues that the researchers of the study wanted to use with secondary school students from the age of 11. The majority of these parents were in favour of such initiative, as they admitted not being able to discuss these issues with their children. All the participants were surprised by this finding.

In relation to queer pedagogical situations, I commented what a participant had written in his questionnaire, that is, during his training period he told his pupils that he was gay and they replied that he did not look gay. This participant intervened voluntarily in the discussion and said that pupils were surprised by his answer, but that they also seemed to know who could be gay and who was probably not, according to general social norms. I asked the group what follow up question(s) we could have asked these pupils; to which one participant commented: “Children should be asked to describe what a gay person is for them”. I responded that this was a perfect queer pedagogical opportunity and children should have also been asked what a straight person was for them, as heterosexuality is often considered as ‘natural’ and unquestionable.

One participant, who was teaching in a Catholic school and had filled in the questionnaire but could not attend the focus group, admitted that she would avoid any reference to queer issues in her classroom. In the discussion, six participants in a similar situation identified with her fear of losing their job. Yet one participant objected:

I would discuss sexuality issues even if I worked in a Catholic school, as part of human rights and multiculturalism, and I would try to convince parents and headteachers about the importance of including sexual identity issues in the classroom just like any other social injustice.

Participants were then asked how EFL textbooks could be used in a pedagogical way, pointing out that queer identities are never present, at least not in the textbooks which I had analysed. Four participants considered inclusion, to which I wondered how it should be done. I suggested that children should think critically as to why queer identities are not present and that this should be discussed with the entire class rather than just trying to include queer individuals; five participants agreed. Moreover, six participants argued that EFL textbooks could be queerly used by asking the pupils if they know of other forms of

family units and, therefore, discuss what is missing in the textbooks and create a general debate on the issue. I thanked the participants for their suggestions and reminded them that the majority of primary school children are bound to know some queer people among their families or parents' friends or from the television (Chesnoff and Cohen, 1996).

The sample group was then asked to provide some examples of queer pedagogical activities that could be applied to their English class at primary school level. The following are the most salient examples: in group work, girls and boys can work together, thus avoiding typical roles for boys and girls (role play); in reading activities, girls can read parts supposed to be for boys and vice versa; use of songs, films and documentaries - those with clear queer content or gender ambiguity with gender variant/nonconforming minors -; exploit queer and non-queer children's literature; talk about different family units; talk about queer issues when discussing homophobia, or use traditional tales but change the gender roles.

It must be stated that the participants were highly motivated and wanted to learn more about pedagogical implications underlying the fact that they had never received any kind of training in how to deal with queer teaching strategies. I also wanted to find out why, for half of the survey's cohort, children were perceived as asexual entities. One participant commented: "Children are seen as asexual beings because they do not like sex and do not seem to possess any knowledge of sexuality"; this would appear to be a common remark. However, I pointed out that most children know that being homosexual is considered inferior and deviant (Chesnoff and Cohen, 1996) and they have also learnt the gender binary system (boy/girl, heterosexual/homosexual, and so forth) from their first days of life and tend to follow it as a general norm, and also that sexual stimuli start very early in our lives (Herdt and Boxer, 1993). After a short debate on the issue, five participants agreed that primary school children possess some knowledge of sexual identity issues and that they are sexed beings; thus admitting that they should not be considered 'asexual'.

In discussing other possible activities which primary school teachers could adopt and which should be relevant to everyone, one participant argued that "sexual minorities are a minority in number and this is why they are given less space and importance". I replied that this is possible; however, in terms of quantity, this might be counterproductive. It is likely that women outnumber men in the world, yet they are a social minority. Hence, it should not be acceptable to think that LGBTI persons should receive different, usually

inferior, treatment simply because they are not heterosexual and they are fewer in number, to which they all agreed.

Towards the end of the talk, we analysed some queer pedagogic implications offered by Nelson (1999, 2009) in which, for example, two women holding hands and two men holding hands in the street were discussed. Five participants admitted that, in our society ('Western', Spanish), two women holding hands in the street could be lesbians, but they are more likely considered to be friends or family members. This kind of activity is highly motivating, because pupils are encouraged to think about different answers for the same situation and this can be applied to multiculturalism. On the other hand, all participants agreed that two men holding hands in the street in Spain would be a gay couple, whereas, for example, in a Muslim country, they could be brothers, friends or relatives. The participants enjoyed these examples and considered them constructive for their teaching purposes. They could also recognise the connection between the social aspect of the activity and the study of English grammar: the use of modal verbs as in "they *could* be friends, they *might* be sisters, they *must* be lovers, etc." (Nelson, 1999: 371).

At the end of the discussion, all the participants emphasised their lack of preparation and training in how to treat queer issues. Since they all admitted that discussing sexual identity issues with primary school pupils was very important and relevant to their job, they were concerned about not having sufficient skills and knowledge in this area, something that could negatively influence their working career. One participant strongly commented: "There is a lack of information, we filled in many questionnaires, many questions, but we do not receive any information". This participant explained that queer issues are never approached and that teachers have to deal with sexual identity dilemmas which often arise at primary school level.

All seven participants admitted that multiculturalism and racism were discussed in their teacher training period at university; however, there was no or hardly any discussion on sexual identities and there was no effort to make the connection between homophobia and other types of social discrimination. I commented that their responses and requests were similar to those of the research carried out at the University of Malaga (Gallardo Linares and Escolano López, 2009) in which both university students and teachers asked for professional training on how to deal with sexual identity issues in education. All seven participants seemed really enthusiastic about the talk and confirmed the need to discuss sexual identity issues from primary school level onwards, and the need for professional training courses.



### 1.3.2 Results

From the filmed focus group I have summarised nine essential themes which emerged from the discussion:

1) According to the seven participants, heterosexuality is not recognised as problematic in our society and four admitted that it is difficult to talk about it because it is considered 'normal'. 2) Six participants agreed that sexual identities are social constructs like 'man' and 'woman'. 3) Five recognised discussions on sexual identities to be conflictive between different cultures. 4) They all agreed that discrimination towards lgbti persons is a social injustice and should be treated as such in primary education. 5) They all understood the importance of treating homophobic and heterosexist situations as queer pedagogical opportunities. 6) Fear of parental reactions, if they decided to treat sexuality issues in their EFL class, was confirmed by five out of seven participants. 7) Six admitted avoiding discussing sexuality issues if they worked in a religious (Catholic) school. 8) They all gave good examples of queer pedagogic activities for EFL at primary school level. 9) They were all concerned about their lack of knowledge of sexual identity issues in EFL primary education and requested professional training.

These results revealed a commitment and willingness on the part of the participants to become professional, sensitive, understanding and empathetic primary school teachers. Pedagogy should involve rigorous critique of our society, why and how we have different identities, and not merely attempt to include, for example, 'subordinate' sexual identities without discussing why they have been categorised as such. Thus, this conversation helped us discuss more in depth themes emerged from the questionnaire that needed to be clarified. All the seven participants showed a high level of awareness of the consequences of homophobic bullying on the young victims and were keen on finding solutions to this educational and social problem. They also recognised the absence of queer-friendly materials in their English-language teaching and learning experience and hoped for more progressive and open-minded legislation and schoolbook publishers.

Their responses seemed in line with queer theory and with its feasible application to EFL at primary school level. However, their lack of preparation and training is likely to lead to unprofessional teaching practices and a failure to respond adequately to pupils' needs in the area of sexual identity in EFL. Undoubtedly, this was the most important datum together with the fact that the participants at the end of the focus group discussion requested to be trained on sexual identity issues in EFL at primary education.



## **2 Research study on sexual identity issues with in-service primary school English-language teachers**

### **2.1 Presentation and data collection**

In order to obtain a more reliable and valid pilot study, I decided to analyse a questionnaire on gender and sexual identities completed by primary school English-language teachers mostly working in the province of Andalusia. This was an opportunity to gather more information from people who were actively working in a school environment and to understand what type of school they worked in. The ten primary school English-language teachers were contacted from the Faculty of Education of the University of Granada, as they were previous university students at the same university faculty. They all agreed to participate in this study regardless of their interest in the issue, which makes their answers more reliable. Also for this project, the thesis supervisor and I decided to have a ‘gender balance’ (see Table 2).

The limitation of this study could be the fact that in this case I did not hold a final discussion nor did I interview them, so, compared to the first project of this pilot study, I could not collect more reliable data. Nonetheless, this questionnaire is quite complete and I was interested in receiving raw and direct information, which could validate my findings. Obviously, if they did not know some of the answers, they could have looked them up; yet, many questions were answered with “I don’t know”, which in a way is more realistic as they only gave the information they possessed, demonstrating at times a lack of knowledge of sexual identity policies in their schools.

Data collection and analysis for the questionnaire took place immediately after receiving the completed surveys in the Spring of 2011 and took me some time to organise due to the fact that, apart from analysing their answers, I had to decide on the type of schools (see 2.3) and draw some general conclusions. The teachers were free to answer in Spanish or in English, so I have translated the necessary contributions made by the participants from Spanish into English where necessary. I will next analyse and discuss the answers from the questionnaire followed by an analysis of the type of schools the participants worked in according to their replies.

## 2.2 Data analysis and discussion

The questionnaire (see Appendix 2) is organised into four parts: A. Personal information. B. Knowledge of queer issues at school. C. Assessing your school. D. Final questions.

Part C of the questionnaire is especially important, as teachers are asked to assess their school partially drawn on the survey carried out by GLESN<sup>39</sup> and employed in the GLEE Project (GLEE, 2002: 58-63; Bedford, 2009: 265-273). After this assessment, each school is analysed in a separate section and divided into four types: the hostile school, the resistant school, the open school and the inclusive school (GLEE, 2002; Bedford, 2009). Apart from parts A and C, which have been summarised, parts B and D follow the same pattern: question, summary of their responses and my personal discussion.

### A. Personal information

GENDER	AGE	SEXUAL IDENTITY	RELIGIOUS
1. W1	24	Heterosexual	No
2. W2	26	Bisexual	No
3. W3	31	Heterosexual	No
4. W4	31	Heterosexual	Yes (Catholic)
5. W5	31	Heterosexual	No
6. M1	24	Homosexual	Not much
7. M2	25	Heterosexual	Yes (Catholic)
8. M3	25	Heterosexual	No
9. M4	26	Heterosexual	Not much
10.M5	29	Heterosexual	A little

Table 2. Participants' main variables

For this first section of the questionnaire, participants' answers have been summarised. As shown in the table above, the study group was formed by five 'women' and five 'men', all Spanish nationals; the average age was about 27. All heterosexual but W2 who considered herself to be bisexual, and M1, who described himself gay. Only W4 and M2 considered themselves to be religious, although this did not seem to influence their attitude towards lgbti people in their answers. For this questionnaire I had also decided to ask for their political inclination. Three admitted being left-wing (W2, W5 and M4), two centre-left (M2 and M3), two right-wing (M1 and M5), whilst W1 was not interested in politics; W3 argued that she was not political and W4 did not believe in politicians. Thus, half of the cohort was left-wing or centre left-wing, including the only bisexual woman (W2); however, the only gay man (M1) considered himself to be conservative. This is only

<sup>39</sup> GLESEN Assessment Survey – From A – Z: Schools and LGBT Issues (2001). Updated GLESEN link (2014): <http://www.glsen.org/article/glsen-releases-new-national-school-climate-survey>

partially surprising as there are lgbt people who are right-wing despite the fact that queer politics are almost always promoted by left-wing parties and politics. Nonetheless, in this case their political views had little influence on their answers especially because all the teachers claimed to know queer people, mainly gay men, thus confirming a general positive attitude towards lgbt persons comparable to that of the pre-service teachers of the previous study. Since the participants were primary school teachers, I was also interested in knowing if they had any children. Nobody did.

### ***B. Knowledge of lgbt issues at school***

#### *1. Do you think that the inclusion and discussion of sexual identity issues in your English class is needed? Why?*

Six answered yes. Their main reasons were based on respect, tolerance, need to develop pupils' own identity, to make pupils more comfortable and to recognise differences. W4 believed it depends on the age, since according to her, when they are young they are not aware of these issues; M1 shared the same thought of W4 although he added that the topics should be discussed only when they come up or when pupils ask in the classroom; finally M6 admitted that they are not really significant. Thus, the majority recognised the relevance of treating queer issues in English language teaching, validating my hypothesis.

#### *2. Do you think primary school children already possess some knowledge of lgbt issues?*

Four responded affirmatively. W2 wrote "The other day one of my pupils (6 years old) was saying that two girls were girlfriends. He started to laugh when he said that". W4 admitted that she did not know; W5 believed that it is impossible to generalise as "it depends on their life experience up to that point". M1 argued that they possess knowledge in the last two or three years of primary school, but not before. Whilst, M2 observed that they can only have knowledge if their parents are lgbt. M4 wrote: "Not much", whilst M3 was the only one who did not believe they do. Although it was not clear to everyone, most believed it was possible.

#### *3. Have you ever used any inclusive lgbt/queer material or discussion in any of your classes? If yes, please give information.*

Only two had. W2 by using images from the Internet and by inventing stories; W3 included them when she talked about families. All the other eight said no. M2 observed that he did not have the opportunity yet, whilst M5 wrote: "I haven't. I try not to differ

between queer and non-queer students. In English class we try to enjoy English the same way for all the students whatever their sexual identity is". It is encouraging that at least two teachers tried to use inclusive lgbti material and/or discussion, and it is not surprising that all the others did not. Although I must admit that M5's remarks are a little surprising, because he seemed to believe that there is some kind of equity between queer and non-queer students, when in fact all the English-language coursebooks I have examined were constantly heterosexist and avoided all references to sexual identities, except for heterosexual.

*4. Do you deal with themes such as ethnicity and race, different religions, physical and mental disabilities, sexism, classism, multiculturalism and interculturality in your English class?*

Everybody replied affirmatively, except M4. W2 also added that these issues must be included in the curriculum; whilst M2 and M5 highlighted that they could be discussed as cross-curricular themes. However, cross-curricular themes, as explained in Chapter II, can contemplate sexual identity issues, but unfortunately they do not seem to receive the same attention as the other issues raised in this question.

*5. Would you discuss sexual identity issues with your pupils from the first year of primary school?*

Eight wrote yes; M1 only if he is asked and W5 believed the issue to be inappropriate for their age. This sounds positive, although only two or three teachers showed willingness to discuss sexual identity issues in their classes. It is encouraging that, according to their responses, they understood that it is not about sex, but rather about people living in our communities.

*6. Do lgbti themes come up spontaneously in your class?*

Four answered yes; for W5 they do sometimes; M5 said: "Not usually"; and the others wrote no. Half of the cohort admitted they do, thus in my opinion, teachers should be ready to address them or at least receive training on how to do so.

*7. Would you feel confident discussing sexual identity issues with your pupils?*

Seven replied yes, three no; M2 commented that he would like to do it well and in order to do so he would need to get information and professional advice. This is an important datum, as most seemed at ease with the issue.

8. *Would you fear parental reaction if you intended discussing lgbt issues? Why?*

Five replied no; two yes and three maybe. W2 wrote that she would be careful because she had a Jehovah witness child in her class; W3 responded that she had talked to some parents as the children asked about lgbt people in the classroom and the parents were fine about it. M1 admitted fearing them in religious schools or if he had to face them during tutorial; M2 feared them because of the “conservative mentality of many parents in Spain”; whilst M3 might fear them because sometimes they can be “unpredictable”. Although there seems to be some concern about parental reactions, five admitted not fearing them, which is promising. This datum partially reflects the results from the previous study with EFL pre-service teachers.

9. *Would you consider knowledge of lgbt issues important for your pedagogical and professional development, and training? Why?*

All said yes, mainly because they could show the real world to their pupils; because they would feel more secure talking about it; because some children need help in order to be integrated in our society; to avoid heterosexist approaches; because it can come up any time and children are usually interested in it and must be prepared for new social changes. M5 observed that he would improve his abilities but “there are other things that teachers should improve much more in relation to their profession”. This is also an important result, almost a request for training, apart from M5 who thought that it is not so relevant. Their answers support the hypothesis of this pilot study.

10. *Would you say that some of your pupils are ‘gender-variant children’ or ‘gender nonconforming children’? (‘Feminine’ boys who dress like girls or behave like most girls and vice-versa, or simply children who do not respond to the roles dictated by heteronormativity).*

Four wrote yes, whilst only three replied with a clear no. W1 commented that she did not have any that year; W3 wrote that she did not have any that year but she did in the previous one and added that in an Arabic dance activity two boys wanted to dress up as girls, however the organiser of the activity told her: “They are boys and they have to be dressed like boys”, to which she replied: “They want to wear a dress and they can dance with that better than a girl, and if they want to, I’ll allow them”, which she did. She even took some pictures and showed them to the boys’ parents who did not complain. W2 admitted having a couple of cases in which you could clearly see that the boys acted more like girls; W4 argued that it depends on the sensitivity that some pupils show because they are

discriminated against as they are perceived as gays or lesbians, but they might not be gays or lesbians. M1 commented that his students were too young, so he could not recognise any gender nonconforming child. M2 wrote: “All my pupils respond to the roles dictated by heteronormativity”. Whilst M5 encountered both boys who acted and wanted to be dressed like ‘typical girls’ and vice versa. Furthermore, only three admitted having observed cases of homophobic bullying, but they all knew about its consequences and were aware that it could happen in their school. These answers confirm that gender nonconforming children are noticed in almost all the ten schools and that these teachers paid attention to them. This is very important, because they also realised that these children might suffer discrimination and their teachers, according to the replies from this questionnaire, did not seem to possess enough skills to deal with it.

*11. Would you like to receive formal training in how to counteract homophobia and heterosexism in primary school? If yes, why?*

All the ten teachers wrote yes. W1 because it is socially important nowadays; W2 because it is sometimes difficult to know how to treat these problems; W3 replied: “Yes, to know how to avoid it”; W4 and M2 to feel ready if it happens and they felt they did not have the experience; W5 believed it would be valuable; M1 because he would like to learn it in an appropriate pedagogical way; M3 to improve his knowledge about these issues; M4 would like to be able to transmit it to his students and finally M5 wrote: “Yes, it could improve my capacities as a teacher to solve possible situations related to this topic”. This was a key question for the pilot study. Just like the pre-service teachers, these ten in-service teachers demonstrated a willingness to learn about how to treat gender and sexual identities appropriately and as part of their learning process. Their answers demonstrate even more the need to develop training courses for both pre-service and in-service teachers.

### ***C. Assessing your school***

The ten participant’s answers are first summarised and analysed in this session, then, at the end of the final questions (section D), each school will be categorised into four different types according to the teachers’ replies.

The respondents taught in different primary schools, five in Granada or in the province of Granada, two in the province of Murcia (outside Andalusia), two in the province of Almeria and one in the province of Seville (both in Andalusia). They had been teaching English for between one and eight years, long enough to be able to assess their knowledge



about their school policies. W2, W3, M2, M3, M4 and M5 worked in a secular state school and, W1, W4, and M1 worked in a private religious (Catholic) school subsidised by public funds. Finally, W5 worked in a secular private school.

Nine schools, except that of M4, had non-discrimination and harassment policies. This is not surprising, as it is a legal requirement, although M4 thought his school did not have any. Five teachers replied that their school curriculum did not include sexual orientation, gender and sexual identity or lgbti issues. W2 wrote “Not much”; M1 was not sure; M2 observed: “Only sexual orientation”; W3 said yes and M3 wrote: “Yes, in the subject of ‘Education for Citizenship’”. Unfortunately, these answers are not surprising either, since recognising discrimination based on sexual and gender identities has not entered the Spanish school system yet as I think it needs to. As a form of comparison, I asked if these policies included multiculturalism and diversity: they all responded yes. Multiculturalism is an area in which gender and sexual identities should find space for inclusion, as well as in diversity policies where the accent is usually put on gender issues discriminating against women. It is unfortunate that even nowadays sexuality issues are almost never taken into account at primary school level in Spain.

When asked if lgbti staff were protected by an anti-discrimination policy the majority (six) replied “I don’t know”; W1, W3 and M4 wrote no, and only W5 said yes. It is a worrying result that most participants did not know about any lgbti anti-discrimination policy for the school staff in their school, which might or might not have existed. Nobody said that their teaching materials included lgbti themes, except for W2 who tried to include them through images from the Internet and W3 who talked about them in her classroom and prepared some worksheets. These answers are not surprising either, but at least two teachers tried to use their own material, which is encouraging.

W1, W3, W4, M3 (he thought so) and M5 said that they would be free to use lgbti inclusive materials and/or discussions in their school. W2 answered: “It depends on what I use”; M1: “If the situation is required, I wouldn’t have any doubt about it”; M2: “Yes, after consulting the school counsellor”; W5 wrote that she did not know and M4 responded with a clear no. It is reassuring that the majority (six out of ten) of these teachers would feel free to use materials with queer contents in their teaching activities, although some of them would be cautious about what to use and how to do it. Yet, only two admitted having used lgbti inclusive materials in their lessons (from the previous question). However, all teachers recognised that their EFL teaching material was heterosexist.

When asked if their school made any effort to include lgbti issues in the school curriculum, five teachers answered no; W4, M2 and M5 did not know, and only M3 wrote: “Yes, I think so”. It is evident that these ten schools are not making efforts, although one teacher thought his school did, but he did not know for sure. It is not a surprise, but a confirming trend as almost all the ten teachers gave similar answers. Seven teachers observed that lgbti persons are not visible in their schools. M2 wrote: “I know a gay teacher and heard of two lesbian mothers”; W3 said: “Last year” and M5 did not know. Visibility is still a big problem, also in Spain where, despite quite progressive legislation, sexism, heterosexism and homotransphobia are still present in society as a whole.

To the crucial question for this study regarding if they had ever received any training in sexual identity issues (how to treat homophobia and heteronormativity) in their school or previously, all replied no, except W1, although she did not give any information about it. This is in line with one of the justifications for this study: teacher training on gender and sexual identity issues does not seem to be implemented in the Spanish education system.

As for the general attitude of adults in the school community towards lgbti people or people perceived as such, W1 wrote: “I think they are afraid and they overprotect their children”. W2: “They criticise them although they don’t admit it. Human beings criticise a lot, so imagine with those issues”; W3: “I don’t know, I don’t mind if someone is homosexual or bisexual or heterosexual or whatever, so I think the rest of the people would think in the same way”; W4: “Normal, no discrimination as we are all equal”; M2: “Good attitude”; M3: “Respectable”; M5: “Respect”. Finally, W5, M1 and M4 did not know as they had not met enough lgbti people. These are very different answers, possibly as a result of different experiences or perceptions. However, only five (half) admitted that attitudes from adults towards lgbti persons were positive.

In contrast, when asked about the general pupils’ attitude in the school community towards lgbti persons or people perceived as such, W1 replied: “I don’t know yet”. W2 wrote: “Reject lgbti people at least at the beginning”. W3: “The youngest ones don’t mind, but the oldest try to use this to ‘hurt’ the classmates”; W4 admitted that it had never happened; W5 said it was taboo; M1 wrote: “They laugh at them”; M2 said to have heard that two mothers were accepted normally; for M3 their attitude was “normal”; M4 argued that there were not any and M5 said that they behaved naturally. Also these answers vary according to each teacher’s experience. W2 and W3 had different outcomes, because for the former, young children reject lgbti persons, whilst for the latter, it is the oldest that are

more aware and use it against their classmates. It is still a taboo subject, as admitted by W5, and many children tend to laugh at gender nonconforming children (M1). However, other teachers admitted that there was no discrimination from other pupils, and two that these cases never occurred. It seems impossible to receive common answers as it depends on the teacher's awareness and experience, the type of school and the type of pupils. Yet, discrimination was recognised by some who observed it.

As follow up questions, I asked if gender nonconforming or non heterosexual pupils and teachers feel safe in their school. Regarding the pupils: four participants replied yes; W2 and M5 thought so; W5 was not sure; M2 commented: "They could feel safe". Whilst M1 wrote: "I do not believe that pupils in this situation feel safe in my school"; and M4 asserted that that there were not any in his school. It is reassuring that the slight majority (six) believed gender nonconforming pupils felt safe in their school; although the only gay teacher (M1) gave a completely different answer, probably based on his awareness. According to studies mentioned in this dissertation, most homophobic (and transphobic) bullying is not perceived as such at primary or secondary school by teachers and school staff. As for possible queer teachers, five participants admitted that in their schools they feel safe, M1 being gay commented: "So far"; four did not know as they had not met any, whilst W2 wrote: "I don't think so because they are afraid of criticism". The situation for LGBTI teachers seems to be slightly better than that of LGBTI pupils (or perceived as such), although one participant (W2) seemed certain that LGBTI teachers did not feel very safe in her school.

In the next question I asked whether the school staff intervened in cases of homophobic harassment, to which W1 argued: "Yes, with some type of punishment": W2 wrote: "Yes. They receive a verbal warning, and if they carry on doing it we use other measures". W3: "I do, but there isn't any intervention from the school staff. I try to make them think about it". M3 admitted that they had to in a severe way; and M5 wrote: "We have to. We must make students deal with this topic as something natural". W4, M2 and W5 did not know, as it had not happened in their school; whilst M4 believed there weren't any cases. The strongest reply was given by M1: "No-one intervenes when we hear our pupils say *mariquita* ('faggot')". Most teachers believed that there were measures taken against homophobia, but it is interesting to notice that the only gay teacher (M1) admitted that the school staff did not say anything or did not intervene when they witness homophobic

verbal harassment. Again, M1 was probably more aware of the situation, but it is also possible than the other schools were safer for LGBTI pupils.

#### ***D. Final questions***

##### *1. What would you like to learn most about this subject?*

W1 wrote: “How to deal with these topics in class with different pupils”; W2: “How to approach it in the class without problems with the parents”; W3: “How to avoid homophobia”; W4: “How to answer these situations in the classroom”; W5: “As a novice I would like to learn as much as possible”; M1: “To treat this issue pedagogically in the most adequate way with both pupils and parents”. M2: “I would like to learn how to explain correctly the different sexual identities in primary education”. M3: “If it is really accepted in our society to feel freer to teach it at primary school”. M4: “How to teach it to my students”. M5: “Maybe methods to help students who may find some problems related to this at school”. All of their answers reflect a willingness to learn pedagogically how to treat sexual identity issues in their classrooms.

##### *2. What do you think primary education needs to do in order to integrate sexual identity issues into its curricula and programmes?*

W1 argued that inclusion would be essential; W2: “I don’t know. First of all more understanding from the rest of the teachers”; W3: “I don’t know because all teachers wouldn’t agree to integrate this topic”; W4: “Show children different types of families”. W5: “Challenge ideas and make it public to deal with parents’ objections”; M1: “That society sees it as it is, a simple option like any other”; M2:

It needs to update and include these issues, to work on it during pupils’ early years. It is very important for students to see as soon as possible these issues with normality. But it’s impossible to work correctly if the educational laws and curricula change every four years.

M3: “More practical cases to educate our children about equality among us”; M4: “Include contents in some of the subject areas, such as knowledge of the culture and natural sciences”; and finally M5: “Many other things need to improve first”. These answers speak for themselves and are all very particular and personal. Apart from M5 who did not see the urgency of treating sexual identity issues, all the others did in one way or another, which justifies even more the necessity for training. M2 made an interesting point when he wrote that it is impossible to learn all the educational laws pertaining to sexual diversity if they

are changed every four year, which is often the case in Spain where general elections are held every four years.

*3. Please feel free to add any additional comments.*

Only two participants left comments. W3: “I would like to say that it is very important what teachers think because we are models for our pupils, I think that if a teacher is homophobic he or she could transmit it to the children”. M3: “It is very interesting that you ask us about these topics. I’m sorry but my experience at the school hasn’t been so long. I hope that my answers can be useful to you. Thank you”. Although only two participants added comments, they were both very constructive, since W3 believed that teachers’ thoughts on the subject are essential and underlined a necessity for training especially for those teachers who, for different beliefs, are homophobic. M3 seemed surprised about this questionnaire which he found very interesting. This stresses once again the fact that sexuality issues are not integrated into primary school Spanish curricula, although almost all these ten teachers found the issues to be interesting and they recognised that they should be part of their English-language teaching, hence they should not be avoided. Next, I will analyse the type of school according to the participants’ responses.

### **2.3 The type of school**

The following are four categories of schools which can be applied to the questions of part C ‘Assessing your School’ of the above questionnaire. Each school was assessed using a frequency method which measured how many times it was *hostile*, *resistant*, *open* or *inclusive*. As mentioned above, this is based on the work carried out by GLSEN (GLEE, 2002: 66-67; Bedford, 2009: 274-275), although modified to suit this study.

#### **The Hostile School:**

- School policies do not protect the rights of LGBTI people and gender nonconforming pupils
- Curricula/materials are devoid of LGBTI themes
- Support for LGBTI students/families is non-existent
- Anti-queer language/harassment is rampant
- LGBTI people are invisible and feel unsafe being open about their sexual orientation/gender identity

The most hostile school turned out to be that of M1, followed by those of W1 and W5. The least hostile schools were those of M4 (but some of his answers were “I don’t know”) and W3. The others did not seem to be hostile. Thus, three or possibly four schools out of ten seemed to be hostile, an alarming result.

### **The Resistant School:**

- Non-discrimination policies may include sexual orientation
- Curricular inclusion of lgbti issues is limited
- Access to books/materials with lgbti content is limited
- Guidance staff show compassion, but information/support is not generally accessible
- Anti-lgbti language is common
- A “don’t ask, don’t tell” atmosphere exists for lgbti persons

The most resistant schools were those of: W2, M4 and M5. The least resistant was that of M3. All the others showed a high degree of resistance, although many answers were difficult to categorise as participants often answered “I don’t know”. In this case, nine schools out of ten seemed resistant, a worrying result.

### **The Open School:**

- Non-discrimination policies are inclusive of sexual orientation and students are made aware of this
- Lgbti themes are occasionally included in EFL teaching
- A variety of books/materials with lgbti content are available
- Adult community is open to lgbti inclusion, but may not be sure how to achieve it
- There are few instances of intentional harassment against lgbti or gender nonconforming pupils
- Lgbti persons are moderately visible; they may be seen as ‘different’, but a safe and respectful atmosphere exists

The schools of W3 and M5 turned out to be the most open schools. The least were those of M4 and W5. The others were all reasonably open, although more resistant than open. So, five or six out of ten schools could be considered open, which is a positive datum.

**The Inclusive School:**

- School policy both protects and affirms lgbt persons; proactive education about such policies exists
- Lgbt themes are fully integrated into curricula
- Books/materials with lgbt content are visible and available to all students/staff
- Adult community has prioritised lgbt inclusion as a part of a larger commitment to social justice
- Anti-queer language/behaviour is rare and is dealt with swiftly and decisively; anti-bias education that embraces respectful, inclusive language is common in classrooms
- Lgbt and gender nonconforming people are visible and fully integrated into school life; there is a high degree of comfort and acceptance regarding lgbt people

Replying to the few questions concerning inclusiveness in the questionnaire, the most inclusive schools resulted to be those of W3, W5, M2, M3 and M5, but not really inclusive as such; that of M4 was the least inclusive. Thus, five schools out of ten were considered inclusive (quite positive), but not fully inclusive due to the other answers in which they seemed especially resistant.

**2.4 Results**

The results of this research based on in-service English-language teachers are similar to the previous project conducted with English-language student teachers and reflected the themes emerged in that study: lack of information, ignorance of Spanish educational legislation and the need for training. According to their answers, these teachers expressed interest in the issue and some of them even considered sexual identity knowledge a fundamental part of their teaching career. Their lack of knowledge and information reflects a tendency to silence gender and sexual identities in primary education. Most importantly, they all believed in the necessity to treat sexual identity issues in ELT in primary education, like the participants of the previous project. They also admitted not having received any training on how to deal with homophobic bullying and suggested receiving professional training to counter this problem.

As for the results of the type of school, the most inclusive and open schools were those of W3 (state and secular) and M5 (state and secular), followed by those of M2 (state and

secular) and M3 (state and secular). The most resistant and hostile was that of M1 (private and religious), followed by that of W1 (private and religious), of W5 (private but not religious) and also those of W2 (state and secular), of M4 (state and secular) and of M5 (state and secular) turned out to be quite resistant. These results might be conditioned by the lack of knowledge and information of the ten teachers on the subject, as some teachers did not know the answers to some questions. As a result, there are some discrepancies since the school of M5 (state and secular) was both quite open and resistant, but not hostile. Another interesting datum to take into account is that all the most inclusive and open schools were state-run and secular, and those most hostile were private and religious (although one was private but not religious). According to this particular study, this result contributes to demonstrating that state schools in Spain seem to have a more inclusive and open curriculum in which LGBTI students and teachers feel more secure and protected and where some of the Spanish progressive educational laws are implemented. On the other hand, LGBTI pupils and teachers might not feel very safe in private, mainly Catholic, schools, who seem less interested in dealing with gender and sexual identity issues.

The school of M1, the only gay participant, resulted to be the most hostile. I suspect that this teacher was more aware of the situation than the others, therefore he responded more negatively as he might have known the grade of homophobic bullying existing in education, probably based on his own experience or awareness. However, his school was also private and religious, which might have made it even more complicated for him to be open about himself and to treat LGBTI issues in the classroom for possible fear of rejection.

It was difficult to give precise answers about the type of school, as the responses were never a clear 'yes' or 'no' and qualitative data of this kind is always complicated to analyse. However, according to the participants' answers (or lack of them), nine out of the ten schools analysed were considered resistant; although five could also be considered open/inclusive. This result is similar to that obtained by the GLSEN survey used in the GLEE Project in which the resistant school was the most frequent type (Bedford, 2009: 111). It is indeed a worrying result which allows me to admit that these teachers work in schools where both gender nonconforming/queer pupils and teachers do not feel very safe and the anti-homophobic legislation is not known, hence not implemented, by some of these teachers and the rest of the school personnel. Clearly, these overall results demonstrate even more the need to offer teacher training courses on how to teach about sexual identity issues in EFL primary school education, which could possibly be applied to all subject areas and educational levels.



### **3 Conclusions from the pilot study**

The most notable result common to the two research projects presented in this pilot study is that almost all the participants considered that training on sexual identity issues would make them feel more secure in dealing with and countering homophobia and heterosexism in their schools, thus supporting the hypothesis I formulated for this study. These answers demonstrate the need to offer training on how to deal with gender and sexual identity issues in primary education to both pre-service and in-service English-language teachers, as both groups admitted that sometimes queer issues come up spontaneously in their classes and that children are curious and interested in talking about them. The final group discussion in the first research project ended with a specific request for training in order to become better prepared teachers and to fill this void that still exists in primary education in Spain and, according to the international studies analysed in this thesis, possibly all over the world.

The assessment of the type of school in the second research project demonstrated that LGBTI inclusiveness is very limited and that the majority of these schools were resistant, that is, they did not consider gender and sexual identity issues a priority. Moreover, according to the teachers' answers, gender nonconforming pupils might not feel completely safe in their schools, whilst LGBTI teachers, possibly because of their status as adults, may feel somehow safer. Another important datum from the second research project shows that, although Spain's educational legislation is quite progressive, this does not seem to be properly implemented in schools, especially private and religious institutions which give the impression of being more reluctant to integrate sexuality issues into their curricula. This might suggest that this legislation appears to be progressive and adequate on paper, but in practice homotransphobia and heterosexism are only partially perceived by the ten teachers and action in their school was taken rarely and sometimes with unexpectedly negative results. It seems likely that this progressive legislation is not enough if it is not properly implemented in the school community by investing money and energy. Unfortunately, as pointed out by a participant in the second project, educational laws might change every four years depending on who wins the general elections, creating a state of confusion and impotence among the teachers.

Furthermore, most participants in both studies considered sexual identity issues as gender issues which, in the case of homophobia and heterosexism, should be treated as

social discrimination just like ‘racism’, which is more likely to be discussed under multiculturalism in primary education. It is clear that this connection has not been made.

Despite the fact that this pilot study was restricted to primary school English-language education, its results can be generalised to suit all school disciplines and applied to teacher training courses on sexual identity issues in Spanish at all educational levels. Its results could be compared to similar results obtained by other Spanish research (Gallardo Linares and Escolano López, 2009; Penna Tosso, 2012). These findings led me to develop two training courses that are the practical core of this thesis and which will be presented in the next chapter.

## **V The training process**

This is the core practical part of the dissertation and therefore the longest and possibly the most important chapter. It is organised into two training courses on gender and sexual identities offered at the Faculty of Education of the University of Granada. Participants enrolled voluntarily at the International Postgraduate School of the University of Granada, which took care of the administrative work, including the participants' fee for the course to cover its expenses.

The first was given in English to (mainly) pre-service primary and secondary school English-language teachers, whilst the second in Spanish was offered to both in-service teachers and university students of different educational disciplines and levels. Thus, the first course concentrated much on linguistic aspects, on teaching and learning English as a foreign language and queer terminology in English; whilst the second focused only partially on linguistic aspects, mainly on queer terminology, and non sexist and inclusive language in Spanish. Both courses are part of the action research axis of this thesis and aim at promoting equity for lgbti persons in education.

The two courses were structured in a similar way, with almost the same objectives. For each course I will start with their presentation and organisation; then I will dedicate a small section to the data collection and analysis, followed by the analysis of an initial questionnaire. After that, I will present the course syllabus and I will explain and analyse the contents of the sessions and workshops in each course, followed by the description and analysis of the participants' teaching projects, which were all original queer pedagogical materials. The last section of each course will be dedicated to the written and oral course evaluations carried out by the course participants, concluding with the results from their course evaluations as well as class discussions and observations which will be presented in recurring themes. Finally, I will draw general conclusions from both courses.



# **1 Training course in gender and sexual identities for pre-service English-language teachers**

## **1.1 Course presentation and organisation**

This is the first course I organised after the pilot study. It took me almost a year to collect all the important information and material in order to develop and prepare it. Much time was also devoted to the lesson planning of the entire course and to each session. The course director was Dr Raúl Ruiz Cecilia, who help me deal with the administrative documents and provided me with all the necessary facilities for the course. Without him the course would not have been possible, particularly because more than half of the course participants were English-language students at the Faculty of Education contacted by him who were interested in learning about sexual identities and improving their English.

The course took place in the Autumn of 2011 and it offered four university credits and a diploma. It was mainly aimed at primary school EFL student teachers, but secondary school EFL student teachers were also welcome, as well as any person interested in the subject who could access university and possessed a European English-language level of at least A2-B1 (lower intermediate). The course lasted forty hours and was organised into ten units spread into sessions of four hours each. It was taught twice weekly, was given entirely in English and I was the only teacher-facilitator. It was advertised on the International Postgraduate School webpage, whilst posters and leaflets were distributed by me in almost all Faculties of the University of Granada, as well as in many primary and secondary schools and educational centres in Granada. Eighteen people enrolled on the course, but only sixteen were able to come on a regular basis.

The specific aim of the course was to empower participants to take action in order to counter homotransphobia and heterosexism in English-language education through queer pedagogical activities. The general aim, in line with the objectives of this dissertation, was to support a queer transformation of both education and society. Participants evaluated the course through written evaluations and a final recorded group discussion. In accordance with one of the research sub-questions, I wanted to ascertain how feasible such a course could be and how necessary it was for the participants. Since it was the first of its kind at the University of Granada, I also wanted to discover if it could be easily implemented in English-language education according to the participants' course evaluations and classroom participation, discussions and observation.

It was difficult to find similar courses specifically for pre-service primary and secondary school English-language teachers, as the available material was very scarce. However, I could not develop such a course on my own and with little experience. In fact, the practical core of this course is based on the already mentioned pedagogical study the 'GLEE Project' (GLEE, 2002; Bedford, 2009). In the GLEE Project, all the training was given in English and it covered different subject areas, but not English-language education. To fill this gap, I looked to the work of Cynthia D. Nelson (e.g. 1993, 1999 and 2009) which helped me formulate some of the theory and some of the practical activities which I used during the course. Her studies, as expressed in Chapter II, are in connection with ESL and adult education and I find them particularly inspiring, especially because she discusses sexual identities within a queer spectrum.

Based on the presentation of the Leadership Training Course from the manual of the GLEE Project (GLEE, 2002: 11), the course was an interactive programme of student teacher training and pedagogical strategies to counter homotransphobia and heterosexism in primary and secondary school English-language education in Spain. The training course provided the participants with a theoretical introduction and interactive seminars and workshops on lgbti educational issues, queer theory as well as critical and transformative pedagogy. Through critical thinking and participatory inquiry, the trainees had to propose and create queer pedagogical initiatives and activities in the area of EFL. They received a latent empowerment (Bedford, 2009) in order to take action against discrimination based on sexual identity and orientation in both primary and secondary education once they become in-service teachers. I consider it essential to affirm here that Tim Bedford kindly sent me the manual of the Leadership Training Course of the GLEE Project (GLEE, 2002), as well as his book (2009), so that I could apply the workshops of the manual to my training courses. Consequently, his contribution to the realisation of my training courses is of paramount importance.

The course method was principally communicative and interactive. More than half of it was dedicated to workshops and group work, including the participants' final oral presentations, as well as class discussions; whilst the rest of the course was devoted to the theory which was sent to the participants by email in the form of texts to be read before each session, which were then summarised through power point presentations in class.

The course also included other didactic<sup>40</sup> activities, all authentic materials, such as watching and analysing short films, excerpts from the Internet, a documentary and a few music videos. To my knowledge, this was the first course of this type in Spanish education offered in English.

## **1.2 Data collection and analysis**

Participants' personal data were collected from an initial written questionnaire (see Appendix 3) which they completed anonymously during the first class of the course. It was a questionnaire aimed at obtaining participants' personal information, knowledge of queer issues and reasons for joining the course. The data collection and organisation of this initial questionnaire had to be done almost immediately because I wanted to analyse their responses for the following session (a week later). As shown in table 3, I gathered the participants' main variables in a table, so that the data can be confronted and easily retrieved.

The course was evaluated by the participants three times: a mid-course written evaluation, a final course written evaluation and a final course recorded group discussion. I, the facilitator, evaluated the presentations of the groups' queer teaching projects together with the other participants in the classroom. This methodology served to evaluate their interest and motivation from the beginning to the end of the course. Also, collecting written and oral evaluations provided wider and more reliable data.

The collection of the data for the mid-course evaluations was received by email anonymously, which I analysed in about a week. During data analysis, I took into consideration each participant's response and I was able to draw general results from the participants based on some in/consistencies in their answers; some replies were similar, but most differed from each other. This is the most difficult aspect for a qualitative researcher: trying to gather the most important data and collect them, when in reality, every single contribution is relevant for a qualitative study. The final written course evaluations were also received anonymously by email and they were sent from the last day of the course and arrived on different days. I spent almost two months collecting and organising their responses, which apart from a few which were similar, most were different from every

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<sup>40</sup> In this thesis the word 'didactic' is always used as a synonym of 'teaching' or 'pedagogic'. I will therefore interchange 'didactic unit' with 'teaching unit' with the same meaning.

single participant, as mentioned for the middle-course evaluations, thus rendering data analysis difficult but challenging at the same time. The recorded oral group evaluation was held in English, it lasted about thirty minutes and started as a free discussion (see 1.6.3 below) which towards the end I managed to organise in a more controlled way. As the data were oral, I had to transcribe all the group evaluation which took me a few days. After the transcription I had to analyse the most relevant data. Some participants gave similar responses, but, just like in the written evaluations, others gave their own personal impressions and contributions, which had to be taken into account. Finally, during the lessons I sometimes took notes through classroom observation. This was done especially when the participants worked in groups during the workshops, since for the rest of the lessons I was actively involved and I was not able to take notes. Thus, I often wrote a summary of the main participants' interventions and the themes discussed at home, based on my memory. The results of the course evaluations together with the notes related to classroom observation and discussions will be organised in section 1.7 below in forms of emerging themes based on frequency and relevance.

### **1.3 Initial questionnaire: Results and discussion**

'Women' (twelve) outnumbered 'men' (four) by far. As mentioned in Chapter IV, in my own learning, teaching and research experience, the fact that in this course 'women' outnumbered 'men' reflected reality, since most people interested in teaching a foreign language and especially in gender-related issues tend to be 'women' or lgbt persons; not only in my experience but also in that of the people I have met who have studied foreign languages and gender studies. Thus, the course participants followed this educational trend which should be accepted as representative of the reality I had experienced in education previous to the commencement of this dissertation and especially during its process.

Moreover, I believe the term 'gender' to be polyvalent and open to various possibilities and not only restricted to the binary system. However, I wanted to point out that in the initial questionnaire the majority of participants described their gender as either female or male, nonetheless, for consistency reasons in this thesis, I have used the initials W for 'woman' and M for 'man'.



GENDER	AGE	SEXUAL IDENTITY	EDUCATION	ENGLISH PROFICIENCY	TEACHING PRACTICE
1. W1	21	Heterosexual	EFL for primary education	Intermediate	Yes, three months
2. W2	21	Heterosexual	EFL for primary education	Elementary	Yes, five months
3. W3	21	Heterosexual	EFL for secondary education	Advanced	No
4. W4	21	Heterosexual	EFL for secondary education	Advanced	Yes, two summers
5. W5	22	Heterosexual	EFL for primary education	Intermediate	Yes, four months
6. W6	22	Heterosexual	EFL for primary education	Intermediate	Yes, five months
7. W7	23	Heterosexual	EFL for primary education	Lower intermediate	No
8. W8	23	Heterosexual	EFL for primary education	Intermediate	Yes, four months
9. W9	25	Mainly heterosexual, but flexible	PhD in Gender Studies	Advanced	No
10. W10	26	Heterosexual, but does not follow stereotypes	Degree in History	Advanced	No
11. W11	27	Heterosexual, but who knows?	EFL for primary education	Advanced	Yes, four months
12. W12	32	Heterosexual	EFL for primary education	Intermediate	Yes, five months
13. M1	20	He thinks he is heterosexual	EFL for primary education	Elementary	Yes, five months
14. M2	22	Heterosexual	EFL for primary education	Intermediate	Yes, six months
15. M3	23	Heterosexual	EFL for secondary education	Advanced	No
16. M4	30	Homosexual	PhD in Gender and Equality Politics	High Intermediate	No

**TABLE 3. Participants' main variables**

As shown in the table, the average age was 24. Ten were studying to become primary school English-language teachers, three to become secondary school English-language teachers, two were following a PhD in gender studies and one was a university history student, these last three participants admitted being highly motivated and interested in the issue. Participants were all native speakers of Spanish, all from Spain, except one from Argentina (W11) and another from Cuba (M4). Regarding their sexual identity, eleven identified themselves as totally heterosexual, W9 as mainly heterosexual, F10 heterosexual but did not like stereotypes, W11 heterosexual but open to other possibilities, M4 was the only person who considered himself to be gay and M1 wrote: "I think I am heterosexual". Considering the young age of most participants and the fact that they completed the anonymous questionnaire in the classroom, expressing their sexual identity could have been embarrassing and intimidating for some of them. Nevertheless, the vast majority

described themselves as purely heterosexual which I found interesting and even surprising given the fact that the course was about sexual identities and in my own experience cisgender heterosexuals tend not to be interested in the issue or not to think about it, especially if it is a voluntary choice. I consider this to be a positive factor for the actual training, validity and outcome of the course. 60% decided to attend the course because they were interested in the university credits and it was an opportunity to improve their English, whilst 40% participated because of an interest in the issue and also because the course was given entirely in English. These findings are also important because they validate the course even further, since, most likely, the majority of participants did not possess a sufficient knowledge of sexual identity issues prior to the course and they participated because it was offered in English and the four credits were recognised as part of their English-language studies. For research and a training course to be valid and to accomplish their objectives it is important that the sample group does not possess much knowledge of the subject in order to learn and be trained appropriately. Nonetheless, class after class participants showed a much greater interest and most were positively surprised by the contents and methodology.

As for their English proficiency, the majority (see Table 3) possessed an intermediate-higher intermediate level, only two admitted having an elementary level (A2 European level). Ten participants had some teaching experience, mainly in primary education as part of their training period; this was also important as the course offered training on how to treat sexual identity issues in English-language education, a theme which was described as innovative and original, as well as necessary, by most participants.

The initial questionnaire was also adopted to receive information about their general knowledge of queer issues. Everybody knew the meaning of LGBT, but 'i' for intersexual was unknown by thirteen of them. Only M4 and W9 gave a definition of queer close to its meaning as in queer theory, due to their gender studies experience. Regarding the meaning of heterosexism and heteronormativity, only W9, W10 and M4 knew what they meant; interestingly, none of the three were studying to become English-language teachers. Homophobia was understood by all as a form of social discrimination. In one question they were asked what caused their 'heterosexuality' (see Chapter IV) and, surprisingly, eight participants replied *queerly* by stating that their 'heterosexuality' was felt as a social imposition.

They all underlined the importance of treating sexual identity issues in English-language education as well as in any other school subject. Moreover and as I predicted, they had never received any training in how to treat homophobia and heterosexism in education, despite expressing a need for it. Ten out of sixteen participants thought that primary school children were not capable of discussing sexual identity issues through critical thinking. In addition, eleven wrote that teaching sexual identities to secondary school students was easier than teaching it to primary school pupils. Parental reaction to treating queer identities in schools was feared by half of the participants as they found the issue too delicate to be understood by parents/guardians, especially at primary school level, but the other half admitted not fearing pupils' or students' parents. Lastly, inclusion of a homosexual family in an English-language textbook was considered feasible by thirteen participants; although W1, W8 and M1 believed that this type of inclusion could be problematic as it might be too early for the Spanish society.

#### **1.4 Course syllabus and workshops: Contents and analysis**

In this section I will present the course syllabus followed by an analysis of the contents of the sessions representing the teaching units of the course, including the practical workshops, which were the core part of the course. It is a description of what was done in each lesson. Some units needed more sessions than others, reaching a total of forty hours. Part of the workshops offered in the course were adapted from The Leadership Training Course of the GLEE Project (GLEE, 2002; Bedford 2009), whilst others were based on my own teaching experience.

##### **Course syllabus**

*Unit 1:* Introduction: Queer Issues in English Language Teaching

*Unit 2:* Language of Diversity and Multiple Identities

*Unit 3:* Introduction to Queer Theory and Transformative Pedagogy

*Unit 4:* Sexualities and Gender; Homophobia and Heterosexism

*Unit 5:* Gender Construction in Early Childhood Education

*Unit 6:* Queering English-language Teaching Material

*Unit 7:* The documentary *It's Elementary: Talking about Gay Issues in School*

*Unit 8:* Transformative Action in EFL Education

*Unit 9:* Presentation of Participants' Teaching Projects

*Unit 10:* Oral Course Evaluation and Closure

**Sessions 1 and 2** were dedicated to the introduction to the course and to the discussion of queer issues in EFL teaching as well as queer language. We discussed the role of English as a globalised and foreign language; Spanish legislation on sexual identity and orientation in education as well as previous studies in Spain on sexual identity knowledge in general education.

*Workshop: Definitions of Sexual Identity Terminology* (adapted from GLEE, 2002: 17). The purpose of this activity is to initiate discussion on the meanings of words and terms to be used throughout the course, understand the current cultural differences and reach agreement on definitions. Participants in groups of four had to give a definition of the following terms: Prejudice; Discrimination; Homophobia (lesbophobia, transphobia, biphobia, intersexphobia); Sexism; Heterosexism; Heteronormativity; Homosexual; Heterosexual; Sexuality; Sexual identity; Sexual orientation; Gender; Lesbian; Gay; Bisexual; Straight; Transsexual; Transgender; Intersexual; Queer; and Bullying.

After every group had completed their definitions, the whole class discussed each term and a common understanding was agreed. It was important to clarify at the beginning of the course this queer terminology which would be used throughout the course. I did not include the terms ‘cissexual’/‘cisgender’, ‘cissexism’ and ‘cissexist’ in the list, but we briefly discussed them in class, nobody knew their meanings except M4. Language is undoubtedly a form of power that, if used adequately, can promote social equity for everybody.

*Workshop: Multiple Identities* (GLEE, 2002: 18). The purpose of this activity is to explore the multiple identities that we all possess, considering how stereotyping and bigotry influence the ways in which we interiorise our identities and manifest them to others. Each participant made three lists about themselves, but they were not allowed to write more than four identities in each list. The first list includes certain identities that are evident to all (e.g. physical characteristics and different abilities, nationality, ethnicity, gender, age, etc.). The second list is about those identities that are not clearly noticeable, but are obvious to others who get to know us over time (may include religion, socioeconomic class, sexual orientation, marital status, occupation, etc.). The third list includes identities that are private, often hidden or disclosed only to close friends or family members (may include divorce, abortion, addiction, diseases, abuse, depression, sexual orientation, etc.). Participants could use symbols to describe these last identities to avoid revealing what they considered to be secrets. Then I paired the participants who introduced

themselves to one another, sharing at least two of the chosen identities and describing why they were significant to them. After the introductions, a discussion was held, first in small groups and then as a whole class, on what causes us to be open about some of our identities and to avoid talking about others. This activity was very effective for the participants, first of all to get to know each other, to understand the concept of multiple identities and to recognise that some identities are easier to disclose than others. Unfortunately, we could not complete the other part of the activity, 'Power and Privilege' (GLEE, 2002: 20) because of the restricted time and especially because we could not move the tables in the classroom since we needed space to get around the room, yet I managed to discuss the activity and pointed out that some of our different identities can bear more power and privilege in our culture (like being a white, married, religious heterosexual man) and others less (like being, for example, a poor trans person, or an unemployed middle-aged lesbian with children).

**Session 3** was dedicated to the introduction of queer theory (drawn on Jagose, 1996), and transformative pedagogy (drawn on Bedford, 2009). We discussed the differences between homophobia and heterosexism, and between in/equality and in/equity (Bedford, 2009: 21-28; Chapter II-1.2). In the same unit LGBTI educational intervention paradigms (Griffin and Ouellet, 2003) were approached: silence (years 1920-1979); safety (years 1980-2002); and social justice (year 2003 onwards), as discussed in Chapter II-1.2. We all agreed that although there is progressive legislation in favour of sexual orientation in education in Spain, the silence paradigm is still the most employed. We then analysed the forms of teacher empowerment: latent, active and transformative (Bedford, 2009: 58; Chapter II-1.2). I pointed out that the course would offer the participants a latent empowerment which could become active when they start teaching and transformative when their action would contribute to an educational system that includes queer materials and discussions in English-language education. We also briefly talked about the role of the transformative teacher (Bedford, 2009: 60; Chapter II-1.2).

*Workshop: Pedagogies of Inquiry.* This kind of pedagogy in English-language education was introduced by Cynthia D. Nelson and is inspired by queer theory. In her articles (1999, 2002) and book (2009), Nelson gives some examples related to Butler's idea of sexual identities as social performances which differ in time and place. For example, as discussed in the Pilot Study and in Chapter II, nowadays two men holding hands in Spain are normally read as a gay couple, whilst in most Muslim countries two men holding hands

could be friends or relatives. After reading two of Nelson's articles (1999, 2002), participants were asked in class to think critically and give examples according to their learning or teaching experience. This activity was in fact very motivating as participants had to think about what is taken for granted as identities in the current Spanish culture vis-à-vis other cultures and apply it to English-language education, which they all admitted being feasible and very constructive since it could be also linked to learning grammar, like the modal verbs: "They could be friends; they might be lovers; they can be brothers" (drawn on Nelson, 1999: 381-382).

**Session 4** was entirely dedicated to four practical activities on sexualities, gender, homophobia and heterosexism spread into two classes.

*Workshop: Queering Sexuality and Gender* (adapted from GLEE, 2002). Its aim is to "consider the diversity of categories of sexuality both historically and across cultures with a focus on the experience of transgender and intersex identities" (p. 28), probably the most invisible in our culture. Some excerpts<sup>41</sup> in English from videos on intersex and trans identities were shown and later discussed in class. This activity served to check the participants' knowledge of trans and intersexual persons and to introduce new categories of sexuality across cultures, such as a Bardache, a two-spirit individual among native north Americans, a Mahu, a third gender person in Hawaii, a Hijra a transgender person in India, a Kathoey (or 'ladyboy'), a trans woman or a very effeminate, sometimes cross-dresser, man in Thailand, etc. I also mentioned the book *Annabel* by Kathleen Winter (2011), about an intersexed child/adolescent, to which the British band 'Goldfrapp' dedicated a song and a beautiful and touching short film in 2013<sup>42</sup>. This activity helped the participants reach a better understanding of trans and intersex persons' realities.

*Workshop: How Homophobia Hurts Us All* (GLEE, 2002). The purpose of this activity is "to explore ways in which homophobia, and oppression of any kind, hurts all of us Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender and Straight" (p. 37). Participants in small groups had to discuss a scenario (GLEE, 2002: 38) in which the protagonists experience homophobia directly or indirectly; each group had to come up with at least one way in

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<sup>41</sup> Intersexual: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xv1yk2Va9qc>;  
Film 'XXY', Lucía Puenzo (2007); trailer: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hqsgHbp39Gc&feature=related>  
Trans: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hqsgHbp39Gc&feature=related>

<sup>42</sup> [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-Vnk\\_j1iKMA](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-Vnk_j1iKMA)

which homophobia was hurting non-lgbti people in their scenario. Then each group illustrated their findings to the rest of the class opening up a whole class discussion. The participants also read a list of examples in which homophobia hurts everyone, not only queer people (adapted from GLEE, 2002: 40-41, drawn on Blumenfeld, 1992). This activity was of great interest to the participants as many of them did not realise how restricted education is for non (cis-hetero)normative, queer and gender nonconforming students and their friends and families. They also learnt how homotransphobia can affect non lgbti people who want to support them and therefore get discriminated against and might suffer homotransphobia indirectly and unexpectedly even if they are (cis) heterosexuals, as happened to some straight teachers who took queer action in their schools and university faculties in Granada and were reproached, and sometimes obliged to stop taking action, by a sector of the staff school. These unexpected cases of direct homotransphobia experienced by (cis) heterosexuals probably for the first time in their life might have made them realise how serious this problem is to the point that some of them may decide to stop taking action in favour of lgbti persons altogether for fear of being discriminated against and for not being able to deal with the pressure.

This workshop, and all the reactions that it provoked in the classroom, supports one of the specific objectives of this dissertation and justifies once more the need to train teachers and educators on how to teach to accept and respect sexual and gender diversity in all its possible varieties, including ‘effeminate men’ and ‘masculine women’.

*Workshop: Strategies to Combat Homophobia in Schools* (GLEE, 2002: 45). The purpose of this activity is for participants to identify real examples of homophobic bullying in their educational experience and report successful strategies to counter it. Participants in pairs talked about incidents of direct or indirect homophobic bullying caused by teachers, peer students, parents, etc., which they remembered and experienced from their school years. They then had to reflect, first in pairs then as a whole class, on what they did or did not do well; what the result of their reaction was; what they would do differently now; and how the whole situation made them feel. This activity served to record successful pedagogical strategies adopted by the participants to challenge homophobic bullying in education which were then discussed with the whole class. Some participants commented that homophobic situations could be used pedagogically, as suggested by Nelson (e.g. 2009), and instead of making homophobic perpetrators feel guilty and just say “this is wrong” or “don’t say that”, they would challenge them and also the whole class by asking,

for example, where they learned those insults (*poof, lezzie, faggot*, etc.), from whom, why they are used, what purpose they serve, how they would feel if they were called those names, why being lesbian or gay is considered negative, etc. They would also ask whether they understand these words in English and thus analyse and deconstruct the language. Then they would ask their students to make comparisons, to ask whether any of them, or any people they know, have been humiliated for the same or for different reasons, how they felt about it and what strategies they had employed (if any) to defend themselves or the others. Most participants (fourteen) also admitted that it would be somehow easier to do so with primary school pupils rather than secondary school students, thus changing the opinion expressed by the majority (ten) in the initial questionnaire and answering one of the sub-questions of this thesis. Likewise, the posture of feeling more comfortable addressing queer issues at primary school level is chimed with a study carried out by Elsbree and Wong (2007), based on the play *The Laremie Project* (Moisés Kaufman, 2000) and related activities, which showed that: “Differences between elementary and secondary pre-service teachers were also noted, with the former group demonstrating better knowledge of GLBTQ issues, and greater degree of comfort to address GLBTQ issues” (Bedford, 2009: 38).

In this section we also briefly talked about sexually transmitted diseases, especially the difference between Hiv and Aids, as asked by three participants, insisting on un/safe sex acts and not on high/low risk groups, on what we do and not on what we ‘are’, and adding that especially in the 1980s and 1990s Hiv-Aids was used to stigmatise and segregate gay men and trans people (especially MtF) even more who are still considered nowadays to be high risk groups in ‘Western’ countries, as discussed in Chapter II-1.

*Workshop: Challenging Stereotypes and Myths* (GLEE, 2002: 46-47). This activity offers the participants practical experience on challenging homotransphobia and identifying successful techniques. The group brainstormed homophobic statements they had heard from students, colleagues or anyone else. These were recorded on the board and the following are some of the examples used in the activity: ‘It’s not natural for a gay or for a lesbian couple to adopt children’; ‘a trans person should get sex reassignment surgery in order to be a man or a woman’; ‘a boy should be discouraged to do girls’ things’; ‘same sex acts are unnatural and should be forbidden’; ‘marriage is only between a man and a woman’; ‘homosexuality is a sin’; ‘trans people are a fake, one is either born male or female’, etc. In pairs, one participant had to defend one statement and the other had to



confront it. Each pair had a different statement from the list to discuss. Participants challenged different partners three times until their roles were reversed and this was repeated three more times with three different partners, so that the whole class had a chance to listen to different statements and viewpoints, both defending and attacking them. At the end of the activity, participants were asked how they felt about the exercise, what they thought they did well and not so well, and were encouraged to discuss some interesting responses and reactions. I collected a list of the things that were felt by the participants to be useful or not so when challenging homophobia in this direct way and finally, a class discussion considered how this could relate to the school environment as a whole and to English-language education in particular. The activity worked extremely well and in my opinion one of the reasons it was so successful is because it was done in English, and the participants had the possibility of expressing themselves in English in a natural way, defending or attacking homotransphobic statements, without having to talk in the wider open group, thus feeling less self-conscious and more confident about their English. Eight participants admitted finding it more difficult to defend a thought that they supported and easier to back up a thought that they did not believe in. I, the facilitator, gave instructions on how to conduct the activity and acted mainly as an observer; at the end we held a whole class discussion. The participants felt enthusiastic about this activity which, according to them, could be easily applied to EFL teaching both at primary and secondary school level, dealing with sexual identity issues or any other issue as everybody would be asked to speak in English in a natural way, stimulating their language skills, learning new vocabulary and thinking critically.

**Sessions 5 and 6** focused on gender construction in early childhood education (drawn on Robinson and Jonas Díaz, 2006) and on queering English-language teaching materials. It was a chance to talk about how our genders are shaped and how the gender binary system prevails in our culture. We also discussed cases of gender nonconforming minors, who suffer homotransphobia simply because they do not conform to their socially expected gender role and are (usually negatively) perceived as lesbians, gays or trans (see Chapter II-3.1).

*Workshop:* Deconstruction of Primary and Secondary School English-language Textbooks. The objective of this activity is to discover how gender construction in childhood and adolescent education is built through the analysis and the deconstruction of a series of EFL textbooks directed to primary but also to secondary school students used in

the schools of Granada. The textbooks examined were from the following British publishers: Oxford University Press, MacMillan, Express Publishing, and Cambridge University Press. Four groups for primary school and one for secondary school were formed. The participants had to pay particular attention to the following aspects: presence of heteronormativity, heterosexism and sexism; how family units are portrayed; clothing for girls and boys; colours for males and females (people or animals); hair-style for boys and girls; girls and boys attitudes and activities (sports/games); adjectives used for girls and boys; language and messages used by boys and girls; professions for women and men; teachers' role and gender; how teachers are depicted; sexist and heterosexist language; different ethnicities; different physical appearances and characteristics; people with different abilities; multiculturalism: if it was only British-centred or also any other English speaking country; any relation to queer issues and characters; how relationships/friendships are portrayed; and body parts. Each group exposed their findings to the rest of the class, which in general were not surprising as there was no sign of queer people or issues in any of the textbooks examined. As a whole class, the participants had to find ways to either use their findings as pedagogical opportunities or try to queerly transform the textbooks. Most participants admitted that in order to include lgbti people and discussions into the curriculum new teaching materials should be created or some sexist and heterosexist aspects of the coursebooks should be discussed in the classroom with pupils and students as a form of awareness, thus showing that sexism (especially towards women) and heterosexism are related to each other and should be regarded as gender issues. Fourteen out of sixteen participants admitted not having previously recognised the omnipresent heterosexism in English-language textbooks.

These are the main results from the activity: all participants argued that the textbooks examined were all heterosexist, that boys would never wear pink, that women are often, but not always, depicted doing stereotypically and historically female jobs, that girls always have long hair or if short they use a red or pink ribbon (even female animals), whilst boys always have short hair; girls are sometimes shown playing football and riding bicycles, but boys are never shown playing with dolls; breasts, bottom, penis and vagina are body parts which are constantly avoided. Both primary and secondary school teachers are usually women, with one or two exceptions. They look young but formal. Some books show different ethnicities; boys and girls are often shown as friends, but there is no sign of affection between people of the same sex, apart from heterosexual parents with their

children. Families are strictly married heterosexual couples usually with two children, a daughter and a son. Participants found the activity really interesting because they were not used to critically examining and deconstructing English-language textbooks and were surprised by their findings, especially how heteronormativity was not easily noticeable at first.

**Session 7** was dedicated to the movie *It's Elementary: Talking about Gay Issues in School* (Chesnoff and Cohen, 1996) and related activities from the film's guide (Chung et al., 2008). The movie was shown with Spanish subtitles, as requested by the participants. Before the screening of the film participants reflected on what kind of messages they had received about lgbt people when they were children, how these messages affected the way they see lgbt people nowadays, what kinds of messages about lgbt people children receive nowadays, and what messages they would like children to receive about lgbt people (Chung et al., 2008: 24). The film was then shown and the participants had to pay attention to the type of messages that pupils and students received in the documentary about gay and lesbian people outside the classroom and from whom.

During the screening of the film the participants could take notes and ask for it to be stopped if there were parts which were not clear. As a facilitator, I stopped the film a few times in order to ensure that everybody understood what was going on and to ask some questions. At the end of the film the participants were asked to answer in small groups of three or four the following questions:

What surprised you in this film? Who was one person with whom you identified in the film? Why? Were you surprised by the messages that students had received about LGBT people and where they had received them? What kinds of conversations do you think your students and/or children have had about LGBT people? What are the benefits of having these kinds of conversations with students? What are the challenges of having these kinds of conversations with students? What changes would you like to see in your school community? What are some next steps you will take? (Chung et al., 2008: 26)

This post-screening discussion was very lively, everyone had something to say and most participants were surprised by the spontaneity of the children and adolescents in the documentary, especially primary school pupils, who talked about gay and lesbian issues very freely and seemed very keen on learning more. In the next activity the participants had to respond to some quotes and statements from the film and say what they agreed with in each statement, what they disagreed with and what questions each statement raised (Chung et al., 2008: 27-28); it was followed by a group discussion. This activity was also

very lively and participants enjoyed it very much. The last activity was about answering difficult questions and answering to pupils' and students' questions raised in the film (Chung et al., 2008: 29-30). It was a great opportunity for the trainees to try to respond in an appropriate and constructive manner. The whole class agreed that *It's Elementary* should be shown in all schools all over the world as it is a great example of how to teach about lgbti issues with children and adolescents in a safe, constructive, intelligent and comforting environment.

**Session 8** was dedicated to the presentation of some examples of queer transformative action in EFL education offered by the facilitator. These materials served as a prompt for the participants to think about the pedagogic project (based on a full teaching unit) they would create and present in small groups in the last two sessions of the course (Unit 9). Three groups for EFL at primary school level were formed, one participant presented her project for primary school level on her own, and two for EFL at secondary school level.

*Workshop: Examples of Transformation.* In this activity participants were shown examples of transformation, such as children's books, some of which they had to read and discuss critically (e.g., Fine, 1989; Sachar, 1993; Richardson and Parnell, 2005; Walliams, 2008), a queer adaptation by the facilitator of a fairy tale: *Little Night Man* based on George Mcdonald's *Little Daylight* (see Appendix 7), the article written by Guijarro Ojeda (2006), the book written by the Italian trans activist Vladimir Luxuria (2009) on famous fables transformed to present the main characters as trans persons, and a music video by the Icelandic band Sigur Rós from 2001 about the love between two boys<sup>43</sup>. I also mentioned song lyrics, like those written by Morrissey for the 1980s British band 'The Smiths', which almost anybody could be queerly identified with as gender is often not explicit. Moreover, I talked about queer writers and their books, such as William Burroughs and Tom Spanbauer from the US. I then showed how to use a children's book for queer lesson planning: *And Tango makes three* (Richardson and Parnell, 2005) from the guide *It's Elementary: Talking about Gay Issues in School* (Chung et al., 2008: 68-71).

And finally, to relax and have a good time, I showed a sketch from the British television show *Little Britain* about 'The only gay in the village'<sup>44</sup>, and another from *The Catherine*

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<sup>43</sup> Sigur Rós 'Viorar Vel Til Loftarasa': <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=34ZtT4Th9Ys>

<sup>44</sup> <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KrlzaBNgz-M>

*Tate Show* about Derek, a gay character in denial of his homosexuality<sup>45</sup>.

After showing and analysing the above pedagogic examples, participants had to start creating their personal action plan based on queer teaching activities in EFL for primary and secondary education. Teaching activities could include writing and performing short stories, plays, working with songs, films, short films, fairytales, and any other suggestion made by the trainees. As for their final pedagogical projects, participants in groups were asked to present a full teaching unit in which they had to state most of the following: the age range aimed at, what level of English, what context, give a justification, what linguistic and extra linguistic competences are used, and the final objective(s). This had to be followed by a detailed explanation of the activities, possible follow up activities, and evaluation instruments and criteria. Participants had to present their project in front of the rest of the class with power point presentations, the Internet and any other material. The oral presentations were evaluated and discussed by the rest of the class together with me.

In order to pass the course, participants were evaluated individually (by the facilitator) on the basis of their project presentations and class participation, whilst their level of English was not considered relevant as long as they managed to present their projects in clear English.

### **1.5 Participants' teaching projects: Description and analysis**

In the last two classes (representing unit 9) five teaching projects were exposed in small groups, except from one presented by a single person on request, they were all aimed at EFL teaching either at primary or secondary school level. Although sixteen participants came to the classes on a regular basis, eighteen enrolled on the course; the two participants who could only come to some of the sessions decided to take part in the final oral presentations. That is why there are eighteen people included in the pedagogic projects instead of the sixteen examined for this course, one joined the first teaching presentation whilst the other took part in the fourth teaching presentation.

As mentioned above, each project represents a didactic unit spread into different sessions. The six pedagogic projects needed on the whole about six to seven hours to be presented and discussed; their original versions are recorded on CD (Appendix 12, available in printed form of the thesis or on request in PDF format), in which I have kept

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<sup>45</sup> <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=b5DGEvaZXck>

their English, apart from some minor corrections to make them clearer to the reader. Here I will offer a summary of each of them, followed by short comments.

*The first teaching project* aimed at primary school pupils, in their first or second year, was presented by three participants. It is called ‘Who is this?’. Its main objective is to recognise different family units using the book *One dad, two dads, brown dad, blue dads* (Valentine, 2004). The didactic unit is distributed into various activities and pupils are supposed to possess a basic knowledge of English related to vocabulary about family and colours. The objective is for pupils to acquire awareness, respect and understanding of different family models. Children in the first activity have to sing a song in English about families and talk about their own families/guardians with other pupils. By using flash cards pupils should recognise and say the family members (mum, dad, etc.) in English. They then have to draw the family members of their own family unit. Afterwards, pictures of families of different ethnicities are shown, followed by pictures of families with two daddies, two mummies, one single mother, one mother and one father. Pupils have to recognise the members of each family using the corresponding English vocabulary. At the end of these activities, pupils are asked to study and repeat the new vocabulary, as well as write a short text on the concepts learned related to different family units, based on what they have seen/heard in class from the teacher and from the other pupils.

This presentation (and teaching project) was positively evaluated especially because we found it feasible and quite easy to organise in a context of young English-language learners.

*The second pedagogic project* for primary school pupils, aged 8, was presented by three participants and is based on the book *10,000 dresses* (Ewert, 2008). The main goal of this teaching unit is for pupils to accept other children as they are and as they want to be and it is called ‘Accept yourself’; the whole unit requires more or less two hours to be carried out. Before presenting the story, the teacher illustrates the new vocabulary related to the book. Books like *10,000 dresses* are written for native speakers of English and they must therefore be adapted for non-native learners. The first exercise consists of pupils’ self description through drawings; they can use their fantasy and describe themselves, for example, as animals or flowers. The drawings are then passed around the class and pupils have to guess who is who. Afterwards the story is read by the teacher showing the illustrations in the book and trying to show how Bailey (the protagonist) feels about his/her gender and how much s/he desires to wear beautiful dresses. After reading and discussing

the story, pupils are asked to give their opinions of it. The main objective is to understand that to be different is common and ‘normal’, by doing so pupils also learn new vocabulary in English. The group also suggested as part of their project showing the Spanish short film *Vestido Nuevo* (Sergi Pérez, 2007) in which Mario, the protagonist, goes to his primary school wearing a dress. The film is in Spanish but discussion could be held in English. Pupils are asked in English what they would do if they were Mario or if they had a child like Mario in the class: would they support him? Would some identify with him in the same or in a different way? Pupils are evaluated according to their participation in the activities. This pedagogic project was also well evaluated and appreciated by everyone in the classroom, we highly enjoyed the short film and the way it was exploited in a critical and constructive way, making pupils reflect on gender nonconforming children and their wishes.

*The third didactic project* was presented by four participants and is aimed at 5 to 9 year-old primary school children. It is called ‘The atypical duckling’ based on the children’s book *The sissy duckling* (Fierstein, 2002). The whole teaching unit is supposed to last about two hours. In this unit pupils learn vocabulary related to animals and how to disclose their likes and dislikes in English. The main objective is to recognise and understand difference. The story was adapted and transformed into simpler English and new drawings. The duckling in the adapted story is male and instead of enjoying playing football he prefers skating which is regarded by other ducks and animals as a feminine activity. At the end of the story ‘the atypical duckling’ explains that he loves skating because it is great fun and wins the respect of the other ducks. Pupils through the reading and the discussion of the adapted story should be able to produce simple written texts on similar stories in English and to act them out in the classroom as role plays. Evaluation is based on class participation, development of the activities, purpose of their story, as well as originality of their own short stories.

Together with the other participants, I thought that the adaptation of the story in simpler English worked out very well, that it was easy to follow and that pupils would certainly understand it and actively participate in all its activities.

*The fourth teaching project*, the last offered to primary school pupils, was developed by a single student who took a strong interest in trans issues. The unit is called ‘We have to understand transsexuality’. The objective is for pupils to understand the needs of transgender and transsexual people in our current society. Pupils learn a lot of new

vocabulary related to trans identities through pictures, videos and drawings. This participant wanted to highlight an aspect often avoided in education: gender variant/trans pupils.

Although both the idea and the intention of this unit were brilliant, most of the other participants thought it would be very difficult for primary school pupils to understand all the new vocabulary related to trans people in English (including hormone therapy and sex reassignment surgery) and maybe the approach should have been lighter and more appropriate to younger children. We all appreciated her efforts and the research she had done and how much she had learnt through it and by presenting her findings to the rest of the participants. However, we suggested her teaching project be simplified and concentrate more on gender variant children or gender nonconforming minors, by promoting their integration into the education system and by using simpler English.

*The fifth didactic project* was developed by three participants. It is aimed at the last two years of secondary school and it is based on the film *Brokeback Mountain* by Ang Lee (2005). It is called 'Brokeback Mountain: A pedagogical approach to LGBTI issues.' The main objectives of the unit are: teaching queer vocabulary (queer, LGBTI, heteronormativity), discussing the homophobia in the film and the reactions received by the general public when the film came out, and making students aware of sexual identity issues which are still considered taboo in education. This teaching unit requires about three to four hours and is organised into a pre-listening/watching activity, a while-listening/watching activity and a post-listening/watching activity. The first activity consists of brainstorming what students think about the film, what comes into their minds, whether they have heard of it or seen it. By doing so, the teacher can get an idea of students' perceptions and assumptions about the film and its theme. In the next activity, students have to match some key words from the film with their definitions, in order to learn new English vocabulary. After that, the film is shown with English subtitles due to the difficulty of the level of English and accents in the film. During the screening students have to concentrate on the main themes in the film and then in small groups discuss them. They should be able to give an oral summary of the story, including their own opinions. In the follow up activity the teacher asks some comprehension questions about the film related to the love relationship between the two protagonists (Jack and Ennis). Through these questions students are invited to think about the difficulties Jack and Ennis had to go through in order to keep their love alive. Students should be able to understand the pressure the two men suffered as well as the homophobia



and the heteronormativity which permeate the film. The teaching unit will end with a class debate in which students have to discuss the limitations of heteronormativity and the notion of 'love' related to any kind of relationship. Evaluation is done through class participation.

This presentation was highly praised highlighting the clear, feasible and precise activities and objectives. 'Brokeback Mountain' is one of the milestone queer films and, as demonstrated by the three trainees, it can be easily exploited pedagogically in order to unveil homophobia and heteronormativity as well as to show a touching love story between two men who do not identify themselves as 'gay', or 'queer', as they say in the film.

*The sixth and last teaching project* was presented by four participants and is aimed at the last two years of secondary school. It is named 'Learning to be yourself'. It is based on the film *Boys don't cry* (Kimberly Peirce, 1999) as well as the homonymous song *Boys don't cry* by the British band 'The Cure' (1979). The main objectives are to discuss family structures and to understand queer terminology and key vocabulary in English. The duration of this unit is of about four sessions of one hour each. All the four learning skills (listening, speaking, reading and writing) would be covered in the sessions. The first activity consists of a brainstorming about the meanings students give to gender and sexual roles; their ideas are written down on pieces of paper. Students also have to describe and write on the same piece of paper what it means to be a girl and what it means to be a boy. It is a warm-up activity before showing the film with English subtitles due to the unfamiliarity with the Texan accent. The film is divided into three parts of forty minutes each. After showing each part, the teacher asks questions about the students' experience related to what they have seen in the movie. The film protagonist is a transgender person, female to male, so students would learn about trans identities. They would also have an opportunity to learn vocabulary and culture related to Texas. After showing the third part of the film, they are asked to write a composition on their opinion on sex reassignment surgery. The follow-up activity is related to the song *Boys don't cry* by 'The Cure'. Students listen to the song and read its lyrics, and a connection between the film and the song is discussed. They debate in groups the meaning of the song and after viewing the film and listening to the song, they discuss their own definitions of gender roles written down on pieces of paper handed out in the first activity and decide whether they can be modified; students are allowed to write new definitions and throw the first ones away and

explain why to the rest of the class. Critical thinking is triggered in all the activities and students are evaluated through class participation. The final results of this didactic unit should aim at facilitating the integration of queer students in education as well as blurring and breaking the binary opposites (male/female; heterosexual/homosexual).

The presentation was positively evaluated underlining its well thought-out preparation and the value given to the theme of the activity: transphobia, cissexism and cisnormativity. I was personally glad that such a theme could be part of one of these projects since I believe trans persons need more visibility in order to be accepted and respected in our society.

Hopefully, these pre-service English-language teachers will be able to implement and use these didactic projects in their teaching experience which, in my opinion, are great pedagogic tools to counter homotransphobia and heterosexism in education and prove that queer issues can be easily taught in English-language education without fearing too much the ignorance, taboo and barriers which still exist worldwide towards them in education. I would like to point out again that these are all new pedagogical materials which could be used by anyone interested in treating gender and sexual identities in EFL education, which represents one of the specific objectives of this work.

## **1.6 Participants' course evaluations**

The course was evaluated three times through a mid-course written evaluation, a final course written evaluation and a recorded group discussion at the end of the course (representing Unit 10 – see 1.6.3 below). The written course evaluations were partially drawn on the GLEE Training Course Evaluation Sheet (GLEE, 2002: 183-184). All sixteen participants completed the written forms, whilst thirteen participants came to the last class for the oral group discussion; three of them were not able to attend it because of their jobs or exams. Nevertheless, I received 100% of the written evaluations, which is very rewarding, so that I was able to receive feedback from everybody even if three participants could not come to the final class.

### **1.6.1 Mid-course written evaluation: Data analysis**

This evaluation, an online anonymous questionnaire (see Appendix 4), was related to the organisation and appraisal of the course half way through. Here I will just write a summary of the participants' responses.

All sixteen participants found the course well or very well organised and admitted that it had met their expectations, apart from three who wanted more practical sessions. The following, in descending order, is what they found most useful: the first session about learning new queer terminology, the practical activities in general, the class participation, the exchange of participants' life experiences and the summary of the most important theoretical notions. As for the least useful sessions, ten participants agreed that it was the one related to queer theory because they found it difficult to grasp at times; whilst eight argued that the theoretical texts they had to read before each class were too long, but agreed that they were useful. Five did not feel totally comfortable with the English used in class, they sometimes found it difficult to understand everything, but they always asked for clarifications when needed and were happy to learn. All the others found the English used in class easy to follow. Queer terminology was more difficult to understand for most at first but after a few classes it became easily assimilated. Queer theory and transformative pedagogy became clearer through class explanations and examples. They all enjoyed the class and group workshops, sharing ideas, practising English, and learning actively about queer pedagogical strategies. They mostly enjoyed the workshop about how homophobia affects everybody.

### **1.6.2 Final course written evaluation: Data analysis**

All sixteen participants sent the completed anonymous questionnaire by email which consisted of sixteen questions (see Appendix 5). Here I will write each question followed by a summary of the participants' responses.

#### *1. How did you feel about this training course and its teaching methodology?*

All the participants, with some variations, enjoyed the course and its methodology. Five felt a little bit embarrassed at first about the issues discussed and also about the lack of confidence in their English. One said to have felt shy at first but then happy because s/he felt more comfortable. Another wrote: "It was very interesting and was dealt without taboos, I feel like wanting to teach even more now!", which is a rewarding comment. One participant admitted that it was very well organised especially for those who want to become teachers and that there was a lot to apply to for future teaching experiences. Only one participant mentioned here that there was too much theory, but s/he enjoyed both the organisation and the course methodology. Finally, due to the length of some of the theoretical texts and the summary of the power point presentations in class, another

participant, who might have had previous knowledge of the issues, suggested that the facilitator (I) could have made the course more entertaining at times as s/he felt a bit bored with some of the theory.

2. *How well do you think the course met its stated objectives?*<sup>46</sup>

All participants agreed that most course objectives were met. One participant would have wanted to do more workshops; another admitted not having been aware of heteronormativity before; two more stressed the importance of receiving a great deal of new information and also the motivation received which contributed to their active participation.

3. *What would you say overall were the three best things about the course?*

I will reproduce the answers I received from each participant who commented on the three best things about the course, each answer is separated by a full-stop:

“Teaching how to face these issues with students, the workshops and the various videos we watched. Talking in English, the issue studied and meeting new people. Group works, preparation of pedagogic unit and good character and behaviour of the teacher. The teacher, *It’s Elementary*, and the presentation of the didactic projects. The use of English, *It’s Elementary* and the group works. The teacher, what we learnt and the presentation of the teaching units. The interactivity with the teacher, group works and presentation of the didactic units. The people in the class, the teacher and the new information. The methodology, the documentary *It’s Elementary* and the bibliography. The terminology, the methodology and the help from the teacher. Learning about tolerance, respect and sexual identities. A reduced class, so I felt more confident, the fact that the course was in English, the teacher and the efforts he made to make the course more pleasurable. Class discussions, videos and films of real cases, and the presentations of the pedagogic projects. Relationship between the teacher and the students, practical activities and number of students. The teacher, concepts and practical activities. Finally: The course objectives, the teaching methodology and learning English”.

4. *Which sessions did you find least useful and why?*

Eleven out of sixteen participants found the sessions related to theory to be the least useful, although they found theory necessary as most participants did not possess enough information on queer issues prior to the course. Two added that in order to perform

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<sup>46</sup> See Appendix 5 for the course objectives.

practice, theory is necessary. At least five participants admitted that they did not find any sessions useless.

*5. Did you understand all the English used in class?*

Five participants observed that they did not feel totally at ease with their English and although they said they had understood almost everything, they showed limitations when they wanted to speak in the classroom. These five participants also had some problems with the course terminology and three of them would have preferred to have spoken in Spanish at times, although they all appreciated that the course was offered entirely in English and this had been one of their reasons for joining the course in the first place. On the other hand, eleven participants admitted having understood all the English used in class and were pleased to practice it.

*6. Was there a good balance between theory and practice?*

Ten participants believed that practice should have been given more importance to help assimilate all the theoretical concepts, as the course was short (forty hours) and intensive (four hours per class). The rest admitted that there was a fair balance, even if they would have preferred more practical activities. Two participants underlined the importance of theory and would have wanted a more extensive bibliography. One wrote: “Yes, there was a balance, although it felt that there was more theory because sometimes it might be perceived as boring, but in reality the theory was necessary for the practice”.

*7. What would you have done differently and why?*

Half of the cohort would have reduced the theory, offering shorter summaries, and increasing the practical activities. One participant would have offered all the theory first and then the practice. Time was a problem for six participants: four needed more to cover everything well and requested a longer course; and, again, two would have limited the length of the class as four hours were considered to be too long.

*8. Do you think you have learned something from this training course? If yes, what?*

They all admitted having learnt a lot from the course, mainly the awareness of heteronormativity, strategies on how to counter homotransphobia especially in primary education, and how to develop a teaching unit based on EFL education and sexual identity issues for primary and secondary education. One participant wrote: “Many things, but especially not to underestimate primary school pupils’ capacity for understanding sexual identity issues”.

9. *Do you feel more empowered now to begin working on challenging homophobia and heterosexism in EFL education (primary or secondary school)? Please, explain.*

All participants admitted having felt more empowered after the course and having acquired more knowledge, information and security. One participant observed: “Yes, it is a subject that needs discussion at primary school as it is very important, but it is still considered taboo”.

10. *After this course, do you think you would be able to discuss sexual identities with your pupils as part of your teaching programme? Or would you wait for the issue to come up spontaneously in the class? Why?*

Ten participants argued that it should be part of their teaching programme in order to avoid improvisations; whilst six would wait for the issue to come up spontaneously, although one of these six admitted that it is bound to come up anyway.

11. *What obstacles do you think you might find in your future school if you intended discussing sexual identities (lgbt people)? How would you try to overcome these obstacles?*

Twelve participants agreed that the major obstacle to teaching sexuality issues is represented by the students’ parents or the school itself (classmates, colleagues and headteachers), especially if it is a religious school. As a solution to this problem, nine participants suggested showing the parents the documentary *It’s Elementary* as well as trying to make them aware of the relationship between homotransphobia and any other form of social discrimination and injustice.

12. *Are you more aware now of heteronormativity and homophobia in education (especially in English-language teaching) than before the commencement of the course?*

They all said they were more aware of the presence of heteronormativity and homophobia in English-language education. Twelve were surprised because they had never noticed how heteronormative the school system is. One participant wrote: “Absolutely, I did not know about its existence before the course”; another was aware but did not have the means to fight against it; one asserted: “Of course, it’s the purpose of the course”; whilst another observed that they were more noticeable after analysing the textbooks, especially heteronormativity.

*13. After this course, would you say it is easier to discuss sexual identities with primary school pupils or secondary school students? Why?*

Eleven believed that it is easier to treat queer issues at primary school level than secondary school level, thus reversing the initial assumption made by most in the initial questionnaire. This was helped, according to them, by the class activities, pedagogical strategies and the film *It's Elementary*. Nine participants asserted that primary school pupils are generally more receptive and curious in the subject than secondary school students who might already have a biased opinion on the issue. One participant commented:

For me it is still easier at secondary school because students might understand it better, before the course I thought the topic could only be dealt with by 'experts' in sexuality and psychologists, but now I believe teachers can do it.

Another wrote: "Primary school pupils, after seeing *It's Elementary*, because they can understand better prejudices and could be more open-minded and respect better the teacher than secondary school students". This is one of the various reasons why the majority of the course participants believed primary school pupils could be more receptive and understanding than secondary school students. Other reasons were that the course helped a participant understand that these issues can be taught at primary school level and s/he thought it was the greatest achievement of the course. Finally, another stated that it is more important at primary school since it is the time when pupils develop their personality and opinions.

*14. Do you think that English-language teachers should be trained in how to treat sexual identity issues? Why?*

They all believed that training courses should be offered to in-service primary and secondary school English-language teachers as part of their learning process as well as to pre-service teachers. According to eight participants, training is needed because sexuality issues are still considered taboo, but since they come up continuously, educators need to be ready to face them adequately. One student commented: "Yes, because a foreign language should be studied taking into account all the linguistic and sociolinguistic aspects, as sexual identities are part of cultures and societies". Finally, another observed that they are necessary because they are contemporary topics.

*15. Would you recommend this training course?*

For the same reasons expressed above, all participants would recommend this training course. Two participants were worried about homophobic reactions in their future classes

and would feel strange talking about queer issues as they considered them to be personal issues. They admitted that this fear was created by observing real life outside the course classroom, where homotransphobia and heterosexism are still rampant in education. Finally, one claimed that it should be offered especially to all people working with children and to pre-service and in-service teachers of all subject areas.

*16. Please use this space to make any further comments and/or suggestions.*

This is a summary of the most salient opinions: the course should be longer and less intensive; there should be less theory; they enjoyed the latent empowerment they received, especially for child education; six thanked the facilitator for teaching them about sexual identity issues and for keeping the course entirely in English. Seven admitted having become better teachers and insisted that the course should be part of the university curriculum in order to provide training for all future educators. One participant commented:

I just really want to thank Stefano for being so nice with us, for having that patience that he had, and for teaching us so much about ourselves. The course has been extraordinary and I have become a better teacher and person. I never thought of this problematic issue despite of my academic background and Stefano has opened our minds up. I also want to strongly suggest the need for keeping the course in English. Albeit several people expressed difficulties in speaking in English, I believe it to be necessary because otherwise we are not going to learn the vocabulary. In addition, there are few courses given in English and most of these future teachers need more fluent English since they are going to be teaching that language. And I also want to encourage strongly the organisers of the course to keep on doing it every year.

And finally another:

It should be part of the degree in Education and 'English Philology' and since that is not the case, at least students should have the right to choose to teach freely and prejudice-free. Because of the atmosphere in the classroom, I really think that those of us who have gone regularly to class have dramatically changed our way of thinking. That is why I would like to thank all of you who have organised it, but especially Stef for having taught us the special nature of being equal in difference.

### **1.6.3 Final course recorded oral evaluation: Data analysis**

The 30-minute recorded group discussion (representing Unit 10) took place in the last part of the final class as a closure activity for the course. The transcription can be found in Appendix 6, in which I did not make any changes to the participants' English, apart from when a sentence was not clear, in order to keep it as close as possible to the original spoken discussion. It was an informal and semi-controlled talk in which participants were asked to discuss the likes and dislikes of the course and their general impressions. Thirteen



out of sixteen could participate in this last class; the three missing had already presented their teaching projects the previous session and were not able to attend the last one due to work or exams. I had told the course participants about this recorded discussion throughout the course and a few students did not seem to be at ease about being recorded. I reminded them that a recorded evaluation is important to gather valid data from a course and for research purposes. Those who felt shy about being recorded at first, in the end accepted to be recorded just with a microphone. So, everybody accepted being recorded and they all showed interest and willingness to participate in this final group discussion.

The following is a comprehensive account of the participants' contributions. In most cases when I quote them I kept their own English; I only slightly changed it when it was not totally clear. P stands for participant, in chronological order, and F for facilitator. It is important to state here that being in chronological order, the numbers after the P are not associated with the initials 'W' and 'M' that I used in table 3 for the initial questionnaire. Since this was a recorded evaluation, at the time of transcription I could not identify exactly who was who because I could only hear their voices. It is another form of maintaining their confidentiality, although they talked very openly and it might be easy for the reader to identify some of the participants and relate them to table 3 above.

I must admit that for some participants it was easier to speak in English than others, so some of these participants took the floor; nonetheless, I tried to involve everyone by directing questions to those who did not speak at first, even in Spanish if they were not comfortable in English. I started the discussion by asking the group their impressions of the course, including the negative ones.

P1 complained that there were too many theoretical texts to read. All the other participants agreed with her. She also said: "For me it would be better a little less, make a summary of them, use pictures, make them somehow more dynamic, it's too much to read and we have to read it". I asked the participants if they understood why I did it and P2 replied that they needed to learn the notions, but maybe texts should have been shorter. P1 added that the main problem was time, that they needed more time to read and assimilate everything, so a longer course would have served this purpose better. P3 recommended that some notions like 'queer' or 'gender' should have been analysed more in depth in order to improve the difference among diverse theories which describe them and, according to him, each theory should be applied to specific areas, like for example trans or intersex identities. He also commented that he was really glad about the course, but he did

not like how I stopped the film *It's Elementary* various times, as it was disrupting for him and he would have preferred to have seen it all first and then discussed it. I asked the other participants if they had the same perception when I stopped the documentary every time I thought it was necessary. P4 said that I did it because I wanted them to understand everything, to which I commented that some participants did not possess the same knowledge as others. P1 reiterated what she said before, that the big problem was time, that they needed more.

As for the theoretical texts, I underlined that they were for them to keep as future references, as I always showed power point summaries in the classroom, which they also had to read and keep as references. However, I did apologise if they thought there were too many texts to read. At this point P2 intervened again:

And one thing, you don't have to apologise because there was too much theory, we are all very big, we're at university, we're adults, if we want we read it. You did not ask us to read it as if we were little children 'Have you read it?', so it is our responsibility.

I added that in the end I made a summary of all the important concepts used throughout the course which we all discussed in the classroom and which everybody agreed it was good and important. I also said that there was no evaluation for the reading texts, that they were summaries of other summaries that I had made, but I did not realise they could have been too long for them. P5 reiterated what we had been saying from the beginning:

Yes, I think the problem is the time not the theoretical part, because I know we need it to understand everything, to analyse the books, to watch the movie, to understand what heteronormativity is and whatever, but I think we need more time to go through it all.

I replied it was a good point and that I should have made it clearer from the beginning what the main purpose of these reading texts was. P4 commented again: "We had the programme, so I think that you have covered every main subject, this is quite difficult to see, because in these years I've been to university, no teacher covered the whole programme".

At this point I asked them to concentrate on something that they liked. P1 apologised for intervening again and said:

I really enjoyed this course, because I know I'm going to use a lot of what I learnt here in my practice, classes, also I practiced here with all the things that I learnt, I'm going to be aware with the words that I choose, you know, like when I talk about families, when I talk about love or when I talk about gender.

I asked her if she could give examples of what she said and she replied:

Of course, also something happened in my practice, they talked to a guy (using homophobic slurs), well, and I said ‘what happens here?’ and I decided to talk to them and to use things I’ve learnt, so I’m happy for this course.

To which I commented that it was good because she managed to use what she learnt in the course in a real teaching situation. Then P5 decided to speak in Spanish as he felt more comfortable and affirmed that he learnt a lot of strategies that he could use in the future. P6 said also in Spanish that she liked it especially because it was given in English. I observed that the level of English could be a problem in a mixed-ability class, but nobody was judged or evaluated for their English. All the participants admitted having understood everything I said in class, but for some it was difficult to express themselves in English. P7 commented:

I also liked the confidence of the people, to express themselves, sometimes we had the opportunity in the class to talk; I also liked the day that you made the activity group (‘Challenging stereotypes and myths’), that was quite remarkable!

Whilst P8 added: “I was not expecting it was going to be like that, people were talking to each other a lot and discussing”. I replied that I wanted to do more similar activities but I could not because of the space of the classroom and the limited time. Then P9 said: “I think sometimes it was difficult to talk about it because we did not have enough information, now we have some information, and for some people it was difficult to say what they really wanted to say”. Whilst P10 commented: “For me it was a very useful course because we learned new concepts, and I learned how to deal with these issues at school, before this course I would have not known how to do it”. To which I replied that I was really pleased. I then asked how they would feel about treating homophobia and heterosexism at school. P11 said in Spanish (the translation is mine):

It is important for my future as a primary school teacher, because I might find myself dealing with these situations, and the true is that before, in this university faculty, nobody had ever taught us how to treat problems with children, not only of this type, so, I’ve found various things in the course that will be useful for my future.

I argued that it was really important that she managed to implement what she learnt in her teaching practice. I then asked if they felt they had enough information, materials and if they felt more empowered and more aware of sexuality issues. They all said yes and P1 observed: “With things about that at least it makes you aware of what’s happening, maybe before it was ‘blind’ for us”. Whilst P2 commented: “At the beginning I could not see heteronormativity, now I see it everywhere, everyday, it’s terrible!”. I told her if she remembered when she asked me at first about heteronormativity and she replied: “Yes and

I've also changed my mind about some concepts, for example, how to deal with the issue with small children, at the beginning I was against it, and now I think it's important and it's easier". I asked the rest of the group if they thought the same and they all said yes and then I wanted to know why it is important to teach these issues at an early age. P13 observed that children do not have many prejudices, whilst P3 argued that it is easier to communicate with children than adults.

I then moved on by inquiring what things they enjoyed the most in the course. P8 said the games, the activities, the group works, the workshops and the videos. P12 agreed and added in Spanish (the translation is mine):

I'd like to highlight the teaching method; I have used the issue of transsexuality. I really liked it because I saw the video and the documentary, characters that suffered and are still suffering, because there are many people who don't know what to think, they're ignorant and this ignorance hurts. For me it was great, very inspiring because it made us feel more mature.

Both P5 and P13 enjoyed all the practical activities, especially 'Challenging stereotypes and myths'. P9 and P10 also enjoyed watching and discussing the documentary *It's Elementary*. P11 liked the group of participants, the teaching method and the final presentations. P1 argued that one of the most important things for her was the fact that the course was given entirely in English. P4 said that that was the main reason she chose the course. P13 observed it was good that they had to listen to and speak in English for eight hours a week. And P10 added:

Also, it is a challenge, because it is difficult to talk about this topic in Spanish, even more in English, we try to understand everything in English, also talking in English, I mean, also explain to them, to children, make it easier for people of 8, 10 or 12 years, it's a challenge for us.

I commented that I liked the fact that they lived it as a challenge. To which P2 said:

Another challenge: sometimes I was nervous because I was afraid to be misunderstood when I spoke in English and I was all the time, but because you act not like a traditional teacher it was not like very serious class, a lot of fun there was mmmh, all these things but not a traditional class, so I was comfortable, also to state other things.

I asked what she meant by a traditional class. She replied that it was one in which the teachers always sit down, never stand up, they speak and all the students are quiet and are only allowed to ask politically correct questions. I asked the group if they expected the course to be like a lecture and they all said no, and I was pleased about that. S11 in Spanish observed that the group dynamics helped a lot to improve her English, even if she found them hard because they had to be done in English. P5 said that also for him the class

workshops were important especially the one in which they were forced to defend or attack different opinions on sexuality issues in English ('Challenging stereotypes and myths'). He also admitted having learnt a lot from the final presentations.

I then asked for something negative about the course. Everybody said there was too much theory. P6 added (not negatively) in Spanish that she enjoyed all the practical activities as they were good ways to improve their English and observed: "As I said before, I found the subject very interesting because it is something that we never do, ever; also the documentary was interesting and all the videos we saw in class, also the music ones". P2 suggested keeping in touch and sending more information also about future courses of this type.

As for the most recurring negative thing everybody agreed again on the theory, they found the theoretical texts too long to read, although P6 observed that it was important to learn new things. Everybody would recommend the course. P6 also commented: "For me the course is really good, but the most important thing is that I can't speak in English but I could make it". I told her that I was very glad that she could make it and understand everything almost like everybody else. Everybody admitted having improved their English but having felt nervous during their final oral presentations. I replied that they all did very well and I thanked them very much for everything, to which they all responded with: "Thank you!".

### **1.7 Results and discussion presented by emerging themes**

The general satisfaction with the course was quite high and I was really pleased with their evaluations and the nice atmosphere created during the lessons. The participants opened themselves up throughout the course due to the issues discussed which were liberating for most of them, and this might have contributed to the relaxing and pleasant environment experienced in the classroom.

The participants' answers from the written evaluations were confirmed in more depth in the final class discussion, which worked out well even if it was semi-controlled and I started by asking their impressions of the course. Not surprisingly, the first participants who spoke better English took the floor and critiqued some aspects but also gave some very useful suggestions. I then managed to control the conversation better by asking questions and getting everybody involved. Nonetheless, I will have to manage the oral evaluations better for future courses by asking just a few general questions.

Between the evaluations and the classroom observation, notes and discussions, I have identified seven important recurring themes based on frequency and relevance. Some of them were critiques which I had to take into account together with the participants' suggestions to find solutions to them. Others were positive appraisals of the course, which served to confirm the thesis objectives and to answer the research questions.

### *1. There was too much theory*

Eight participants in the mid-course written evaluation complained that the theoretical texts to read before each class were too long and this was confirmed by the majority of the participants in the final written and oral course evaluations. Their suggestion was to keep the texts shorter or just use the summaries of the power point presentations in class, thus reducing the amount of information received. In reality these texts were 15-25 pages each, double spaced, but most participants admitted in class not having enough time to read them due to their university studies. I will have to consider shorter texts or less theory for future courses, although not everyone wanted less theory. Those who found the theory less stimulating were also those who found it difficult to understand at first, both for the concepts, the new terminology and the English used. As a consequence, they requested more practical activities. Therefore, for future courses I will try to give practice more relevance, since theory can always be retrieved from the texts I send by email, the books and articles, from the references, and from many resources found on the Internet; and participants can ask any questions about theory in class. Also, I should have made it clearer from the first class that the theoretical texts were especially for them to keep as future references and concentrate on the main issues presented in the form of summaries in the classroom. The idea of offering all the theory at first as suggested by one participant could be risky as it might result in a rather boring course; moreover, I believe that theory should be followed by practice straight away. Finally, for future courses it is my intention to include more trans and intersex identities in the course material and theory, as suggested by two participants in the classroom.

### *2. The time issue*

In order to be able to read and analyse all the theoretical texts, participants suggested a longer course with fewer hours per class. Time and timing are often a problem in a course, as time is needed to cover all the parts of the programme, which I could not fully achieve since sometimes I had to give priority to what the participants wanted me to explain, both

in terms of sexual identity issues and the use of English. This slowed the course down a little, but I found it necessary. Moreover, as the course was given between November and December, a longer one would have meant continuing into January after the holidays, which would have been far more distracting and probably less feasible for obvious reasons. Thus, one solution could be offering a Master's degree, as suggested in class by some participants, but the procedures are far more complicated and a course supported by the International Postgraduate School of the University of Granada is the normal first step for this praxis. However, despite this lack of time, one participant highlighted that the course covered all the aspects of the programme, which, according to her, was surprising.

### *3. Appreciation of practical workshops*

They all admitted having enjoyed all the workshops, especially 'Challenging stereotypes and myths' as it was a great opportunity for them to use their English and put into practice their own life experience together with what they had learnt in the course. They also enjoyed the films we discussed in class, notably the documentary *It's Elementary* and its related activities, as well as having learnt a lot through their oral presentation teaching projects. Moreover, they commented that the practical activities worked well because of the good relationship with the facilitator and the teaching methodology employed in the classroom. Furthermore, they all found the strategies learnt in class to counter homotransphobia and how to develop a queer pedagogic unit very useful. These activities made them aware of the presence of heteronormativity in EFL education and twelve participants admitted being surprised by this.

One participant argued that the course was especially helpful because students are not normally encouraged to think critically in education by means of group activities and workshops. However, another criticised the course for not being dynamic enough suggesting more role-play or creative activities, which was also a request expressed in the evaluation of the Leadership Training Course of the GLEE Project (Bedford, 2009: 171).

### *4. English as a language barrier*

Some participants (five or six out of sixteen) possessed a lower level of English than others and they sometimes struggled when they wanted to participate in class conversations or when they presented their final projects. This is a common problem in a mixed-ability foreign or second language class, where some students possess higher knowledge of the language than others. In the second part of the course I tried to use simpler English and I

made sure that everybody could participate actively, also in Spanish if they did not feel comfortable speaking English. It is quite normal to expect these reactions, even if nobody was judged in class for their level of English. Nonetheless, it is highly comforting that everybody enjoyed the exclusive use of English during the course as they admitted having improved their English-language skills and felt relaxed enough to ask me anything they needed. Although the course participants were all native speakers of Spanish, but with different levels of English, language as a power issue was also critiqued in the Pilot Leadership Training Course of the GLEE Project:

One of the observations during the *Pilot Leadership Training Course* was that native English speakers spoke in workshops disproportionately more than non-natives. This power issue that led to exclusion raised concerns that it went against the principle of fostering cross-cultural dialogue. (Bedford, 2009: 171)

The course participants' comments analysed for this theme reflect the final objectives of the course itself which, apart from teaching how to deal with sexual identity issues, was offered entirely in English, so that participants could improve their level of the language as well as learn new queer terminology, which was appreciated by everyone. Moreover, they were all happy that the course was given in English and this was one of the main reasons they decided to participate and they lived it as a challenge gaining more confidence on their understanding of the language throughout the course.

##### *5. Change of initial perception of themes related to gender and sexual identities*

The most remarkable change is related to the initial participants' position (eleven out of sixteen) that it was easier to teach sexuality issues in secondary education than primary education. Towards the end of the course, and confirmed both in the classroom and in the course evaluations, this was reversed as eleven out of sixteen believed it was easier to do so with primary school children. According to these eleven participants, children do not have prejudices, they can think critically, they possess their own knowledge, and it is somehow easier to communicate with children than teenagers. Throughout the course they also learned that they do not need to talk about sex (as in sexual acts) with their pupils and students, but rather focusing on sexual identities as cultural entities within the spectrum of human rights and social (in)justice.

They also became more sensitive about sexuality issues and were even more surprised about the presence of heteronormativity in EFL education towards the end of the course. One student admitted that those who went regularly to the class (the vast majority) had dramatically changed their way of thinking about gender issues and the course contributed



to broadening their minds. Two more students commented that they would be afraid of homophobic reactions if they treated sexuality issues in their classroom. This reaction was mainly provoked by observing the homotransphobic reality outside the safety environment of our classroom, which they were not aware of before the commencement of the course. A slight majority (about ten) also commented during the last classes that they would inform pupils' and students' parents when they intend discussing sexuality issues by inviting them to the school to see the movie *It's Elementary* and to show that homophobia and transphobia should be treated as social discriminations, like others.

#### *6. Use of class material for future teaching experiences*

It is really encouraging to realise how the participants took the issue very seriously and were prepared to use the course material in their own teaching experience, paying attention to the language they would use. One participant stated that she had actually used what she had learnt in the course in a homophobic situation during her training period. This answers the main research question, as these materials and the willingness to treat sexual identity issues from the course participants are a contribution to social and institutional transformation in favour of a more equitable society for lgbti persons. By using their valuable queer pedagogical materials of the final course presentations for their future teaching career, participants will be able to transform their latent empowerment into an active one.

#### *7. Importance of being trained*

All participants appreciated the training course and underlined in the final oral course evaluation the importance of being trained to counter homotransphobia, gender binarism and heterosexism in EFL education for their professional development. For them, gender and sexual identity issues should be part of the teaching curriculum and should be treated as social injustice and discrimination, especially because they tend to come up in class conversations anyway. In fact, they all admitted that they had not received any training in these issues prior to the commencement of the course, whilst they considered it fundamental for all teachers and educators, thus justifying the importance of such a course.

This training course aroused the participants' awareness of the presence of homotransphobia and heterosexism in education and offered them latent teacher empowerment in the area of EFL education. One participant confirmed this by stating that during the course they became better teachers thanks to the course methodological

approach and how naturally sexuality issues were discussed in the classroom enhancing their security to deal with these themes. Other participants found the methodological approach innovative and said they had learnt a great deal from it, and also from my way of teaching and facilitating, which was appreciated. It is comforting that they managed to relate sexual and gender issues to English-language teaching.

However, most participants observed that sexuality issues should be addressed in all school subjects. This was also one of the reasons for offering another course in Spanish for both teachers and university students of different educational disciplines. In other words, the course participants of this training course given in English requested a broader course in all subject areas, also in Spanish. That is why, as a form of progression, I decided to organise a course in Spanish and in general education on the same themes, which will be presented in the second part of this chapter.

## **2 Teacher training course in Spanish on gender and sexual identities**

### **2.1 Course presentation and organisation**

Following the promising results of the training course on sexual identities for EFL primary and secondary school student teachers, another course was organised, open to anybody interested in gender and sexual identity issues. In order to do so, I had to enlarge the course target and offer it in Spanish, so that both university students and teachers of diverse educational disciplines and levels could join the course. In this way, I could compare the two courses and apply some of the requests made by the participants of the course given in English and discover, through the participants' evaluations, if this latest course was better organised and evaluated.

The course was given in the Spring of 2013 and it took me quite a long time to organise it, to collect all the material and to plan the entire course and each lesson. The course director was Dr Juan Ramón Guijarro Ojeda, who helped me with all the necessary assistance and without him this course would not have been possible. For this course I invited a special person to facilitate it with me for half of its duration: Kim Pérez Fernandez-Fígares, promoter of sex and gender fuzzy set theory discussed in this dissertation (see II-1.3). Moreover, other people were invited to the course to chat with the participants: a trans female to male, a lesbian woman with Hiv, a theatre actor and a trans feminine artist and activist ('One Man Nation' aka Tara Transitory) from Singapore who is a musician and delighted us at the end of the course with the presentation of her documentary based on her life and transition. We also transcended the classroom a few times, which supports one of the specific objectives of this thesis.

It was forty-hour long, given twice weekly for three and a half hours each class, so fewer hours per lesson than the other course. It was organised into twelve units spread over various sessions. For this course I had to add a couple of weeks as each session was shorter, thus respecting what the previous course participants had requested. In my opinion, this formula worked out better as after each class the participants did not feel as tired as those of the previous course. Yet we tended to keep our conversations and debates until the end of each session and time never seemed to be enough.

It was advertised on the International Postgraduate School webpage and I put up posters and left course leaflets in almost all faculties of the University of Granada, as well as in many primary and secondary schools and educational centres of Granada. It was aimed at both in-service teachers and university students of all subject areas, who, after finalising the course, received four university credits and a diploma. In order to attract more people the course director and I minimised the costs so that participants had to pay a reduced and reasonable fee. Moreover, the high number of participants, thirty, demonstrates that these students and teachers were interested in an issue that has often been silenced in education at all levels, as discussed in this thesis, thus validating even more the need for such a course. Due to the high turnout and the variety of extra-curricular activities, this part of the chapter is longer than part 1 dedicated to the course given in English, especially because I had to take into account the contributions of all the thirty participants.

The course structure, method, justification and objectives are similar to those of the previous course (see 1.1 above). However, this course concentrated more on social and general educational aspects than linguistic ones and more emphasis was put on trans identities. In order to be empowered, the participants needed to understand the inequities existing in our society towards non cis-heterosexuals, to develop skills and strategies to counter gender binarism, homotransphobia, heterosexism and cissexism in education, and to learn to take adequate queer pedagogical action, which they proved capable of during class participation and especially by presenting their final projects. Following the results and requests from the previous course participants, this was more interactive and theory was kept to a minimum, with shorter texts to read and shorter summaries through power point presentations in class. Each theory session was preceded and followed by a class discussion where we (Kim Pérez and I) asked the participants what they were mostly interested in, in order to shape, whenever possible, the course as they wished within its programme. To my knowledge, this type of training is practically non-existent in Spanish education; yet it was considered necessary by all the participants of this and the previous course.

## **2.2 Data collection and analysis**

Participants' personal data were collected from an initial written questionnaire (see Appendix 8) which they completed anonymously on the first day of the course. As in the previous course, the data collection and organisation of this initial questionnaire had to be

done almost immediately because I wanted to analyse and organise their responses for the following lesson (a week later). As shown below, I gathered the participants' main variables in a table, so that the data can be confronted and easily retrieved.

The course was evaluated by the participants twice: a final course written evaluation and a final course recorded group discussion. I, together with Kim Pérez and the other participants, evaluated the presentations of the groups' queer teaching projects in the classroom. The collection of the data for the final course written evaluation was received by email anonymously after the completion of the course and I spent more than two months collecting, organising and analysing their responses. The recorded group oral evaluation lasted about forty minutes and was organised differently from the one of the course given in English. First of all, this oral evaluation was held in Spanish, the native language of all the participants present in this last session and secondly, I had prepared a few general questions to ask in reference to the course, giving the participants the freedom to join in the conversation whenever they wanted to. The data collection and analysis for the Spanish course turned out to be more complex than that of the course given in English. This was not only due to the larger number of participants, but also because the transcription of the oral evaluation is written in Spanish, nonetheless, the analysis and results had to be written in English for this thesis, thus I had to translate into English the most relevant participants' contributions. However, in this course it was easier to take classroom notes because for half of it I could count on the presence of Kim Pérez with whom I often compared notes and discussed the most important themes emerging from them. When I was facilitating alone I tried to remember class interactions after each session and I kept a record of them. This course was more interactive than the previous one, especially because it was held in Spanish and everybody felt empowered to use their language, including the only non-native speaker of Spanish who spoke perfect Spanish. Thus, in this course there were more discussions, dialogues and interventions, some of which will be reported in the form of quotes; their translation from Spanish into English is mine. These class participants' interactions and the results of the participants' course evaluations will be presented and discussed as emerging themes based on frequency and relevance in 2.7.

### **2.3 Initial questionnaire: Results and discussion**

As happened in the previous course, in this one ‘women’ (22) also outnumbered ‘men’ (8) by far. The participation was voluntary and this datum reflects a generalised assumption that I have discussed in the previous course (1.3 above): in my experience, ‘women’ and lgbti people generally appear to be more interested in confronting themselves with sexuality issues than (cisgender) ‘men’. Thus, despite this gender discrepancy, the course seems to reflect reality.

In the following table (table 4) I have grouped the participants according to their ‘gender’; however, as expressed in the course given in English, for consistency and clarity reasons in this thesis I have used the initials W for ‘woman’ and M for ‘man’. Nonetheless, given the variety of answers from this cohort, I have decided to write the ‘gender’ chosen by each participant after W and M, thus respecting their choice. For this initial questionnaire, participants could describe their sexual identity as well as their orientation.

As shown in the following table, the participants’ age ranged between 21 and 48, thus including people with different perspectives, background and experience. All participants were Spanish nationals, apart from W12 (Swedish) and W19 (Peruvian). Regarding their gender, out of the twenty-two ‘women’, thirteen considered themselves to be ‘feminine’, whilst seven wrote ‘women’, one did not express it (W4) and another (W12) answered with a very interesting and critical question: “Biological, social or juridical gender?”; which denotes how difficult it is to describe one’s gender. Notwithstanding, the question expressed by W12 did come up again during the course and was a great opportunity for opening up a class discussion on what we consider gender and especially how we consider ourselves. One of the two trans feminine persons (MtF) described herself as feminine as gender and trans heterosexual as an identity/orientation (W1), whilst the other considered herself to be a woman as a gender and trans feminine as an identity/orientation (W15). Both admitted in class later on during the course that their sexual orientation was heterosexual, although at the end of the course the idea of being women was blurred by both of them, as they admitted feeling more comfortable to describe themselves as trans feminine or trans women as an identity whilst their sexual orientation was considered to be secondary.

<b>Gender</b>	<b>Age</b>	<b>Sexual Identity and Orientation</b>	<b>Education/Profession</b>
<b>1. W1 Feminine</b>	21	Trans and heterosexual	History student
<b>2. W2 Feminine</b>	21	Heterosexual	Pedagogy student
<b>3. W3 Feminine</b>	22	Heterosexual	Pedagogy student
<b>4. W4 Not expressed</b>	22	Lesbian, but only from a political position and not as an identity that delimits her life and emotions	Social anthropology student
<b>5. W5 Woman</b>	23	Heterosexual, but she does not like being considered in a determined feminine role	Pre-doctoral social studies student
<b>6. W6 Feminine</b>	23	Heterosexual	Early childhood education student
<b>7. W7 Feminine</b>	24	Nowadays heterosexual, but she thought to be bisexual in the past	Pedagogy student
<b>8. W8 Woman</b>	24	Heterosexual but she does not like sexual categories	Pedagogy student
<b>9. W9 Woman</b>	24	Heteroflexible: heterosexual but potentially bisexual	BA in Social studies. Unemployed
<b>10. W10 Feminine</b>	24	Heterosexual	Primary school speech and hearing abilities teacher
<b>11. W11 Feminine</b>	25	Heterosexual, but possibly bisexual	BA in Pedagogy. Unemployed
<b>12. W12 Biological, social or juridical gender?</b>	25	Queer and intergender, but perceived by others as a lesbian	English-language teacher and gender studies student
<b>13. W13 Woman</b>	26	Heterosexual	Primary School Pedagogy student
<b>14. W14 Woman</b>	26	Heterosexual	BA in Pedagogy
<b>15. W15 Woman</b>	26	Trans feminine	BA in Psychology
<b>16. W16 Feminine</b>	26	Heterosexual	BA in Primary School Pedagogy
<b>17. W17 Feminine</b>	26	Bisexual	BA in Physical Education
<b>18. W18 Feminine</b>	29	Lesbian	Secondary school French-language teacher
<b>19. W19 Feminine</b>	33	Heterosexual	BA in Primary Education. Unemployed
<b>20. W20 Feminine</b>	41	Heterosexual	History student
<b>21. W21 Feminine</b>	45	Heterosexual	Psychology Primary and Secondary School teacher
<b>22. W22 Woman</b>	48	Up to now heterosexual, but open to other possibilities	Secondary School teacher
<b>23. M1 Masculine</b>	21	Heterosexual	Music education student
<b>24. M2 Masculine</b>	25	Heterosexual	Pedagogy student
<b>25. M3 Man</b>	25	Heterosexual	BA in Pedagogy
<b>26. M4 Man</b>	26	Heterosexual, but open to other possibilities	BA in Social Studies
<b>27. M5 Masculine</b>	31	Not sure	University teacher in mathematics
<b>28. M6 Man</b>	35	Bisexual, but does not believe in fixed categories	Social educator
<b>29. M7 Man</b>	45	Gay	Plastic and visual arts secondary school teacher
<b>30. M8 Masculine</b>	47	Gay	Social studies secondary school teacher

TABLE 4 Participants' main variables

Tara Transitory, the artist who presented her documentary in the final class, does not consider herself as a woman, but rather as a trans feminine; she also says she is pansexual, with a preference for women. When asked in the course if she was a lesbian she replied that she had not experienced such an identity before her transition because she was a heterosexual man, therefore she finds it difficult now to suddenly consider herself as a lesbian, although sometimes she uses the term to make people understand her sexual orientation better. This explanation created confusion among some of the participants as they still found it difficult to break the gender binary system and to understand that one's sexual identity differs from one's orientation.

The slight majority of the participants (seventeen) considered themselves to be totally heterosexual, which may validate the course even further as expressed before in this thesis, although W5 did not like what is considered feminine, W7 thought she was bisexual in the past, W8 did not like sexual categories, W11 described herself as heterosexual but possibly bisexual; W4 lesbian but only as a political position; W9 'heteroflexible': potentially bisexual; W12 queer and intergender, although she added that she is perceived by others as a lesbian; W17 bisexual; W18 lesbian; W22 and M4 wrote to be heterosexual but open to other possibilities; M5 admitted not being sure about his sexual identity/orientation. M6 wrote to be bisexual but does not believe in fixed categories; whilst M7 and M8 considered themselves to be gay. We soon discovered that although the slight majority was heterosexual, the group was quite *queer* and willing to learn and to discuss their gender and orientation in class.

Less than half of the participants (thirteen, 45%) decided to take part in the course because of the four university credits, thus validating once again the importance and results of the course, as these specific participants did not participate for a personal interest and presumably did not possess much knowledge of the issue prior to the course. The remaining seventeen participants (55%) were interested in the issue for different personal and professional reasons. Fourteen were university students, mainly studying pedagogy, but also other subjects, as shown in the table; seven were already in-service teachers both at primary and secondary school level, whilst nine possessed a BA (mostly in Pedagogy) of whom three were unemployed. The sample group, although slightly heterogeneous, was involved in education and teaching, as requested for the participation in the course. Everybody except W16 knew at least one lgtbi person, this datum is also important, as I



have discussed before, since it has been shown that knowing and frequenting queer people decreases the chances of being homotransphobic (Hereck, 1998).

As in the pilot study and previous course, the majority (twenty-three people) understood the meaning of LGBT, whilst only eight knew what 'i' (intersexual) meant. Queer was unknown by the large majority (twenty-four participants), whilst homophobia and transphobia were understood as social discrimination by almost all participants (twenty-five), yet heteronormativity and heterosexism were understood only by eight. Not surprisingly, cissexism was known only by five participants (W1, W12, W15, W22 and M6), of whom two, were trans persons (W1 and W15).

In relation to what caused their 'heterosexuality', the majority (seventeen) wrote that it was caused by the attraction to the opposite sex, but all the others argued that it was caused by a social and educational pressure and wondered how and what we would be without such a pressure. Three wrote that they were not heterosexual although they were forced by society at first to be so. Four self-identified heterosexuals admitted not having thought about this before.

As for the questions connected to sexual identities in education, everybody agreed that they should be discussed in all subject areas. Nobody received training in education on how to counter homotransphobia, and most participants (twenty-four) insisted on the importance of giving training on sexual identity issues to all teachers. Half of the participants (fifteen) argued that primary school pupils are able to discuss sexual identities, whilst the other half was not sure and thought it would be better done in secondary education. The majority (twenty participants) was afraid of parental reactions if they intended to treat sexual identity issues in education, especially at primary school level. They all agreed of the importance for such a course at all educational levels and ages and most (twenty-two) expected to learn strategies on how to counter homotransphobia and on how to treat sexual identities in education.

#### **2.4 Course syllabus and workshops: Contents and analysis**

In this section I will present the course syllabus followed by an analysis of the contents of the sessions representing each didactic unit of the course, including the practical workshops, which were the core activities of the course. For this course the units are twelve instead of the ten presented in the previous course. This is because I reduced the theoretical sessions and I tried to cover almost each unit in the twelve sessions as each

class lasted three and an half hours. However, some units extended into two or even three sessions, depending on participants' need and time, or even took a completely different path due to participants' requests or unexpected events (like Session 4). It is a description of what was done in each lesson, including participants' behaviours and responses that I observed and recorded during or after each lesson often with the assistance of Kim Pérez who helped me take notes which will be reported, in certain of the following sessions, as quotes from the participants' and the facilitators' classroom interventions. Some of the workshops offered in the course were adapted from The Leadership Training Course of the GLEE Project (GLEE, 2002), whilst others were based on our own teaching and life experience.

### **Course syllabus**

*Unit 1:* Introduction to the Course and to the Language of Difference

*Unit 2:* Multiple Identities & Power and Privilege

*Unit 3:* Introduction to Queer Theory and to Sex and Gender Fuzzy Set Theory

*Unit 4:* Spanish Legislation on Lgbti Rights

*Unit 5:* Queer and Transformative Pedagogies

*Unit 6:* Homotransphobia and Heterosexism

*Unit 7:* The Documentary *It's Elementary: Talking about Gay Issues in School*

*Unit 8:* Gender Construction in Education

*Unit 9:* Deconstruction of Teaching Textbooks

*Unit 10:* Transformative Action in Education

*Unit 11:* Presentation of Participants' Teaching Projects

*Unit 12:* Course Closure: Oral Evaluation and Extra Curricular Activities

**Session 1.** Facilitators: Stefano Barozzi and Kim Pérez. The first day started like the previous course with a questionnaire (see 2.3 above) and a class discussion on the expectations of the course. Kim and I presented the course and we soon realised the high motivation of all the participants who appreciated our approach as we sat in the classroom at the same level as they did as a form of equity and we also said we had knowledge to share with their own knowledge, so that participants understood the importance of this interactive course in which their voices were primal. Both Kim and I were really pleased by this first approach with the group and the nice atmosphere that was created in the

classroom. In this session we discussed sexist language in Spanish. We believed that non sexist and inclusive language should be discussed in the class from the beginning.

Spanish, like all Latin languages, uses the masculine gender as the generic form for both plural and singular nouns when referring to people. We all agreed that a solution should be found in order not to be forced to use the imposed generic and inclusive masculine form. Therefore, after reaching agreement with the whole class, we decided to adopt the neutral 'e' as a form of 'neutral', 'multiple', and 'reactionary' inclusive form. Thus, for singular articles and nouns, let's say *le niñe* (the child), the 'e' is both masculine and feminine as well as inclusive for those who do not consider themselves either masculine or feminine, whilst *el niño* would remain just masculine and *la niña* just feminine. The same 'e' can be applied to plural nouns and articles: *les niñes* (the children) being the neutral and inclusive form, whilst *los niños* would remain only masculine and *las niñas* only feminine. The participants, who from that moment on were labelled *les participantes* (avoiding the generally used 'inclusive' masculine form *los participantes*), were totally enthusiastic about this non sexist and inclusive language, which they all used throughout the course with surprising easiness. I must point out that this inclusive, neutral and non sexist use of the Spanish language is not implemented nor accepted in Spanish grammar, even if suggestions like this have been made by various (socio)linguists over the last twenty years or so.

*Workshop: Language of Difference* (drawn on GLEE, 2002: 17). This was the same workshop employed in the previous course, but this time new words were added: cissexism, gender code and gender freedom. This workshop was supposed to finish during the first class, but given the high motivation of this big group of thirty participants we had to carry on discussing each term also during the second class, slightly modifying the scheduled programme. The terms which needed more discussions were the difference between identity and orientation, cissexism, gender code and gender freedom. We all came to a common agreement for each term. As mentioned in Chapter II, Kim explained that the gender code is a social code which in many cases is punished, like a young boy who wants to wear a dress at school, or girls that are considered too masculine; these social codes are intrinsic in our societies and people who break them are perceived as outcasts and wrong. In some countries breaking the gender code could result in a death penalty. Gender freedom is the freedom to choose whatever gender we might want to choose without following all the strict social rules that are imposed on us. All participants found this

activity to be highly stimulating as it gave the basis for a common queer vocabulary which would be used throughout the course.

**Session 2.** Facilitator: Stefano Barozzi (although Kim assisted in the class). This unit started with the continuation of the workshop on queer terminology followed by a short power point presentation on previous Spanish and European studies on sexual identities in education.

*Workshop: Multiple Identities* (GLEE, 2002: 18). This is the same activity that was employed in the course in English; however, the results in this course were more various and extremely interesting due to the vast number of participants and therefore different outcomes. The subsequent class discussion was a way to get to know each other better by disclosing some of our identities while maintaining others hidden and trying to explain why without revealing them.

*Workshop: Power and Privilege* (drawn on GLEE, 2002: 20). This was the workshop that in the previous course I could not organise due to the limited time and class distribution. This time we managed to do it and the outcome was extraordinary. The objective of the activity is to present “the idea of ‘unearned privilege’ and explore ways in which some groups hold power within our societies” (GLEE, 2002: 20), as well as considering how we can ally with groups that have never been traditionally granted power and privilege in our communities. In order to develop the activity, each participant received a different character written on a piece of paper by the facilitator (drawn on GLEE, 2002: 23). All the characters had multiple identities, like an unmarried gay man aged 50 in the closet, a black lesbian on a wheelchair, a married lesbian couple with a daughter, a gipsy gay man, an elderly non-operated trans person, a young unemployed man with Hiv, an unemployed ‘illegal’ migrant, etc. All the participants have to hold hands in the middle of the room thus making a long line. The facilitator then reads a series of sentences (drawn on ‘Power shuffle statements’ from GLEE, 2002: 22) like: ‘Does society support and recognise your right to have children? Can you easily hold your partner’s hand in public? Do you feel safe out after dark? Can you easily obtain employment disclaiming your medical condition? Are you easily supported by your family members and society at large? And so on.’ If the answer is yes the person has to take one step forwards, whilst if it is no they have to take one step backwards. After having read all the nineteen statements it was amazing to see where everybody stood in the classroom. I asked everyone to look around and what at first had felt like a game with lots of smiles suddenly became a much

more serious event. They were positioned in different parts of the classroom, a couple were leaning on the back wall as they could not go further back, whilst one participant had to go outside the classroom to continue walking forwards. I asked what their first reaction was. Simultaneously some participants yelled: “I felt abandoned, they did not hold my hand anymore”. So, the first reaction for everybody, also for those who advanced but mainly for those who went backwards, was a kind of abandonment, of solitude, loss and rejection. Two participants were really surprised to learn that having multiple identities would affect one’s life to such an extent.

The participant who always moved forwards was ‘a white, heterosexual man’, those at the back were a non operated trans person, aged 70, and a poor Romani (gypsy) lesbian. Interestingly, the participant who impersonated ‘a young unemployed man with Hiv’ moved forwards quite considerably. We asked why. The participant said that nowadays Hiv people can live like the rest of the population as long as they take their treatment. We agreed that health-wise things have improved considerably nowadays for people with Hiv, but we also added that if this boy had to disclose his status for a job application he might not get it, or how difficult it would be for him to talk to his family members or friends for fear of rejection, the same (or higher) rejection that he might suffer from a possible partner. The participant realised the importance of social stigma. I commented that it would be great if Hiv were considered like any other infection, however its social stigma has not changed much over the years, making people with Hiv vulnerable individuals. This triggered an extremely lively class discussion in which each character was described and each participant gave reasons for moving forwards or backwards. Unfortunately, we did not have enough time to go deeper into details. As a result, the participants left the classroom with so many things they wanted to say that they spent some time discussing them outside the university building. I was positively surprised by the participants’ reactions, sensitivity and sympathy. “Every each one of us could be one of those characters”, one participant commented at the beginning of the following class, underlying and understanding the importance of being included as ‘us’ and not excluding anybody as ‘them’.

**Session 3.** Facilitators: Stefano Barozzi and Kim Pérez. This lesson was mainly devoted to theory, followed by two workshops. The theoretical texts were sent to the participants by email a week earlier and in the classroom they listened to mine and Kim’s summaries and asked questions to generate dialogue. Most participants were not familiar with queer theory

so we spent some time clarifying any doubts or queries and we also briefly discussed critical and transformative pedagogy (see Chapter II–1). Sex and gender fuzzy set theory was praised by most participants as they admitted not having heard it before and were fascinated by the similarities and differences between queer, critical and sex and gender fuzzy set theories. They also understood the importance of incorporating sex and gender fuzzy set theory as it takes a more biological and biographical position which was needed to understand certain personal processes especially related to trans persons' experience. It was highly rewarding and gratifying to receive information about sex and gender fuzzy set theory directly from its founder. In this session Kim Pérez also mentioned the so called *feminófilos*, a Spanish term to describe men cross-dressing as women in their intimacy; they are usually heterosexuals and they normally keep it a secret sometimes even from their close friends or partners. Kim is convinced there are many more *feminófilos* that we can imagine and they should be considered part of the lgbti/queer/fuzzy sets rubric mainly because of their gender ambiguity and marginality.

*Workshop: Fuzzy Set Gender Dots.* It was named as such after Kim's application of fuzzy set theory to sex and gender, although this exercise has been used extensively worldwide with a variety of different names and it is partly based on the Kinsey scale mentioned before in this thesis.

In order to make Kim's theory and its 'more or less' paradigm clearer (see Chapter II-1.3), Kim carried out a dynamic class activity in which every participant had to choose a different coloured pen to be used on a big piece of paper. On it Kim drew two big lines, on the first line she wrote at the two extremes 'completely heterosexual' and 'completely homosexual', and on the second line she wrote at its extremes 'completely female' and 'completely male'. Then the big piece of paper with the two lines was put outside the classroom attached to a wall. Each participant in turn went out with their chosen coloured pen and put their dots accordingly where they thought they best fit. After the last participant's contribution, the piece of paper was fixed on the classroom wall, so that all the participants could see where all the dots were positioned. They were mostly surprised as the dots were scattered everywhere on the two lines, mainly close to the extremes, but only five dots with the same colour were exactly at one of the extremes of the two lines. This triggered a vivid class discussion from which their main conclusion was that we all are a more or less and even 'biologically' we cannot be completely heterosexual and female or homosexual and male. A participant in the class had a quite strong reaction and

commented: “I’m totally sure I’m completely female and completely heterosexual”. To which Kim answered: “Maybe there are other people in this class who could say they are more female and more heterosexual than you, in that case, where would they put their dots?”. Kim explained that we cannot really measure our femininity or masculinity in terms of hormones, attraction and other biological elements, because they would always differ from each one of us. She added that it is also difficult to express whether we are more homosexual or more heterosexual than others, as we are all very complex people with our own differences. The participants in general were very satisfied with the outcome of this activity which made them understand that deep down we are all a more or less. Another participant intervened and said:

Now I understand when you said that in reality we should all be considered trans people, since we are all transitioning, as demonstrated by the dots we put on the piece of paper. It is possible that even in a few days my dots would change position. Thank you for this exercise, I’m more confused now, but I understand better why I’m confused since I’m a more or less like apparently most people in this class.

Some perplexed faces were not sure whether they agreed with this participant’s comment, but on the whole the activity was understood and appreciated.

*Workshop:* How Homotransphobia Hurts Us All (drawn on GLEE, 2002: 37). It is the same activity employed in the previous course. With this group the class discussion was even more intense due to the bigger group and also to the fact that all the discussions were held in Spanish. In this discussion we listened to real cases of homotransphobia which the participants had experienced directly or indirectly and how these affected everybody including non queer people, demonstrating once more that sexual identity issues are of interest to anybody and homotransphobia can affect anybody, both directly and indirectly.

**Session 4.** This session was supposed to be dedicated to Spanish and European legislation on lgbt rights, but the expert that was expected to give his lecture had to cancel it for personal reasons. Facilitators: Stefano Barozzi and Kim Pérez.

Kim and I decided to keep the introduction to the legislation brief by asking questions about the texts that they had to read for this session. Thus we changed the schedule and decided for the rest of the lesson to ask the class participants what they had found more surprising in the course that far and what they wished to discuss more in depth. It was just a way to give them a little break to catch up with all the information they had received. Kim and I took notes whilst the participants intervened with their opinions and doubts. At least seven participants were confused with the notion of heteronormativity, cissexism and

gender code, which together with all the other participants were clarified. Five more participants said that they were surprised by sex and gender fuzzy set theory as it was totally new to them and they learnt a great deal from it. Then one participant said something revealing and, according to Kim, ‘revolutionary’:

I was surprised that the facilitators and the participants used the feminine pronouns to address me. It was hard for me as in my language [Swedish]<sup>47</sup> we try to avoid a gender binary distinction when we use personal adjectives and I found it frustrating when people in general don’t pay attention to this.

To which another participant replied: “But unless you tell us the gender you want us to use for you, how are we supposed to know it if you don’t speak up?”. The previous participant responded assertively: “Well, this is a course about gender freedom and I expected some more flexibility or sometimes specific genders should have been avoided when addressing me.” Another participant intervened: “Ok, so, how do you feel now? How do you want us to address you, shall we avoid calling you by your name as it appears to be feminine?”; to which s/he answered:

No, my name is ok, it’s just that some days I feel more feminine and others more masculine, so fuzzy set theory applies to me, I’m a more or less, intergender or genderqueer I suppose, but I also understand that in Spanish there is not an agreed neutral form even if we discussed possibilities here in the classroom.

After this very interesting explanation, I commented:

I’m sorry if I have used the feminine pronouns with you and with anybody else, whether I’ve used the masculine or the feminine ‘erroneously’. Yet, as your companion said, it is extremely important to talk about how we feel with our assigned gender and how we would like to be addressed. If we don’t open up this is never going to happen. For example, I don’t like it when people in general refer to me as a ‘man’, but I can’t blame them because they don’t know that I do not consider myself as such, even if I sometimes find it irritating just like you do.

The tension created in the classroom was so high that everybody was interested and had something to say. So, this specific (Swedish) participant detonated a bomb even if (maybe) that was not her/his/their/hir or zir intention. Suddenly, another participant commented:

After only three classes in this course I have to admit that I don’t consider myself to be a woman anymore. It’s difficult to explain this as I’ve always considered myself to be either a girl or a woman, but I’ve never liked the idea of woman that I should represent in our society, probably just like you feel Stef when people address you as a ‘man’. And now that I’ve said it I feel much lighter even if rather confused.

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<sup>47</sup> Article about the adoption of Swedish gender neutral personal pronouns:  
<http://www.theguardian.com/world/2015/mar/24/sweden-adds-gender-neutral-pronoun-to-dictionary>



Then, another participant added:

I don't know if anybody here has noticed it. But I'm a trans person, I was operated on when I was 18 and I feel totally feminine now. I've never really said this in public, and never to a group at university, to people that I barely know, but thanks to the course theme, atmosphere, facilitators and participants, I feel free to talk about it and I consider it to be a big step for me. Believe me, sometimes I still feel worried or scared when I say it because I'm afraid of other people's reactions.

A surprised participant replied: "Really? I would have never guessed you are trans, you're so feminine in all aspects. It's amazing! Thank you so much for letting us know".

Another surprised one said:

Honestly, I did not have any clue, wow, I was wondering if there were trans people here beside Kim, but I could not really tell. I'm so happy for you, especially because, unlike Kim, you managed to go through your transition early in your life.

Kim intervened and commented:

Yes, I envy people like you, because when I was your age I could not even dream of having my sex reassigned, you must understand that I lived under Franco's dictatorship for a long time in my life and I had to wait until I was 50 to be psychologically prepared to take this big step. It makes me feel extremely happy to see young trans people who can do it nowadays or who can talk about their transition whether they are taking hormones or they want sex reassignment surgery or not, which is not obligatory anymore in Spain in order to legally change one's gender.

Another participant emotionally asserted:

Well, I don't know if you have noticed, but I'm also trans male to female and I feel like telling you here because only a few people know about me in this room and especially because I feel safe to talk about it here and I want to talk about it. I'm also lucky, I've always had my parents' approval; I started transitioning with hormones only one and a half years ago and I'm very happy with myself now, so if you have any questions, here I am.

To which another one observed:

Now I understand why you know so much about the subject, more than almost anybody else in this class, it's comforting that almost all your knowledge comes from your personal experience. You have so much to teach us and you're such a beautiful and cheerful girl.

Everybody emotionally added that they were so glad that it seems easier nowadays to be trans and to be accepted just like anybody else. One participant raised her hand and said:

I've never told a group of people like you who I don't really know that I'm a lesbian. But my main concern is that I'm a French-language teacher in a secondary school and I would love to tell my students, but I'm scared of their reactions and the school reaction in general.

One participant told her:

Since I told I was gay in my own school where I teach, my relationship with both students and personnel has got better and better, so my suggestion is to say it in a natural way and everything will be fine.

Another participant commented:

I consider myself bisexual, but I understand what you say, it's not easy to disclose your sexual identity in an apparently hostile environment, like the school, as I've heard some bad stories about teachers being sacked because of discrimination based on their gender identity. So, my advice is to take it easy, when you're ready you will be able to talk.

After this intervention I said:

Remember when most of you said at the beginning of the course that nowadays it's not a big deal being lgbti and our society makes it easier for lgbti people to come out of the closet, well, what do you think now? Are all the environments safe?

Most participants said no. One observed that he did not realise what it means to 'come out' as he always felt heterosexual and never had to come out to anyone and did not understand why lgbti people had 'to come out' to be accepted. However, he also added that he would find it difficult to tell other people if he were gay. Another one commented:

I'm impressed. I feel overwhelmed. I've always felt safe as a heterosexual woman and I've never realised it. I also feel guilty for having been heterosexist without knowing it and I can't help it now as I feel sad and sorry.

We all replied to her that she was fine and that it was fantastic that she was aware of her heteronormative behaviour since all of us have been victim of it without even realising it. Both Kim and I thanked her for being so open and sincere. The class discussion went on and on and almost everybody intervened whilst Kim and I felt like lucky spectators taking notes and only interrupting when we felt it was needed or when asked directly. We looked at each other many times while the participants were talking so openly and we both agreed that we had a lovely group of people full of empathy and understanding regardless of their sexual identity or reasons for attending the course. Kim openly admitted during these conversations that this safe environment created in the classroom with a slight majority of cisgender heterosexuals was like a vision of the future, an equitable and desirable future in which she would like people with all sorts of gender and sexual identities to live together and respect each other. We considered this positive attitude from the participants of paramount importance for the good outcome of the course.

**Session 5.** Facilitator: Stefano Barozzi. We started the class with a discussion about the previous session which was felt by everybody to have been extremely moving and in line

with the spirit of the course. Afterwards, we analysed queer issues in education, e.g. equity vs. equality, cissexism and heteronormativity as well as queer and transformative pedagogies for social change, which were all discussed through power point presentations.

*Workshop. Pedagogies of Inquiry.* I introduced the lesson with the pedagogies of inquiry discussed by Nelson (1999, 2009) and which I used in the previous course. It was followed by a very motivated class discussion during which we ended up talking about films that participants suggested watching during the holidays (Easter, one week), which we could then discuss in class. Some of the films suggested were: *Tomboy* (Céline Sciamma, 2011), *Ma vie en Rose* (Alain Berliner, 1997), *Stonewall* (Roland Emmerich, 2005), *Brokeback Mountain* (Ang Lee, 2005), *Boys don't cry* (Kimberly Peirce, 1999), 'Cambio de sexo' (Vicente Aranda, 1977), 'Teorema' (Pier Paolo Pasolini, 1968), *A taste of honey* (Tony Richardson, 1961), 'La ley del deseo' (Pedro Almodóvar, 1987), one of the best known Spanish film directors, and some other Spanish and international films.

**Session 6.** Facilitator: Stefano Barozzi. This class was entirely dedicated to two workshops. However, it started with an interesting discussion on the films that participants had watched during the holidays or others that they wanted to talk about.

*Workshop: Strategies to Combat Homotransphobic Bullying in Education* (drawn on GLEE, 2002: 45). This workshop is the same employed in the previous course, although this time more attention was given to transphobic bullying. The participants first in pairs then in groups discussed real cases of homotransphobic bullying and what strategies they used to counter them (if any). It was interesting to listen to various examples and points of view, some direct, like a participant who said he confronted some students outside the school who were using the word 'maricón' (faggot) to address another boy and told them not to do it and stood up to defend the boy. The outcome was positive as the bullies apologised and the boy said to have felt safer after that. Other participants commented that they did not know what to do when they witnessed cases of homotransphobia, whilst others reported acts of homotransphobic bullying to the school principal, but despite this, these acts continued afterwards. Others tried to talk to the bullies, but did not really know how to tackle the issue. Two admitted being bullied and feeling completely helpless. Then all the participants discussed in groups the strategies employed in each situation and decided which worked better and why. Everybody liked this activity as it was an opportunity to talk about real cases of homotransphobic bullying and learn new strategies to counter them.

*Workshop. Challenging Stereotypes and Myth* (drawn on GLEE, 2002: 46-47). It is almost the same workshop used in the previous course. However, this time the participants had to brainstorm homotransphobic statements especially those related to trans identities. As happened in the previous course, the activity was one of the most enjoyed and the participants could not stop talking (changing pairs) defending or attacking statements and then changing roles. This time it was done all in Spanish, so there was no language barrier. Nonetheless, it was easier to conduct these confrontations for certain people than others. In fact, most participants said that they found it really hard to support a statement that they did not believe in, but one participant stated that it was easier for her (*zir or hir*) to defend a homotransphobic statement as s/he/ze heard them so often and knew exactly what these homotransphobic people thought, so s/he/ze used their arguments. The participants who had a greater knowledge and experience of the subject could defend or attack a statement more easily than others. In fact, another participant argued that this kind of activity should be done towards the end of a course in order to allow people who do not possess sufficient knowledge of the subject to be able to fully participate. Everyone agreed with him, admitting that at the beginning of the course most participants would have not known how to tackle the activity. They highly enjoyed this direct strategy and admitted having learnt a great deal from it, like feeling more comfortable when they have to face these types of confrontations. The class discussion went on and on until almost half of the group accepted going to a nearby restaurant to have dinner in order to continue the discussion in a less formal environment, Kim and Tara were also invited. This enabled the participants to get to know each other better and created an even more relaxed atmosphere among us.

**Session 7.** Facilitators: Stefano Barozzi and Kim Pérez. This session was about the movie *It's Elementary: Talking about Gay Issues in School* (Chesnoff and Cohen 1996/2007) and it was the same as the one employed in the previous course. The film was watched with Spanish subtitles which everybody could easily read. After finishing all the workshops and group activities related to the film, the participants discussed the film as a whole class. For this course I did not stop the film when there were queer pedagogical situations, especially because they did not have to concentrate on the English. The discussion was very motivating as the participants were really surprised by the contents of the film, of how easily children and teenagers managed to discuss sexuality issues in the classroom. Kim observed that what she saw in the film was a reflection of what she was experiencing in the classroom during the course:

What's happening here in this classroom is quite similar to what we've seen in the documentary, us, the facilitators prompt some questions to start discussions and to create a very safe and enjoyable atmosphere, where the participants' knowledge and voices are of primal importance. I wish I had known this teaching method when I was a teacher!

At the end of this session two external people were invited to talk about their life story: a transgendered female to male and a lesbian woman with Hiv. It was an opportunity to listen to their experiences and to ask questions which they were both very happy to reply. It was a very positive experience and participants were delighted to listen to invited people with different life experiences and perspectives, and to exchange dialogues with them. It was also an opportunity to meet a female to male (FtM) trans person, as most participants recognised not to know any, and to talk to a lesbian woman with Hiv who breaks the typical stereotype of people with Hiv in our 'Western' culture (notably gay men, drug users and prostitutes).

**Session 8.** Facilitators: Stefano Barozzi and Kim Perez. This class was an opportunity to discuss two texts that participants had to read at home: 'Gender construction in early education' (a summary drawn on Robinson and Diaz, 2006) and 'Gender-variant minors in education' (a text written by Kim Pérez especially for the course). We discussed gender binarism and non-binary gender, and how binarism affects our normally forced 'choices', how discrimination and fear affect our decisions, and how we perform in order to be accepted and not rejected, even if this is not always possible, especially if we decide to be ourselves.

*Workshop:* Exercises related to sex-gender nonconforming/variant minors (Kim Pérez). Kim developed some activities to be thought about before this lesson and carried out in the classroom (see also Chapter II-2.3.1). These are the activities she presented:

a) Gender nonconforming minors have a dilemma: should they be repressed, should they be convinced to be repressed, or should they be free to be themselves?

Exercise: Write your initial position, later you can write it again in case it has changed.

b) Objection: Other people's opinion on sex-gender variant minors will be irreversible.  
Exercise: Write an answer to this objection.

c) Gender-variant minors are bound to be discriminated against by the rest of the students, the teachers and family members. Sometimes the reactions towards them could be cruel.

Exercise: Should the tutor in charge of the minor(s) defend them by taking legal action when necessary?

d) Fact: Both North American and European Endocrine Societies share a position which supports the use of puberty detention therapy from the first puberty sign, which is totally reversible, and cross-sex hormone therapy (or hormone replacement therapy), partially reversible, from more or less the age of 15.

Exercise: Write your opinion on this position bearing in mind that it can change in time.

Texts proposed by Kim in English on real cases of gender variant/nonconforming minors were then read and analysed from 'The Mail Online' (see Chapter II-2.3.1). At the end of the presentation and after carrying out the above exercises we had a vivid class discussion. For some participants it was hard to understand the need for some minors to want to transition during puberty, but in general the participants, thanks to Kim's explanations, understood the minors' needs and necessities, especially when they are aimed at avoiding social rejection and discrimination.

We also watched the Spanish short film *Vestido Nuevo* (Sergi Pérez, 2007) and listened to and watched a Sigur Rós' video/song<sup>48</sup> (about the love between two boys), and another about an intersexual teen, as mentioned in the English course, from the British band Goldfrapp<sup>49</sup>. We also talked about real cases of gender nonconforming minors in Spain, two cases in the city of Malaga, and watched the story of Jazz (*I am Jazz*)<sup>50</sup>, a North American trans girl.

**Session 9.** Facilitator: Stefano Barozzi. This is was activity in which the participants had to analyse and deconstruct teaching textbooks employed in different school subjects. These were the subject areas covered: early childhood education, Spanish language and literature, special education, French-language teaching, English-language teaching, music education, physical education, pedagogy, religion, primary school education (various subject areas) and secondary school education (various subject areas). The exercise was the same employed in the English course with the same questions. The results were similar in this course: no signs of queer people or lgbti issues, boys and girls were depicted physically as stereotyped heteronormative people in their activities and in the language

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<sup>48</sup> <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=34ZtT4Th9Ys>

<sup>49</sup> [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-Vnk\\_j1iKMA](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-Vnk_j1iKMA)

<sup>50</sup> [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Bk\\_YIBM5JAE](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Bk_YIBM5JAE)

they use. The only textbooks that showed boys playing with girls' toys and wearing pink were those related to early childhood education. This created a vivid class discussion in which in the end we agreed that it is easier to show gender as something free and fluid when children are very young and when parents might not pay attention to the issue yet. But as soon as children reach primary school things change and are dictated by strong gender codes and heteronormativity. Religion turned out to be the most heteronormative of all, although Jesus in the textbook examined was depicted with long blondish hair, blue eyes and gentle manners, which we all thought as not typically representative of cisgender heterosexual men of our 'Western' society. The most surprising subject was special education: not even once could we see pictures of girls or boys with different abilities, nobody was in a wheelchair, nobody was blind, nobody had other different abilities, they all looked 'normative' and heterosexual. This was really striking and it shows how much work is needed in order to transform these teaching materials into all inclusive materials. The discussion went on about how we could pedagogically use these books in a queer way or how we could queerly transform and modify them. All participants found this activity very useful and most admitted never having noticed how heteronormativity permeates education at all levels. At the end of the class I showed some queer alternative books in English for primary education and other books (see 1.4 above) which participants really appreciated as they realised that some work had already been done to disrupt the imposed heteronormative model.

**Session 10.** Facilitator: Stefano Barozzi. During this session we analysed and discussed some examples of transformation especially the oral presentations carried out by the participants of the English course, so that these course participants had clearer ideas of what they needed to do. They were all highly praised and appreciated. In this session, six groups for the oral presentations were formed: one for early childhood education, one for special education, one for 'non formal' education, two for primary school education and one for secondary school education. Participants in their group started to prepare their projects, based on full teaching units, which were presented in the last two classes of the course.

**Session 11.** This session represents unit 11 and was dedicated to the participants' teaching projects which are detailed in a separate section below (2.5).

**Session 12.** Facilitators: Stefano Barozzi and Kim Pérez. The final class was held in one of the participants' flat in Granada, thus transcending academia. It was primarily organised

to conduct the final course recorded oral evaluation (see 2.6.2 below) and to attend Tara Transitory's presentation. It was also an occasion to end the course in a more relaxed and informal environment with a type of 'end of course party' in which other people with an interest in gender and sexual issues were invited to meet the course participants and exchange experiences and knowledge.

Tara Transitory, a transgender feminine artist and musician from Singapore, presented part of her project in this session: a documentary which unfolds the story of her transition and her art based on gender and noise ('OneManNation'). Her presentation was filmed by the documentary director who followed and filmed Tara in different parts of the world, especially South East Asia and Europe. Tara showed how her transition had started and how she relates it to her music based on electronic noise (as a liberating act), gender and ritual music related to (trans)gender issues from South East Asia. The documentary, made in English, is an ongoing project and work in progress. Tara also interviewed some of the course participants who were also filmed by the documentary director. During the presentation, Tara stopped the documentary a few times to be sure that everybody understood what was going on, especially for those who did not understand English. Everybody was enthusiastic about Tara's presentation which they all enjoyed very much. The participants then started a constructive conversation with Tara in Spanish who stayed with us to answer all the questions and to share experiences.

As for more extra-curricular activities, I find it important here to mention that throughout the course Kim and I went out to dinner twice with the participants, which were friendly occasions to discuss the issues dealt with in the classroom. Most participants and I also went out to see a theatre play: *Why is John Lennon wearing a skirt?* (Claire Dowie, 1999), in which gender and sexual identities are discussed and problematised. After the play we held a very constructive discussion with the female actor, who had been invited to introduce the play to us in one of our classes, the producer and the rest of the public. This was an excellent way to discuss what was learnt during the course in a context of art, transcending the academia. Finally, in a bar of Granada (*Cascabel*), once a month and sometimes almost every Saturday, together with Kim and Tara we organised a 'Translaetica' night in which Tara was DJing electronic music and where trans people and people with all sorts of gender identities were invited to listen to the music, dance and have discussions on sexual identity issues. Some of the course participants came and took part in the discussions. This is another good example to show how 'pedagogy' can be used outside



the classroom and through the arts; the environment created in this Granada bar was unique because everybody felt safe to talk and have a good time outside academia.

## **2.5 Participants' teaching projects: Description and analysis**

This separate session (representing Unit 11 and preceding the final class) was dedicated to new pedagogical materials developed by the participants. Twenty-seven participants presented their projects; three could not participate due to their final university exams. It was organised into two classes. The teaching materials consisted of six different projects representing didactic units exposed in groups; their original versions in Spanish are recorded on CD (Appendix 12, available in printed form of the thesis or on request in PDF format). Here I will offer a summary in English of each of them, followed by short comments. These pedagogic projects are generally more detailed than those of the previous course; that is why their description in this section is longer.

*The first teaching project* was presented by three participants and deals with primary school education for pupils aged 11-12; the unit is called 'Learning about family'. The justification for this unit is to show different family models. The participants introduced the unit by stating that the 'traditional heterosexual family' is being deconstructed nowadays and new forms of families have arisen even if nuclear families and patriarchy still prevail. They also added that new reproductive techniques question the essentiality of a family formed by a woman and a man. The objectives are to: break the traditional family scheme; strengthen and develop the concept of family as a social base; promote respect towards all family units; promote the conditions which allow no discrimination and equality/equity among all people; fight against sexism within the family; be aware of the limits of sexist stereotypes; prevent homophobic and macho conduct in family relations; question gender within the social structure; recognise and act against gender inequities; and identify the role of family. The teaching unit is introduced by a picture of two men hugging with the caption: 'love is love'. It is then explained what purpose the unit serves for the pupils: learning basic concepts like family, homosexuality, lesbian, gay, mono-parental family, adoption, transsexual/transgender, bisexual, intersexual and heterosexual.

The first activity of this teaching unit begins with a survey bearing these following questions: - What do you understand as family? - Have you talked about it before? Do you think it is important to talk about it and why? - What is the role of the man in a family, do you think it is correct and indispensable? Why? - Tell me ten characteristics that define

family. - Do you know families different from yours, with two dads, two mums, one mother and one father, or just one parent? And what opinion do you have of them?

The second activity is called 'Analysis of reality', introduced by a drawing of two people kissing who could be two men or two women or a man and a woman with the caption 'each person sees what they want to'. The follow up activity is related to reading and commenting on a story about a son, aged 19, coming out to his father. After that, some publicity posters are analysed to make pupils aware of the heteronormativity which permeates our lives. As another follow up activity, pupils have to find other advertisement pictures in which any kind of family is depicted, they will have to say which family type is predominant and why in their opinion publicity in general does not make other forms of families visible; afterwards, they will have to produce an advertisement in which all kinds of non heterosexual families are showed.

The third section of the unit, 'Deconstruction of identity', is then introduced by a picture which shows a choice between 'gay, lesbian, bisexual, straight and human', with the tick on 'human'. The follow up activity is about watching a short film '*Eu nao quero voltar sozinho*' (*I don't want to go back alone*), by the Brazilian director Daniel Ribeiro (2010)<sup>51</sup>, which in 2014 became a feature film '*Hoje eu quero voltar sozinho*' (in English *The way he looks*) by the same director.<sup>52</sup> The short is watched with Spanish subtitles. It is a touching love story between a blind teenage boy and another teen boy. All the participants praised the short film. The activity related to the vision of the short is about analysing normative conducts in order for children to identify themselves with a role model and its moral questioning. As a follow up activity, pupils have to discuss this sentence: 'People are judged by what they do, not by what they are thought to be'.

The fourth activity of the unit is called 'Conflict resolution'. The first part of this activity consists of role play exercises in which pupils have to act as members of different families, from the more patriarchal to more modern family models, followed by a class discussion on the roles of each family member.

The fifth and last section of this the unit is a class discussion preceded by an excerpt from the US TV show *Modern Family*<sup>53</sup>. Pupils have to discuss these questions about their

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<sup>51</sup> Link to the short film: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eBnmdlznXmU>

<sup>52</sup> Trailer of film: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OY9RFKaZoDQ>

<sup>53</sup> <http://www.foxtv.es/series/modernfamily/videos/modern-family-t1-ep1-presentaci-n-del-beb>

beliefs of what it means to be a family: - Is my belief certain? - Am I completely sure that this is always like this? - Isn't there any exception to this idea? - Does everyone think the same? The exercise serves to deconstruct the 'traditional' family, the role of each member and to understand different family models. Evaluation methods: at the beginning of the unit pupils will have to write a text about the concept of 'family', they will also have to define new vocabulary (patriarchy, heteronormativity, homosexual, gay, lesbian, trans, etc); finally, after having carried out all the activities, they will have to write a new text on the concept of family and check through a class discussion if their initial idea of family has changed; in addition, they will also have to discuss ways to counter discrimination against non heteronormative families.

This first teaching project presentation was highly praised, especially the use of the short film *I don't want to go back alone*, but all the other activities were also considered appropriate and feasible.

*The second pedagogic project* is dedicated to special needs education. It was offered by four participants and it is called 'LGBTI in special education'. We were all surprised by their presentation as they used a program called 'Prezi' in which they added videos and all the teaching materials. It was very well organised and prepared, and can be seen online<sup>54</sup>.

The first part of the unit is the introduction in which a small text and a video with the four participants talking appear: this is the pattern followed by all the other parts of the Prezi presentation. The introduction stresses the importance of discussing sexual identities with people with special needs because, according to these four participants, we are all special people. The main objectives are to inform and raise awareness of the importance of treating sexuality issues in special education, supporting gender freedom, respecting gender diversity, thinking critically about sexuality as a fundamental component of human beings, promoting the process in which everyone can recognise themselves as sexed and sexual people, supporting sexual roles within the field of human rights and social equity, as well as considering the life experiences of pupils and students, and discussing sexuality like any other topic. Activities related to gender and sexual identities for people with special needs will be held during the normal academic year and especially on 'family day' and 'disability day'; a questionnaire both for teachers and students will be used. It is

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<sup>54</sup> Link for Prezi presentation: <http://prezi.com/nxgwelhsmm2z/trabajo-identidades-sexuales-en-educacion/>

mainly aimed at people with special needs, but it could be applied to all types of students. The methodology will be qualitative and will consist of questionnaires, interviews, practical activities in the classroom, drawings, stories and music videos.

In the first activity they decided to use drawings with different family models. This is because the four participants thought it would be difficult to talk about sexuality in special education and the restrictions are not only imposed by the school management but also by the families and the medical sector. The drawings will be discussed especially on ‘world health day’, ‘Valentine’s day’ and ‘family day’, thus different family units and sentimental relationships could be discussed. Children then will have to draw their own families and how they will see themselves in the future. The drawings will be compared and a discussion will take place on LGBTI people in a subtle way.

Another suggested activity is called the ‘Chair game’: while listening to music, participants will have to move around a circle of chairs, including one (or more) wheelchair(s), when the music stops everyone will have to find a free chair and also take the wheelchair(s) to a space, the person who cannot find a free chair will be the loser. Another activity also employs music: every time the music stops participants will have to pose in what they consider either a ‘masculine’ or ‘feminine’ posture of their choice (corporal expression). At the end of the activity a class discussion will take place on what are considered feminine and masculine postures and behaviour and why. Other materials suggested for use in the classroom include different video clips, like one by ‘Sigur Rós’ (1999)<sup>55</sup> performed by an Icelandic theatre company whose members have Down’s syndrome; whilst other materials were taken from [www.gaypaintings.com](http://www.gaypaintings.com).

The group actually used an interview and an anonymous questionnaire with some students and teachers in special needs education in a school in Granada, thus putting their project into practice. That is why I decided to dedicate a longer section to this teaching project. It was very difficult for the four participants to obtain permission from the headteacher, but in the end they got it. One of the group participants is a trans person and she asked both teachers and students the following questions: 1) Do you know somebody who is not heterosexual? 2) Who do you think I am? Could you define me? 3) Do you think there are things which are typically feminine and masculine? Give examples. 4) Do you see it in people around you? 5) Do you understand the term LGBTI? 6) Can a disabled

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<sup>55</sup> <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Xow2gnVTUjs>

person be LGBTI? 7) Can a trans person be gay or lesbian? 8) Can a teacher be LGBTI? 9) Could a teacher's sexual identity influence their students? 10) Do you believe homosexual people are promiscuous? 11) What question would you like to be asked which is not included here?

Some of the answers were surprising, especially from the students who showed a high level of ignorance related to sexual identity issues, although supported by a strong interest. The teachers demonstrated a lot of interest too and agreed with the group participants that sexual identity issues are never mentioned and hence should be addressed.

For this didactic unit they would use a progressive evaluation mainly based on class participation and observation from the teachers; so that students would not feel they are being examined. As for the conclusion of the presentation, each course participant described how they felt about their project. The first was the trans person who said that she got very positive responses from the questionnaires she used and added that this kind of work should be done in special education because of the lack of information that still exists on sexual and gender identity issues. Another participant of this project stressed the difficulty she had to go through with all the necessary documents to get permission from teachers and the school head who at first were very reluctant to take part in the project especially when they heard the word 'sexual', but she also stressed the necessity to discuss it with the students as one of them approached her and asked her whether she liked men or women; another student commented on how taboos still persist in our society in relation to sexuality in education when, according to this student, it is necessary to talk about it. The other two participants observed that despite these inconveniences it was a very good experience because they realised that it is possible to treat sexuality issues in special education and it is needed.

These four participants were also surprised to see some of the pupils drawing different family models and not only the heterosexual one without having told them anything prior to the exercise. They also encountered indifference, which confirms the problem illustrated in the Introduction of this thesis, as the topic was not considered important for those teachers and they realised that it is even more complicated to talk about sexuality in special needs education than in other educational disciplines. Moreover, the four participants considered most of the parents to be over-protective towards their children, who sometimes think their children have no emotions or have no sexual impulses. One participant who took part in this project also added that she felt very well because she realised that they

were experiencing a change in attitude and a possibility of transforming special education to becoming more accepting and more flexible towards sexuality issues.

Everybody in the classroom admitted that it was a great presentation, full of hope and with realistic examples, commitment and motivation. Furthermore, the rest of the participants stressed the fact that these four participants managed to accomplish a project with real people, in a real school, so they could experience how reality worked and what kind of reactions they received. Hopefully this material will be implemented in other real class situations soon.

*The third teaching project* was presented by five participants. It was very rich and well articulated, as each person introduced a session. It is called 'Unmasking'. According to this group, 'unmasking' does not only mean 'to come out of the closet', but it mainly means to unmask heteronormativity and all the problems related to homotransphobia which still persist in our society. It is directed to secondary school students in their last two years, and its main objective is to try to change simplistic and detrimental ideas about *biopsychosocial* issues related to lgbti people through direct participation in the classroom, using dialogue and games. It would last minimum two hours, but it could be extended to maximum eight hours spread into four sessions of two hours each, and it would have to be accepted by the school headteacher. As a form of evaluation an initial anonymous questionnaire will be used to get to know students' knowledge of and attitudes towards lgbti issues; whilst class participation will be the main means of evaluation.

First activity: 'Come out of the closet'. Some images are shown about typical heteronormative attitudes, but lgbti people will also be shown in order to observe students' reaction. The pictures are used to explain the difference between public and private spheres, and, according to this participant, coming out of the closet is part of the public sphere, and it takes courage to do it. The activity also deals with all the different processes it takes to come out of the closet, although difficult and painful at times. The conclusion is that coming out is essential if we want to live a respectful and healthy life.

Second activity: 'Role play: accept myself, accept yourself'. The teacher will discuss eight couples, depending on the numbers of students, dealing with acceptance of diverse gender identities; eighteen students will be chosen (mainly voluntarily) to impersonate the couples. Each person will confront themselves with the other using a series of arguments given by the teacher but participants are free to expand them or transform them. The acting must be spontaneous as students have only a few minutes to think about what they would

say in each situation. At the end of the activity each couple must reach agreement, and LGBTI individuals, according to the exercise, must stand for their rights and never give up, otherwise the relationship would be a failure. The situations suggested were: a father and his gay son coming out, a mother and a lesbian daughter, father and bisexual daughter/son, mother and bisexual daughter/son, two gay or lesbian friends, a heterosexual classmate with a gay/lesbian one, a gay guy and his boyfriend or a lesbian girl and her girlfriend, a female student with a gay teacher. The teacher will then suggest a 'guideline' for LGBTI students to accept themselves and be accepted, which will be debated in the open classroom.

Third activity: 'Deconstructing sex-gender-sexuality'. This exercise starts with some guided questions like differences between men and women, toys for girls and boys, clothes, gender characteristics; the difference between heterosexual and homosexual, stereotyping for gay men and lesbians; the difference between transsexual and transgender, and talks about love related to all sexual and gender identities. A short film is then showed *El sirenito*<sup>56</sup>, by Moisés Romera and Marisa Crespo (2003), in which a boy wants to dress up as a siren, but the mother mistakes the boy's desire as a wish to be feminine. The short analyses how we can be easily mistaken about children's behaviour, and sometimes a sign of gender nonconformity is not always a direct sign of gender variation/transgenderism. The follow up exercise consists of a group analysis of the mother's reaction in the short film and students reflect on how our society affects the way we think, also because of our parents, teachers and friends. The analysis considers whether these thoughts are innate or nurtured. The conclusion of this activity is that the only difference between a man and a woman is biological, the others are cultural, which can be critically discussed and deconstructed through education.

The fourth activity is called 'Dignity'. A series of pictures of famous people are shown, students must guess who they are (they are gay, lesbian or bisexual people). Then a list of countries of the world where same sex marriage is legal is shown and the students have to debate in favour or against same sex marriage and adoption. Some readings and music

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<sup>56</sup> <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SgYnninJAdc>

videos are suggested and shown<sup>57</sup>. The conclusion of this activity is that in order to live with dignity we need legal recognition of all people's rights.

The fifth and last activity of this teaching project is called 'Breaking stereotypes'. The main objective is to normalise different models of lgbti love relationships through role playing. Students are asked to propose some situations and eight would take part in the role play: four couples (two gays, two lesbians, two heterosexuals and two trans persons) will improvise and they can use different types of conventional clothes, both for men and women. The themes proposed for the love relationships are jealousy (insecurity) and falling in love (desire). In the short session of two hours, couples need five minutes to decide what to say and between two to three minutes to act it out; in a larger session of maximum eight hours spread in four sessions, the time dedicated to this activity would be longer. Participants are encouraged to avoid stereotyping and to act naturally. The rest of the students will have to evaluate and reflect upon the role-play and the different situations with the possibility to freely intervene to say what they would have done differently and why. At the end of the activity, participants will have to talk about their experience and discuss it with the rest of the students; also, everybody will have to write a sentence which represents what was shown in the activity for them. If there is more time, all the students could participate, so everybody would be involved. This final activity was actually performed by eight course participants at the end of the first day of presentations in our classroom. The result was excellent, as each couple performed very well and spontaneously, it was also an occasion to relax and to have fun. The role play activity was video recorded and stored in a folder that we shared in 'Dropbox'.

Everybody in the classroom thought that this presentation was extremely good and easily applicable to secondary school education. The activity in which eight course participants were involved in acting out their couple relationship was mostly enjoyed because the results were very good and all participants agreed that performing is an excellent means to understand gender and sexual issues.

*The fourth didactic project* is aimed at primary school children aged about 8-10 and was developed by six participants. It is called 'Difference makes us equal'. The main objectives are for the pupils, in the subject areas of music and physical education, to learn basic notions related to sexual identities, to be aware of the importance of different sexual

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<sup>57</sup> El Barrio – 'Crónica de un gay': <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Rv2wrVi1iaY>; Ricardo Ariona – 'Que nadie vea': <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eLvXgHmjd38>



identities, to develop respectful behaviour towards all people who are considered minorities, to raise awareness of stereotypes and prejudices towards queer people and to deconstruct teaching materials which portray heterosexist messages. The methodology is participative, with some theory and mainly practical activities related to music and physical education. To develop this pedagogic unit the minimum time required is four hours.

The first activity is called ‘What do we know?’. Pupils are asked to discuss the meaning of concepts related to lgbti people like ‘prejudice, discrimination, homophobia, heterosexism, lgbti, bullying, sexual identity and sexual orientation’.

The second activity is called ‘Sticker’. The teacher plays some music while children run in the patio of the school, when the teacher stops the music in pairs pupils must hug the nearest person, they could be two girls or two boys and the teacher will promote this, the person who cannot find a partner will be the loser.

Third activity: ‘Analyse *Queen*’. The video *I want to break free* (1984) by the band ‘Queen’ is shown<sup>58</sup>; pupils have to describe how gender codes are changed in the video; then they will listen to it again and dance freely.

Fourth activity: *Billy Elliot*. The movie (Stephen Daldry, 2000) is shown and then analysed paying attention to the social roles which are imposed in our society.

Fifth activity: ‘The theatre’. The teacher will read a story containing lgbti people, like a modified fairy tale. Pupils will have then to try to modify other famous fairy tales and make them queer; afterwards, they will have to impersonate some of the chosen characters and act them out in front of the class. The evaluation will be based on pupils’ class participation in the activities and on the new concepts learnt using a crossword in which for each definition they will have to write the missing word. The evaluation is not done to give marks, but most likely to see the impact these taboo issues had on the children and how they can contribute with their knowledge and experience.

This project was highly praised and considered feasible in a primary school setting especially because the group used a variety of activities which would captivate children’s attention and learn with fun.

*The fifth teaching project* was developed by five participants and is called ‘Sexual identities in early childhood education’. As an introduction the five participants stated that

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<sup>58</sup> <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eM8Ss28zjcE>

young children (aged 3 to 6) should not be treated as if they were not capable of thinking critically and they should be educated not to conform with society; ‘family’ is used as a proper issue to be discussed as there are different family models in Spain. The whole teaching unit will be spread over two weeks, so that children will have sufficient time to assimilate everything.

First activity: ‘Friendship, difference and integration’. A tale will be told using geometrical figures in order to understand empathy, after that, it is important that children have understood the tale so that they can draw something similar. The video ‘*Por cuatro esquinitas de nada*’<sup>59</sup> is showed in which a square cannot enter the door of a circled house inhabited by circles with a circled door; the square tries to change its image, the circles shout at it to be a circle, but it cannot, so the circles suggest cutting its edges, but it refuses, then the circles reunite to find a solution and they realise that it is not the square that must be changed but their door, so that the square can join its circle friends in the house. This will be followed by a class discussion on the meaning of the video with all the pupils.

Second activity: ‘Family diversity’. Some stories from books for early childhood education are shown in which there are two mummies, two kings, etc. Pupils first talk about what family is for them and then will have to draw the family members of their own family and also of the families shown in the books.

Third activity: ‘Our character’. In this activity, no binarism and heteronormativity are discussed. In the classroom arrives ‘Yupo’ a small ET character, who is afraid because it realises that it looks different and asks the class to tell ‘it’ how humans are, so pupils make a drawing of a human person. This is an opportunity to discuss how we are, to notice what the main characteristics that pupils imagine about a human being are, and these will be debated in class. The evaluation will be done through class participation.

Everybody in the classroom observed how well this project was structured and its viability for early childhood education, where it would certainly work and young children would learn a lot using their own creativity and enjoying themselves.

*The sixth and last teaching project* was dedicated to ‘Non formal education’, meaning a kind of education which is not included in the compulsory school system, like adult

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<sup>59</sup> [http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DBjka\\_zQBdQ](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DBjka_zQBdQ)

education or extra-curricular education. It is called 'Radio and diversity in the juvenile wave' and it is addressed to young teenagers living in the rural areas of Granada. It was presented by four participants. At the beginning of their presentation they sat around the desk of the classroom and some music was played thus simulating a radio station with fake microphones and a telephone, which took us all by surprise and was very enjoyable.

The main objectives are to empower young people to use a radio channel and create podcasts, learn how to think critically and queerly and make these teenagers aware of different gender identities. The four participants developed various activities for the teens before taking part in the radio programme in which a specific gender-related theme was discussed in each session: watching films ('Tomboy', 'XXY'), analysing music lyrics, preparing a questionnaire for other teenagers, making contact with some professionals and choosing people to prepare the interview.

After each activity a discussion will be held, analysing queer language and strategies to fight against discrimination. Some more specific activities to work with sexual identity and orientation were also presented and herewith described. In one activity, we, the class participants, Kim and I, were included and had to draw ourselves: on a piece of paper we had to draw on the head something that is related to the way we think and that not everybody likes, on the arms something that we like to wear but our family members don't want us to, on the feet some hobbies or activities that we like doing, on the eyes a way that we like to be represented in a photo, on the shoulders some of our behaviours that other people don't normally see, on the belly some jokes that people make of us and which still hurt, on the heart an attitude of others that makes us feel better, on the hands somebody we like but we never told, and finally, around the body somebody towards whom we feel love but not as a partner (they can't be part of our family). The title given to this activity is: 'Looking for our gender identity'. Next, the participants of this activity describe how they have felt during the exercise and they can show their drawings to the other students/participants, they can choose who, but preferably someone they don't normally socialise with to discuss the activity. In the end we were all satisfied with this creative exercise in the classroom.

The follow up and last activity is entirely related to learning how to use a radio programme in order to promote discussion and critical thinking on gender and sexuality issues among teenagers. In order to explain how this activity works it was shown to all the course participants in the classroom. The four participants who developed the unit were in

the radio studio (simulated around the desk of the actual classroom) taking questions by phone from the audience (faked by some of the other participants), who were usually teenagers interested in sexual identity issues. Several other course participants and the facilitators were also included in the activity and acted as lgbti experts answering some of the questions presented by the 'audience', some of which were collected around the rural areas of Granada and others were acted out by some course participants in the classroom. It was really good fun, and it showed how a radio programme could get young teenagers to actively participate. The young people who wanted to participate in the programme through the previously mentioned activities would receive a basic knowledge of queer theory and sexual identity issues. The example about the radio programme shown in the classroom was very effective as various course participants faked some phone calls and asked questions related to the difference between gay and homosexual, transsexual and transgender, and how to come out as an lgbti person, even a 'parent' phoned and asked advice on how to talk to her daughter, and a teacher who wanted to know how she should tackle her coming out at her school. The answers were possible because we covered the topic in forty hours and participants felt empowered to talk about it and to give advice.

We complimented the four participants on their project presentation especially because the rest of the course participants, as well as the facilitators, took part in it actively, which at first we did not expect to, although we all enjoyed contributing to it. Everybody in the classroom commented positively on the dynamic activities and its originality.

All the final teaching projects, which are valid original queer pedagogical materials, were received with enthusiasm and applause at the end of each presentation. We all thought that they were feasible in a real teaching situation and I do hope participants, and anybody else interested in the issues, will use them in their own teaching experience.

## **2.6 Participants' course evaluations**

The course was evaluated twice through a written evaluation form and a recorded group discussion. The participants who could not attend the recorded final group discussion held in a participant's flat filled in the anonymous written evaluation, of which I received sixteen, whilst twelve out of fifteen (they told me so) who participated in the recorded group discussion did not fill in the written evaluation in order not to have to evaluate the course twice, this was a decision taken in agreement with all the participants in the classroom. In this way, I received evaluations from twenty-eight different participants from

both the written and the oral evaluations; three decided to complete the written evaluation form as well as take part in the final oral evaluations. At the end of the academic year it was difficult to get all the participants to write both the written evaluations and participate in the recorded final discussion, as they were very busy with school exams, thus the period of year is an important factor to take into consideration in future courses. Although they all seemed very enthusiastic with the course, they were also tired because of their jobs or because they had to study for university exams. Nevertheless, we found this solution, so that, as mentioned above, between written and oral evaluations I could receive twenty-eight different responses, whilst two participants had to leave the course beforehand.

Unlike the previous course, for this one there was not a mid-course evaluation, which was agreed with all the participants in the classroom who believed that one final written and one final oral evaluation were more appropriate. I will next provide details in English of the data analysed from both evaluations. I would like to point out again that the translation from Spanish into English is mine, also for the participants' quotes.

### **2.6.1 Final course written evaluation: Data analysis**

It consisted of a survey comprised of seventeen questions and it was partially drawn on the course evaluation sheet used for the GLEE Project (GLEE, 2002: 183-184). Sixteen participants completed the anonymous questionnaire sent by email. I will write here each question followed by a summary of the participants' responses. The original questionnaire in Spanish is to be found in Appendix 9.

#### *1. How did you feel during the course and with its teaching methodology?*

Nine participants out of sixteen just replied "very well"; one added that s/he never experienced all those different methods used in the course. Another argued: "Very well, sometimes the methodology was heavy because there were many hours, but good"; whilst another commented:

Very well, although I sometimes felt bad because I'm not lgbti and I've always been heteronormative without knowing it, thus the course helped me a lot to control my vocabulary and it opened my mind on how to talk to people, I really liked the methodology.

And another one: "Well, surprised at the beginning"; two participants replied: "Very well, innovative methodology"; and finally another one: "Interested in the contents and I liked the methodology".

2. *Was it the kind of course you expected?*

Six participants admitted that it was not the course they expected because they found it innovative; five wrote: “Better than I expected”; one expected it to be more theoretical; one did not know what to expect; another one commented that s/he did not think it would be so dynamic; and another: “Partially, but in the end it overtook my expectations”; and finally only one answered with a simple yes.

3. *Did you like having apart from the main facilitator (Stefano) also Kim and the other people invited to the course?*

Twelve participants agreed that it was very important to learn from a variety of different experiences and opinions and some added it was fundamental; one also appreciated Tara’s intervention very much; another commented: “Yes, Stefano has created a perfect safe place where we were all confident to talk, and Kim shared with us her personal life and experience, something still not debated nowadays, as well as the other invited people”. Finally, another argued that it would have been better with even more facilitators/teachers.

4. *Do you believe the course has achieved its objectives?*<sup>60</sup>

All said yes. One added: “Yes, I’ve used them in my own teaching lessons”.

5. *In your opinion, what were the three most important things in the course?*

I will here reproduce the answers I received from each participant who commented on the three best things about the course; each answer is separated by a full-stop:

“Learning about sexual identities, making friends and developing a teaching project for primary school education. All the people, addressing heterosexuality and transsexuality and not only homosexuality, and means to fight against discrimination. Stef, Kim and the other invited people. The invited people, the class participants’ experiences and learning about all this. Companionship, relations with facilitators and what this course moved inside us. The rest of participants, Kim and Stef. The participants, the authentic materials, and the actual use of the issue without any fear, which is still taboo in education. Theory, practical ideas and the relationship with the other participants. Participants’ confidence, spontaneity and the class discussions. Learning queer language, how to treat my pupils and how important we are as teachers for the pupils. The participants, final project presentations and material used. The participation of invited people who exposed their life experience, what the other participants know and what you can learn from them, and to feel more at ease

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<sup>60</sup> See Appendix 9 for the objectives in Spanish.

now that I know more about the issue. Companionship, teachers and reflexions. Everything we learnt, the participants' willingness to express themselves and the fact that we all have brought new things and experience. The invited people, *It's Elementary* and the course teaching methodology. Finally: Stef for his knowledge and reasoning, the teaching material and the course participants".

6. *Which sessions seemed less useful for you?*

Ten participants out of sixteen wrote "None". The following are the answers, separated by a full-stop, given by each of the remaining participants:

"Not much theory but better like this. Some of the sessions were shaped by some participants who took them in a personal direction, but it's ok. The activity 'Challenging stereotypes and myths' because it was a bit chaotic to move around the chairs. Explanations of activity dynamics which would have been better in small groups. None, I found it difficult the first sessions for the vocabulary and the theory, but they were also essential for me. Finally: Maybe when we analysed some sexist children's textbooks, I did not agree with some of the other participants".

7. *Do you think the course was balanced between theory and practice (including class discussions)?*

Nine out of sixteen participants responded yes. The following are the answers, separated by a full-stop, given by each of the remaining participants:

"No, there was more practice but better like this. No, there was barely any theory. No, but I prefer it like this, as 50% never really works, more practice was better. Yes, but I would have preferred more group dynamics, more practice. Yes, an excess of theory would not be appropriate in such a course. Yes and no, but I prefer more practice like in the course. Finally: I would have preferred more theory and more participation of external people".

8. *Do you think the course managed to be interactive and critical?*

All wrote yes. One commented: "Yes, never a course at the University of Granada has been so interactive in my experience".

9. *What would have you done differently and why?*

Four wrote: "Nothing"; two pointed out that maybe the facilitators should have explained some terminology first and then discussed it with the participants instead of asking the participants first, and they also added that it should be a normal school/university subject offered to all teachers and not just a single course. These are the other answers, separated by a full-stop, given by each of the remaining participants:

“I would have invited some lgbti associations to talk in class. Maybe give all the theory first and all the practice and discussions afterwards. A more defined structure, sometimes the facilitators allowed us to decide how to control our discussions and this has a price to pay, but otherwise all was fine. Fragmented theory to work first in groups and then as a whole class. I would keep the final presentations shorter in order to have more time for a final discussion. The timetable was not ideal for me, but just for me. Nothing, because it was much better than I expected. I would have given more space to theory. Maybe a different timetable and fewer hours per class. Finally: Some participants did not have any knowledge of the issue, so maybe more theory would have helped”.

*10. What did you learn more in this course and what surprised you most?*

Three participants commented to have learned new vocabulary, to be better people and were surprised about the strength some participants showed in the classroom in order to be what they are. The following are the answers given by each of the other participants separated by a full-stop:

“Everything related to sexual identities and the rich queer terminology. A lot, surprised about the ignorance that people in general possess on this issue. To understand better, to sympathise, and to be more critical about some comments, I was surprised to find out that the course directors and the university accepted the course without censoring it. Sex and gender fuzzy set theory and queer theory, and I was surprised by the willingness of some future teachers to treat these issues, I’ve learnt new concepts and I gained more security in what I’m doing. Kim’s innovative theory, the change of participants’ attitude throughout the course and surprised about the reticence of some participants to open up about themselves. New theoretical knowledge, integrated the queer thought to my practical experience, but also surprised to see that without this knowledge professional practice could be a total failure and even dangerous for young learners without even realising it. Learnt a lot of new concepts and I was surprised to realise how much I did not know. How to deal with my students, to be more critical with regard to lgbti issues and countering heteronormativity. I already treated these themes in my school, but the participation of trans people was for me of a great impact. At a personal level it was very significant for me, I was surprised by some participants’ revelations in the classroom and how we all empathised with each other. Sexuality is more varied than I thought, I was surprised to learn to counter some of my barriers and ignorance. Different opinions, queer people’s life experience, and a free and non imposing pedagogy. I learned how to use strategies and



pedagogical activities with the job I do with teenagers and their sexuality, take advantage each time I can to talk about sexuality, not feeling bad when I do it and not feeling judged by the other colleagues if I do it. Finally: I would treat the issue in a most normalised way without getting scared about it because of some pupils' or teachers' reaction".

*11. Can you see now more clearly heteronormativity, homotransphobia and cissexism in education than before the commencing of the course?*

Thirteen wrote yes. These are the other answers separated by a full-stop:

"Yes, I did not know these terms before. I've always seen them, now we have to find effective ways to make students aware of them. No, I could see them before, but the course gave me tools to counter them".

*12. Do you feel more empowered to deal with heteronormativity, homotransphobia and cissexism in education now? Please explain.*

Five wrote yes because during the course they obtained the tools and the right attitude. Two answered yes because they previously had some basic knowledge, but they needed more training like that offered in the course. The following are the answers, separated by a full-stop, given by each of the remaining participants:

"Yes, especially because now I know the terminology. Yes, as a beginner because there are many obstacles. Yes, I know how to react now. Yes, but I need more time to assimilate what I've learnt. More than empowered I have more means to do it and especially dialogue, through dialogue you can achieve almost anything. Yes, more tools, firmer knowledge and many examples to refer to. As I felt before, but now there is a network of people who can collaborate together and fight against it. Yes, because it is an issue I already know and I know how to deal with it. Finally: I was already empowered before".

*13. Would you teach sexual identities as part of your teaching programme or would you wait until the issue comes up in the classroom? Why?*

Ten participants would do it as part of their teaching programme. These are the other answers, separated by a full-stop, given by each of the remaining participants:

"I'm doing it already. Yes, I would, but it depends on the group. Yes, but at the right moment. Something in between but it needs to be done, so I would try. I feel ready but I would wait until it comes up. Finally: Part of the programme as I used to do, but now with a different perspective and better knowledge".

*14. What obstacles might you encounter if you decided to teach sexual identities in education? What would you do about them?*

Three participants agreed that the main problem is the hierarchical obstacles in schools and they would try to politely convince headteachers and parents. Three more participants believed it was the kind of school and they would try to find allies with other teachers, headteachers, parents and pupils, especially teenagers. They also agreed that for both teachers and students training is needed, and parents are more difficult to be convinced of the importance of training for themselves; and the school head should always approve the training programme first. The following are the answers, separated by a full-stop, given by each of the remaining participants:

“My school subject would not be appropriate. Parents and colleagues. Parents and school staff, I would try to find support from colleagues or talk about it with students and let them know, I would also ask for more information and necessities. Adults, both parents and school staff, I would use it subtly when introducing the issue. Parents, I would try to naturalise the issue. I don’t see many problems, first of all we must take action with students and make them aware. Prejudices and ignorance, which are inevitable, I would show real life cases. Prejudices from parents, teachers and students, I would previously inform them on the importance of treating these issues. Parents, the type of school, the school head and teachers, I would try to find a consensus on the issue and try to naturalise it as part of my ethics. Finally: Maybe some colleagues, but I feel our Spanish legislation can support me”.

*15. Do you think that all teachers should be trained on how to treat sexual identities in the classroom? Why?*

Eight participants believed it is necessary and fundamental in the gender evolution and development of a person (both teachers and students). Four others agreed they should be trained since teachers must be ready to face the issues when they come up spontaneously in the classroom. Two more participants observed that it is necessary as there is too much ignorance around these issues. One wrote: “Yes, because training is never enough”; and the last one: “Yes, but education in general is not ready to face this”.

*16. Would you recommend this course?*

All sixteen responded yes.

*17. Please, use this space to leave any comments or suggestions.*

Three participants complained that we had to change classrooms various times because the university faculty gave priority to other courses, whilst, according to them, the University of Granada should promote this type of course as part of its programme; two more complained about the bureaucracy for the course enrolment which was considered too complex (too many documents to fill in to enrol for the course); Two thanked me and Kim for creating a great atmosphere and for giving everyone a chance to talk and learn despite of some participants' previous knowledge and experience. These are the other answers, separated by a full-stop, given by each of the remaining participants:

“Thanks to the facilitators for this opportunity. Theory should have been taught into small groups. Great group and atmosphere. It would be ideal to teach this course at a higher level, like a Master's degree or a research area in the University of Granada. Finally: I want to thank Kim and Stef, as well as the rest of the participants, now I feel I can educate my students better”.

### **2.6.2 Final course recorded oral evaluation: Data analysis**

As mentioned earlier on, the final course recorded oral evaluation (representing Unit 12) took place at a participant's flat. Fifteen participants were able to attend. It lasted about forty minutes and its transcription in Spanish is to be found in Appendix 10.

Everyone had a chance to talk and I told them to concentrate on two main issues: 1) Impressions of the course; 2) One positive aspect and one negative aspect of the course. It was a semi-controlled group discussion, in which I participated as a facilitator and moderator. Also Kim participated given her opinions on the course. The participants were free to talk in a very relaxed way and had the right to intervene when they thought it was necessary. I passed the recorder from one person to the other; they all accepted being recorded and were happy to give their evaluations. The following is an extensive summary in English of their responses. The translation from the Spanish is mine.

P stands for participant (in chronological order) and F for facilitator (F1 me; F2 Kim). As in the previous course, being in chronological order, the numbers after the P are not associated with the initials W and M that I have used in table 4 for the initial questionnaire. Since this was a recorded evaluation, at the time of transcription I could not identify exactly who was who because I could only hear their voices. This was another form of

maintaining their anonymity, although they talked very openly and it might be easy for the reader to identify some of the participants and relate them to table 4.

P1 started the discussion and said that her impressions of the course were fantastic. She especially enjoyed it on a personal level and she learnt things that for her were not clear before. P2 observed that he had been waiting for a course like this for a long time. He believed that gender and sexual identity issues are a fundamental knowledge in education but unfortunately teachers and educators do not possess the tools to treat them and this course offered at the university was particularly appropriate. He was also glad to have met all the other younger participants with a strong motivation and added that he expected more theory because he had already fought in the past against homotransphobia and he would have preferred to spend more time with theory and theoretical texts. To which I asked the other participants if they thought there was not enough theory. P3 said that he preferred more practice; P2 pointed out that he really enjoyed the course but he just needed more theory. P3 observed that we learn more through practice because we can give real examples, empathise and discuss them, he also thanked everybody for coming to his flat to celebrate this last class. We all thanked him and then I commented that in the previous course the participants complained that there was too much theory, especially reading texts, in fact almost half of that course was theory; that is why I tried to reduce it for this one. P3 added: "It was surprising for me because it was one of the few courses that I've done in which participants and facilitators did the same amount of talking and that was remarkable!". I reminded them that this was one of the aims of the course: to be interactive and participative.

P4 stressed that she would have preferred a longer course, something like a Master's degree, with more theory. According to her, some participants did not possess the same knowledge as others but she thought that it was constructive for everyone and she added: "I have also followed many courses with a lot of theory, this one was excellent because it followed what it advocated for and we should thank Stef and Kim for this". (Everybody applauded). I argued that it was a training course in which, according to Kim and myself, practice needed more space, but I also agreed with her for a need of a longer course. F2 (Kim) commented that she was delighted to hear that they wanted more theory, as she is a theoretical person, and said that they could keep in touch with her and me, that we would be happy to exchange more theory and it would be the perfect excuse to maintain contact. I

added that we could provide more texts to read at home, and the main intention in the classroom was to avoid giving lectures.

P5 said that she was surprised and happy to have met wonderful people that she did not know before, the spirit and enthusiasm of the group and its human and emotional level was what she appreciated the most. She also liked the fact that the course transcended the classroom with my emails, reading material, having to meet up with other participants to develop their very creative teaching proposals, and added:

I believe a course that can offer all these emotional and human experiences is a very strong course, also we are all adults and if we want to learn more theory we all have the means to do it, but sometimes it is difficult to find all we need, so it is important to maintain the contact among us by wearing the gender and rainbow glasses.

She also launched a proposal based on the role-play workshop presented as part of their teaching project in the classroom: to form a small theatre group with the aim of making people aware about these issues, especially in education. We all seemed interested in this proposal which we found excellent. Other merits of the course for her were the invited people, who were very open-minded, with a very interesting perspective. I told her that her proposal was great and feasible.

P6 said that she did not expect anything. A colleague mentioned that the course was probably going to be good, but as she did not expect anything she experienced many things: “I moved from feeling at times very bad and ugly to enjoying it a lot, and from not knowing anything to knowing something”. She also added that she was not sure if she would be able to bring something from the course to her students, but she also admitted having learnt a lot about lgbt persons and she really did not know how to thank us for all this. I pointed out that she gave great examples during the course in which she employed what she learnt in the course both at home and in the school where she worked. In fact, she recognised heteronormativity in her life and counteracted it. I also said that people with little knowledge are especially welcome on the course, because they can learn more and they do not have to be lgbt persons, on the contrary, everyone can learn (and teach) about sexual identity issues. Then F2 (Kim) commented:

When I used to talk to lgbt people I felt very free, always at ease, whilst when a heterosexual person came in I felt rigid and much more formal. So, the very interesting thing about this course is that in only one and a half months I can talk to all of you with the same freedom I would in an lgbt environment, that is, I have the sensation that we have assimilated all this in a way that we are people that consider this as something normal.

P7 stressed that what they had learnt was important, the changes that the course brought to them. She also wanted more theory, even if what she found more important was at a personal level, the critical spirit created in the course and the transformational changes in them; she considered the course to be very experience-based. She also commented:

For example, I felt really at ease with my transsexuality in the classroom, to talk about it with my classmates. I usually cannot talk about it anywhere, it is therefore important that we try to generalise it in our life, with our friends, in order to be more authentic.

P2 intervened to admit that he shared what she said, the security they felt in the classroom during the activities and he said to be working in the same direction with his students for May 17, international day against homophobia, together with another colleague who was also in the course (P5). They organised talks on how to counter homophobia for both students and teachers at their secondary school. And he observed: “For me, as a teacher and as a homosexual, the course has given me the security to be able to move forward and organise more activities in my school, to put into practice what we’ve learnt in the course”. To which I reminded him that his headteacher had asked him to give a course and a talk in the autumn on lgbti issues, which he confirmed. I also added that this is what interested me the most: contributing to social transformation. P8 underlined that it was also a personal change, and through this we can change what surrounds us.

F2 intervened again and said: “Inside our experience, another experience inside this experience was watching *It’s Elementary*”. Everybody agreed that *It’s Elementary* was a fundamental part of the course.

P5 commented that it was very important that one of the course participants, a trans person, went to her school to talk to her students and this intervention was published in a local newspaper. She found that experience fundamental for the visibility of trans people and by doing so the course can open up more possibilities. Whilst P9 observed that she came to the course completely ignorant about these issues, but in the end she left the course very satisfied as she admitted having learnt a great deal. P10 said to believe that she knew lots of things prior to the course, but she admitted having learnt many new things during the course and she was happy to collaborate to this type of social change. P11 commented that the course helped her realise how important it is to treat these issues in special needs education as it is a totally taboo subject, but it is the actual pupils who generally ask to be informed. Unfortunately, she also said that teachers ignore the issue and they do not want to face it as they would get annoyed if she talked about it in her school.

Thus, she said that the course gave her tools to be implemented in her classes. P12 admitted being very lucky to have received all the materials which we used in the classes and also the projects presented by the participants. She stressed the importance of keeping in touch with each other. She also complained about the publicity for the course that she found difficult to find. P13 joined in and said that he only knew about the course because another participant had told him. She actually paid for the course for him. He said to have liked the course a great deal especially his final project which involved early childhood education. The course made him think about many different things and he said he needed more time to assimilate everything; the documentary *It's Elementary* had a great impact on him as it made him cry and moved many things inside him. P14 agreed that he also needed some more time to digest the course and found it difficult to express all the feelings he had about it.

I then asked if they thought the course was short as argued by some participants. P15 found it a bit short and she would have liked a more detailed bibliography in order to have more documents to read at home. P5 also said she would have preferred it longer. I replied that it was difficult to organise a longer course unless it was a university course or a Master's, which at that moment was not possible.

P12 commented that she felt confused and she had felt like that for some time, as she did not manage to digest a part of what she thought she was. She said that she could not define herself as either feminine or masculine, but with time it ceased to be a problem and she felt more relaxed about it. P8 (a trans participant) said that she feels both like a man and like a woman, to which F2 (Kim) observed that trans persons asked themselves that same question all of their life. P3 argued that he really enjoyed that in the course homosexual, bisexual and heterosexual people were treated with the same weight. He thought the course was for gay men, but he felt completely identified with the course as a heterosexual man and that was the main reason he liked it. P6 said that we are not aware of the ways we try to control ourselves and what we think we are and P15 added that we have to consider all types of genders and orientations, as they go together and we should try not to separate them.

At this point I asked each person to say what they liked the most and the least in the course. P6 said that she enjoyed the class interactions most, the practice and *It's Elementary*, which helped her bring into practice a teaching model; the least was the fact that we had to change classroom quite often. P10 enjoyed what she learned from the other

participants and from the facilitators, she stressed that she followed many courses after graduating that she found rather boring. This one for her was a perfect example in which every participant can learn from the other participants and not only from the facilitators, and all training courses should be like this. As for a negative aspect, she found the course to be too short. For P4 the best thing was companionship, making connections, building trust among the participants and being able to talk about anything, the worst was that she had to commute (quite far from Granada). P11 most liked having to put into practice everything and that nobody felt different, that everybody could express what they wanted in total freedom. She did not like the reality outside the course as these issues are rendered invisible. For P5 the best part was the relationship with the participants and facilitators, and the course dynamics, she could not find anything negative. P2 highlighted the people as the most positive aspect, and then also my motivation as I decided to give such a course twice and not for economic reasons, which according to him, was admirable; as negative, he would have preferred more theory. P12 liked the environment created in the classroom most, which was similar to that of *It's Elementary* and she added: "I loved the fact that everybody could express themselves without being judged, so we all felt free and at ease, and that environment was great, I'd never experienced it before". On the other hand, she thought time was not controlled and we wasted much of it discussing; for her, time passed too quickly and this could have been done in a better way. I said that for both Kim and I it was hard to stop an interesting discussion which helped the group to think critically, this can have negative consequences like not being able to cover the entire programme, but it was especially done as a form of empowerment for the group. P7 enjoyed the equal relation between participants and facilitators and the queer methodology. On the other hand, she thought there was a lack of contents and structure, which had broken the usual schemes for a course. To which I said that sometimes we did not follow all that was programmed because the course took a different path, which P7 thought to be positive.

P8 really liked the people, their life stories, the queer methodology and the tools they received to counter homotransphobia in education. As a negative aspect she stressed that she was too busy studying for her exams.

F2 (Kim) commented:

The most positive and new aspect for me was the method, I wished what Stef put into practice I had learnt twenty years ago because my classes would have been completely different, and it was such a natural way of communicating that now we can say we are all friends after only one and a half months.



I intervened and said that without Kim this course would not have been possible. She thanked me and added that the group participation was magnificent and thanked the participants for that. As for the negative side, she repeated what other participants had stated, that the outside reality for LGBTI persons was still crude in 2013, but she wanted to transform it into something positive:

Well, we know what we need to do, that things can change in 2015, 2016 or 2017 and this depends on all of us. I hope it is an interesting challenge and I would love to meet you in 2017 or 2010 and say 'Oh, it is incredible what we've done, what we've achieved!'

P3 repeated that the most important thing was the people in the course, which was surprising for him as he had no previous knowledge. I therefore asked him his main reason for joining the course. Without hesitating he said: "I'm not going to lie, it was for the four university credits which I needed!". Everybody laughed. However, he added that he had learnt a lot from each one of us and found the course really inspiring. As for a negative side, he would have preferred the course to be longer in order to get to know each other better. I told him I appreciated his honesty and said that the group was very large (thirty people) and there was an average of twenty-four people per class which was very good for a postgraduate course.

P15 wanted firstly to thank everybody because she loved meeting all of us and she felt really at ease; she underlined the importance of having trans people in the course which she found necessary. I thanked her and said that I did not want trans people to be marginalised, more than what they already are in society at large. P15 also commented that the course helped her move things inside her and she felt like talking about her sexuality with her close friends and family; as for a negative side, she stressed what Kim and other participants observed, that when we leave a safe environment, such as this training course, we realise that there are too many barriers and people in general do not believe that it is possible to treat sexuality issues in education and finally she thanked everybody.

P13 argued that for him the negative and the positive aspects were more or less the same. That is, at the end of the course he felt really bad about the discrimination that LGBTI people suffer, for the life story of some of the participants, and he often went home feeling sad. However, this mixture of negative feelings made him realise the importance of acting in his own teaching profession which he found extremely positive.

P6 commented:

I consider my experience in the course completely positive, if I didn't feel bad sometimes I would not be where I am now and I keep moving on, I feel more positive about myself. Also, I appreciated that in the course there was more practice than theory, as I understood better when I was involved in practical activities.

The only negative aspect was the fact that she sometimes had to leave before the end of the session, when the class discussion reached its highest point.

I ended this oral evaluation by saying that sometimes time was limited and it was a shame that some participants had to leave before the end of the class. I thanked everybody for making such a successful course in all aspects, but also because I met wonderful people without whom the course would not have been the same, as we learnt from each one of us. I also commented that at the beginning of the course Kim and I were wondering what type of people would come to the course, we were a little worried that there were people against these issues because some participants would join any course for the credits without paying attention to the contents of the course. But it was not the case. I finally thanked them for their wonderful oral project presentations and suggested we all hug each other, which we did, and everybody applauded.

## **2.7 Results and discussion presented by emerging themes**

As in the previous course, between the written and the oral evaluations, and the class observation notes, I have identified seven important recurring themes based on frequency and relevance. Some of them were critiques which I had to take into account together with the participants' suggestions to find solutions for them. I have to admit that most were appraisals for this course, which served to confirm the thesis objectives and to answer the research questions. The appreciation for this course was in general higher than that of the previous one due to the fact that I had more experience, I was not the only facilitator and also because I implemented most of the suggestions proposed by the participants in the previous course.

The discussion for each of these seven themes is generally longer than that of the previous course, principally because in this one there were thirty participants plus another facilitator, and I tried to give voice to everyone. Another reason is linked to the fact that the course was given entirely in Spanish and participants were freer to talk and intervene than those of the course given in English in which, as expressed in one of its emerging themes, language was a barrier and the participants' improvement of their English was one

of the main reasons for their joining the course. The discussion is particularly long in the last of the following seven themes since I have analysed the advantages and limitations of this course which was considered innovative by Kim and most of the participants.

### *1. Companionship and relaxing atmosphere*

This theme came up so many times in the classroom and a few more times in the evaluations that it deserves to be mentioned here. The participants in general felt gradually more relaxed during the course thanks to the companionship that they created among themselves, with the facilitators and also due to the themes discussed. Being often personal issues that at least four participants said they would probably never talk about outside the classroom, helped create this special atmosphere of trust in which the participants felt free to talk about basically anything without being judged. The fact that they often worked in small groups and that they presented their final teaching projects in groups and we always ended the classes with open discussions, contributed to this feeling of amicability. If we also add that we had a couple of dinners at a restaurant, went to a bar in Granada a few times to discuss sexuality issues and to listen to Tara's music, went to see a play about gender roles and spent the last class and consequent party at one of the participants' flat, it is not surprising that at the end of the course all the participants felt like friends.

Moreover, Kim mentioned in the classroom that having a slight majority of cisgender heterosexuals in the course and being in such a safe and relaxing environment is like a vision of the future. Some of the (cis) heterosexual participants in the evaluations admitted having felt included in the discourses and felt pleased about it, also because they realised that their position of power and privilege was socially imposed on them and at times they did not feel at ease in their expected social roles. As discussed in the oral evaluation, Kim admitted that in the past she had always felt relaxed to talk to lgbti people, whilst at times she would become rigid in the presence of heterosexual people whom she did not know. Thus, she found the course extremely stimulating because after only one and a half months she could talk to all the participants with the same freedom and safety that she would talk to lgbti persons; and the course helped all the participants feel at ease and treat gender and sexuality issues with normality.

Furthermore, Kim, as well as the rest of the participants, underlined the impact that *It's Elementary* had on them as what they saw in some of the schools showed in the documentary was similar to what was going on in our classroom: an experience inside a similar experience, which Kim found innovative. The only difference is that in our course

we were all adults and, unlike the documentary (released in 1996), we also included trans and intersex identities in our class discussions. The participants in the evaluations also admitted having appreciated the exchange of knowledge among themselves and the knowledge they shared with us, the facilitators, creating a more horizontal and linear relationship than a hierarchical one. One participant was in fact surprised that ‘teacher talk’ was almost the same as ‘student talk’, and often the participants’ talk exceeded that of the facilitators. This was done also as a form of empowerment for the participants and mainly because we wanted to be treated all as equals.

Similarly to the previous course, the participants opened up about themselves quite freely in the classroom, which I hoped and expected as the course was a safe environment in which the participants in general could confront themselves and feel completely relaxed with sexuality issues, probably for the first time in an academic situation, even if some felt at ease but did not want to disclose much about themselves, and this was also fine. This realisation is very relevant for the importance of this interactive course, in which the participants’ life experiences played a fundamental role in shaping the course itself. One participant who had been an activist advocating lgbti rights commented that he was really pleased to have met younger highly motivated people, whilst another said that she was surprised and happy to have met wonderful people that she did not know before, the spirit and enthusiasm of the group and its human and emotional level was what she appreciated the most. Whilst for two more participants the security achieved during the course gave them additional motivation to propose and organise more queer activities in their secondary school. For all these reasons participants requested to stay in touch after completing the course as a form of constructing a link in order to exchange experiences and information.

## *2. Personal introspective process*

Undoubtedly, such a course triggered strong emotional reactions amongst the participants, as each one of us had to confront dilemmas surrounding our gender and sexual identities, including those who considered themselves (cis) heterosexuals. I also include myself and Kim in the discourse as we opened up in the classroom revealing personal aspects of our lives related to our gender formation and fluctuation, which the participants found innovative because they admitted not being used to hearing ‘teachers’ and ‘lecturers’ discussing their gender and sexual identities critically and in such an uninhibited way.

Thus, the themes approached during the course provoked various and interesting reactions. One participant was impressed by the impact of *It's Elementary* and what we discussed in the classroom affected the way he saw his 'new' and evolving identity. Some others claimed that they needed more time to think about all the responses the course provoked in them. A strong reaction was given by a participant who admitted feeling confused during the course and that she would feel like that during some time, as she did not manage to digest a part of what she thought she was. She said that she could not define herself as a typical woman and typically feminine, but towards the end of the course it ceased to be a problem and she felt more relaxed about it. Another participant thought that the course was about 'homosexual people' and felt really surprised to notice that all identities were included, also (cis) heterosexuals. Therefore, the course succeeded in problematising (cis) heterosexuality, which I consider an achievement, especially for straight people who have generally learnt in their lives to accept their social role as something completely natural without ever thinking about it. Another observed that the course helped her move things inside her and because of this she felt ready to talk about her sexuality with her close friends and family; whilst another was delighted by the fact that there were trans people in the course and the course itself made her stronger about her gender and sexual identity to the point that she decided to talk about it with her close friends. Coming out is extremely important in order to feel accepted and to be able to be ourselves with all the people we choose to, but this can be achieved when people feel ready and safe about it. Moreover, a participant said that the course made her a more positive person, which is an excellent personal achievement and also admitted that the course had strong personal impacts on some participants contributing to countering some of the previous barriers they might have had towards these personal introspective issues. Moreover, Kim's new theoretical contribution of sex and gender fuzzy sets influenced many participants as it helped them recognise that in the end, according to this theory, we are all a more or less, never definite, often shifting and in transition.

Perhaps the most striking introspective moment happened in the classroom when a participant complained about the fact that we referred to her/him/hir/them with feminine pronouns which s-he/ze/them did not like, especially in a course like this in which gender awareness should be always high. This statement literally triggered a bomb in the classroom as the other participants were surprised and felt the urge to say what they thought about it opening up the path for two trans people to come out in the class. It was a

fantastic and unexpected experience for Kim, myself and all the rest of the participants, especially after only three classes. Ultimately, all these revelations made the participants understand that gender and sexuality issues are not sufficiently dealt with in our society at large.

### *3. Not enough time*

Time also turned out to be an issue in this course. One example was the short time we had for the final presentations, as remarked by one participant in the oral evaluation and confirmed by almost everybody in the classroom. As a suggestion, the participants would keep the final presentations shorter in order to have more time for evaluating them and for a final discussion. In reality, I had told them how to prepare each teaching project precisely, with a timing of a maximum half an hour presentation for each group. Of course reality is different since it was very hard to stop the presentations especially because they were extremely interesting and the participants were very enthusiastic about them and got carried away. Consequently, in both of the final classes when they presented their teaching projects we ran out of time and left the university premises half an hour later. As a result, I will try to add another day of final presentations in a possible future course, so that we will have more time to analyse, evaluate and discuss them.

Time seemed to be limited also for the workshops and related class discussions. Some participants complained at the end of the sessions that we had to leave the classroom when the discussion was at its highest point. Therefore, these participants requested having more time for the workshops and especially for the class discussions. Even if it might sound like a limitation, the fact that they enjoyed the workshops and the discussions so much is highly rewarding. As in all interesting discussions time is regarded as an 'intruder' which can limit the development, the length and depth of a discussion. At the same time some participants asked for a course with fewer hours per class, in which workshops and discussions, in my view, would have been even more restricted. It is always difficult to find the perfect timetable for everyone, especially because university classrooms are not always available and courses have to follow a programme, although in this case not so strictly. But time was also a problem in terms of the duration of the course itself. Six out of fifteen participants in the oral evaluation would have preferred a longer course, because forty hours were not enough. As in the previous course, they suggested offering the course as part of a Master's degree or as a university subject, with more theory, especially for those participants who possessed little knowledge of sexuality issues prior to the

commencement of the course. However, also in this course one participant praised the fact that despite this lack of time the course followed what it advocated. I argued that this was a training course in which practice needed more space and a longer course would have given more opportunities to explore wider theoretical aspects as well as practical ones. It is fine to teach theory in a course and it is definitely needed, however, in my view theoretical texts can be read at home and discussed in the classroom with summaries thus avoiding giving tedious lectures in the classroom and wasting time.

#### *4. Feeling of being empowered to treat gender and sexual identity issues in education*

All participants recognised having received enough empowerment and motivation to treat sexuality issues in education. In fact, they all agreed on the importance for such a course at all educational levels and ages. They also recognised that the materials used in class and the course methodology would be used as pedagogical instruments in their teaching profession or even in their everyday life. Through their teaching empowerment, the majority of the participants admitted that it was easier to teach primary school children than secondary school pupils, thus changing their initial perception when only half of the participants thought it was easier with primary school pupils, in line with the participants of the previous course in English. They also managed to carry out workshops like ‘Challenging stereotypes and myths’ more successfully after having had some classes and knowledge of LGBTI issues, in other words, after feeling more empowered.

Moreover, *It's Elementary* helped the participants realise that teaching children and adolescents about LGBTI people is feasible and offered valid pedagogical examples which were highly praised in the classroom and will serve for their teaching career. The trainees certainly became more empowered towards the end of the course thanks to their project presentations. The main reasons for their empowerment were said to be acquiring new strategies to counter homotransphobia and heterosexism in education as well as learning a rich queer terminology, the tools used throughout the course and the knowledge gained in the classroom. They also expressed more security after the course and a willingness to treat these issues and queer terminology in education. Knowing how to use words and definitions is important because it is empowering when we come to face sexual identity issues as well as learning new theories, like queer theory and sex and gender fuzzy set theory, which one participant discussed in her teaching practice, whilst another employed some of the course activities and applied the course objectives in her own lessons at a secondary school. In addition, one participant recognised seeing heteronormativity

everywhere, something that before the course she was not aware of, and in her everyday life with her students and her family she tried to counter it using what she had learnt in the course. Whilst another pointed out that in special needs education sexuality in general is rendered totally invisible, thus in the course she admitted having learnt how to bring gender and sexual identity into her profession.

Furthermore and most importantly, one participant stressed the importance of professional training and gaining knowledge without which it could be dangerous to teach about gender and sexual identity issues, especially to children, due to lack of experience and teacher empowerment, basically, without proper professional training and an appropriate pedagogical approach these issues could be badly taught or not addressed at all for fear of not being capable of dealing with them. In fact, the course participants who were in-service educators said that the course made them feel more secure to teach their students better by means of organising activities in their schools similar to those employed in the course. The trainees also recognised that treating these issues would not be as easy as it seemed in the classroom. Like for the participants of the previous course, they said that they would have to face obstacles like parents, types of schools, colleagues and headteachers. However, they gave valuable examples on how to try to counter these obstacles, some of these strategies they learned during the course. Finally, all the participants agreed that this type of training for pre-service and in-service teachers is fundamental and necessary.

##### *5. Appreciation of having two facilitators and invited people*

As expressed before, this course might have worked better than the previous one in part because I had more experience and because there was another facilitator with me for half of the course, and also other people were invited which was highly appreciated by everyone. The participants were enthusiastic about having two facilitators with a vision of gender issues slightly different but totally compatible; they also praised the invited people who were considered very open-minded and with whom they shared experiences and listened to their life stories. A couple of participants suggested having even more facilitators and more invited people to receive different visions and experiences. In a possible future course, I would like to include more facilitators and I would also like to extend the range of contacts with external people and associations. One participant in fact



suggested inviting lgbti associations to the course; however, I believe it would be easier and more feasible on a longer course or, as suggested before, as part of a university subject, as this course was quite short and intense; even so, we managed to invite external people successfully. I also believe that inclusion is fundamental as long as it is done through critical discussions.

#### *6. The realisation of lgbti and queer persons' reality outside the course*

Four participants during the oral evaluation admitted that due to the course they became more aware of the difficulties that lgbti persons still have to face in our society nowadays. This made them feel sad and realise that before the course they did not think that the situation of many lgbti persons was still dramatic in many different aspects, especially in education with all the cases of homotransphobic bullying. Kim agreed with them and added that for her it was astonishing to be part of a course with a majority of (cis) heterosexuals with whom we all created a nice and easy relationship, tangible and real. But then she added that on the streets of Granada this reality seemed still far away. However, she was also positive when she commented that maybe in just a few years we might meet up again and happily declare what we have managed to achieve. Thus, for her and for the rest of the participants, it is essential to transcend the classroom and academia in order to change society and in order to make it a more equitable place for all the people who feel marginalised for their sexual orientation or gender identity. Participants also recognised that when we leave a safe environment, like this training course, we realise that there are many barriers against an equitable society for gender nonconforming individuals and many people do not believe that it is possible to treat sexuality issues in education or do not see it necessary, insisting that it is not a priority nor a problem nowadays. I hope this type of training courses could contribute to triggering social change for a more equitable society for lgbti and all marginalised people starting from education.

#### *7. Originality of the course: advantages and limitations*

It was recognised by various participants, both in the classroom and through their evaluations, that this course was different and innovative for them mainly because it was interactive, it promoted critical thinking, and the facilitators shared their knowledge with those of the participants and tried to maintain a position of equity with everybody. Their perspective on the course confirmed that this was not a typical university course based mainly on lectures. The participants found it dynamic, and they also enjoyed all the

practical activities. The fact that the course was perceived to be dynamic is reassuring since some participants of the previous course did not find it dynamic enough. These responses made me realise how different this course must have appeared to some of them who found it more interesting and motivating because of its interactivity and critical thinking. All participants appreciated learning queer language and non sexist and inclusive language in Spanish (the use of the neutral and pluralistic *e*). Moreover, most participants and Kim praised the course methodology to the point that Kim would have enjoyed her own teaching much more in the past had she applied such methodology to her lessons, which I found really gratifying since her experience and presence in the course were fundamental and I learned a great deal from her theory and from her excellent communication skills. All the participants found Kim's sex and gender fuzzy set theory to be innovative and helpful for understanding better our orientations and identities. Because of the presence of Kim, and as I personally wished, another innovative change in this course compared to the previous one was that we discussed more trans and intersexual identities, which was clearly appreciated by everyone.

It was also unusual for the participants to be in a very practical course in which practice had more relevance, even if two participants would have preferred more theory and another one even more practice. In possible future courses I might add some more theory, but only if the course is longer, although I agree with one participant who stated that a 50% balance between theory and practice never really works. Another example of the appreciation of the course was given by two participants in the oral evaluations who stated that the course was a perfect example in which every participant can learn from each other and not only from the facilitators, and all training courses should be like this, that is, interactive, in which participants' knowledge is considered as important as that of the facilitators, who ultimately have the duty to manage the course and give the essential tools for the participants to be able to think critically and talk freely.

Moreover, two participants in the written evaluation thought that this type of course should be a normal university subject given to all in-service and pre-service teachers. However, so far, academia in Spain, at least in Granada, has not accepted such a subject and issue as part of its programmes, curricula and specific research lines. Nonetheless, one participant was surprised that such a course could be offered at the University of Granada, and she was very pleased about it. In fact, it was the second course of this type (after the one I offered in English) given at the Faculty of Education of the University of Granada

and I consider myself lucky and privileged to have been supported by my thesis directors, who left me total freedom to organise the courses, after obtaining their approval.

The originality of the course was also appreciated by the fact that although the course was given at the university, participants and facilitators met outside the course various times and different activities were organised outside academia. Therefore, the trainees understood the importance of transcending the classroom and university as a step forward to reach more people and to better contribute to a social change in favour of LGBTI rights.

On a more negative side, some participants expressed their criticism about the course which of course I have to take into account in order to improve future courses. I was, for example, asked to give clearer explanations before each practical activity in order to avoid confusion or misunderstanding, or to try to control more the most experienced students who sometimes took the floor during classroom discussions. As to first giving the meaning of gender and sexual identity terminology before discussing it in groups, I am not sure if it is a good idea, since all the participants had their own knowledge, some more and some less, and this had to be taken into account and compared before reaching a final agreement. It is important for the participants to understand that the facilitators cannot possess all the 'right' knowledge and answers, although both Kim and I felt prepared to manage the course and to take control whenever it was needed. Nonetheless, some discussions could have been better structured and controlled, but we wanted everybody to have a chance to talk, especially those who had less knowledge of the issues before the commencement of the course and obviously felt more inhibited to intervene at first. The suggestion about fragmenting the theory to work first in groups and then as a whole class I will keep in mind, this is feasible and very constructive.

All these comments and proposals are valuable and I am glad that the changes I introduced for this course were all appreciated and worked out well, like being more dynamic, inviting external people, having another facilitator to work with me, introducing another theory, making a connection between art and sexual identities, and transcending academia, in line with the thesis objectives.



### 3 Conclusions from the training process

The participants of both training courses demonstrated how this type of teacher training is relevant and needed in education in order to fill a gap which has never been properly dealt with for all the reasons described in this thesis and from the class discussions with the participants of both courses. The evaluation of the two courses was in general positive, especially for the second one given in Spanish. In the course given in English there was a language barrier which was yet lived as a challenge by most participants as they admitted that it was not usual to find university courses given entirely in English at the University of Granada and even less usual courses on sexual and gender identities. For the participants of both courses, the course itself was rather short as they needed more time to assimilate what they had learnt and to put it into practice first in the classroom and then in their teaching practices.

In the second course, the changes introduced from the suggestions from the previous course participants were all appreciated, thus contributing to providing a better organisation. Moreover, the participants of both courses considered it important to have learnt equitable language and strategies to counter the gender binary system, homotransphobia, heterosexism and cissexism in education, together with the necessity to enact queer sociolinguistics in English language teaching as well as in general Spanish education.

All queer teaching projects presented by the participants of the training courses were excellent in my opinion. Moreover, the course trainees asserted that they would employ them or other strategies used in the courses in their future career as English-language teachers and in general Spanish education, thus transforming their latent empowerment into an active one. I sincerely hope the materials used in both courses and the participants' final presentations could be employed by other educators who, like us, need to learn about sexuality issues and want to discuss them in education. Furthermore, in both courses it was demonstrated that queer theory, critical theory, and for the second course, sex and gender fuzzy set theory can be easily applied to English-language education and general education in Spain, at all levels. The rewarding presence of Kim Pérez in the second course reinforced the need to discuss issues related to trans and intersexual persons and having two trans people on the same course contributed to giving more visibility to trans identities, who are usually rendered invisible in education. Another satisfaction regarding

these training courses was given by a participant on the second course who had been an advocate for lgbt rights all his life and admitted having waited for a course like this for a very long time. He believed that gender and sexual identity issues should be a fundamental knowledge in education. Another participant from the second course proposed to form a theatre or role-play group to work in primary and secondary schools to treat gender and sexuality issues, which I find a very effective way to act with fun in order to transform education. In addition, both courses had a high course participation and attendance, especially the second one, understandably as it was more general and in Spanish and less restricted in terms of target people than the first course. Moreover, in both courses the class atmosphere created because of the issues treated was considered special, as each one of the participants had to do a lot of personal introspection helped by the teaching methods aiming at facilitating them with the necessary tools and offering practical workshops and space for open dialogues and class discussions.

On a more negative side, the participants of both courses realised how relatively easy it was to treat sexuality issues during the course but how difficult it is to take real action in general education outside the course classroom, and how hard life could be for some lgbt persons. This realisation created uneasiness among the participants, who said to try to turn this problem over by contributing to a more equitable education and society for lgbt persons employing what they learned during the course, thus demonstrating having achieved active teacher empowerment (Bedford, 2009).

Finally, both courses are justified and rendered valid by the fact that a good proportion of the participants took part in them because of the credits offered, thus demonstrating that they did not all participate because of an interest they already had in sexuality issues; even if more than half (60%) of the participants of the second course given in Spanish participated for an interest in gender and sexuality issues, which I find gratifying. Moreover, in the first course almost everybody considered themselves to be (cis) heterosexual and also a slight majority in the second course, creating an environment where everybody was included in the discourses and thus problematising all gender and sexual identities, especially (cis) heterosexuality, making the participants realise that homotransphobia affects everybody and hence should be considered and included as a gender and power issue like women's inequity in our society.

## VI Concluding discussion

### 1 Autobiographical reflection:

#### Practical achievements during my PhD research

I have decided to start this final chapter with an ‘autobiographical reflection’ since this research has been a crucial learning experience for me through which I have managed to take some additional queer action in different academic and extra-academic contexts. However, I would like to point out that these are not simple autobiographical reflections; rather they are practical achievements which helped me shape the whole of my dissertation and are related to the main research objectives.

The research process as a whole, although complex, has been a gratifying experience which has helped me get to know myself and the people around me better through a process of self-deconstruction of our gender and sexuality. Thanks to this, I have gained more security about what I am *not* (more than what I am). In particular, I have improved my communication skills, ergo becoming more confident when debating and discussing gender and sexual identity issues in educational and social fields through the queer literature I read, the courses I offered, the contributions of the participants to the courses, the interesting queer and non queer people I met in and outside academia, and the motivation and commitment which have always accompanied me. All this acquired experience would not have been possible without working in parallel with other invaluable teaching and learning experiences, like offering talks and interventions on sexual identity issues in different places, not only in Spain, which some deserve to be mentioned here.

First of all, I presented a paper in Spanish on the work of the pilot study of this dissertation at the *1<sup>st</sup> International congress on equality in education: Gender and sexualities* in November 2011 at the Faculty of Education of the University of Granada. In 2013 I collaborated on a Master’s course given in English called *Language and gender: A critical perspective* organised by Dr Hidalgo Tenorio at the Faculty of Arts of the University of Granada, Department of English. My session was called *Sexual identities: Terms and definitions* through which a lively discussion was held with the ten participants especially on the meaning of cissexual/cisgender and how we were all taught at a very young age to be homotransphobic. Every participant gave examples of homotransphobic bullying in education according to their experience and to their cultural and religious

provenance as the group was formed by people from different countries worldwide, causing at times conflicts that we managed to resolve through critical thinking.

Also in 2013, I participated in the Erasmus programme and spent three months at the Faculty of Sociology of the University of Padua (Italy) doing research for my thesis. This was a very enriching experience as I had the opportunity of collaborating in a two-day seminar organised by Dr Luca Trappolin and called *Sociology of Cultural Processes*. In this seminar I presented my PhD study in Italian, my mother tongue. I focused the discussion on the need to talk about gender and sexual identity language and social situations especially related to gender nonconforming minors and trans people. Apart from discussing sexual identity terms (like 'cissexist', 'cisgender' or 'heteronormativity'), emphasis was put on gender nonconforming minors who might be trans and who might need puberty blockers (or inhibitors) and hormone replacement therapy at the beginning of puberty. It was a passionate and lively discussion that led to a heated debate. If during the first day of the session the majority of students were against puberty-blocking drugs and hormone administration before reaching 'adulthood', on the second day 70% were in favour of it, thus understanding these adolescents' necessity to have the right to transition if they really express a need for it and to receive the appropriate medical attention always under the supervision of their family members/guardians. The sociology students and Dr Trappolin of the University of Padua were surprised by the progress made in Andalusia with respect to the rights of trans people. In Italy only a few universities, including that of Padua, give permission to trans students to have two university student cards, one with their name and gender given at birth and the other with their chosen name and gender. Some of the students after the two-day seminar approached me and told me that our talks opened their eyes and minds and that they had never spoken about sexuality issues in such a critical way and thanked me for my collaboration. This is another positive aspect of my study, as the experience at the University of Padua felt like a continuation of my training courses in a satellite event in a different country.

Moreover in 2013, I took part in a project called *Stop Trans Pathologisation* in a cultural centre in Granada. My intervention was the workshop I gave in both training courses of this dissertation about confronting homotransphobia and challenging stereotypes and myths, in which the twenty participants by changing pairs attacked and/or defended typical transphobic statements and tried to convince each other. It worked out very well as all the participants admitted how efficient - or less efficient compared to other forms of



dealing with the problem - this type of confrontation was as a way to counter (homo)transphobia.

In 2014 I presented and discussed the themes of my PhD study in different faculties of the University of Granada, often with Kim Pérez and Tara Transitory. Furthermore in 2014, I was invited to give an interactive talk in a secondary school in Granada after the play *Why is John Lennon wearing a skirt?* (Claire Dowie, 1998) was shown. Most school students and teachers were present and we talked about the gender code - I was wearing a Scottish kilt -, gender roles, and any topic that students brought up, like gender nonconforming people and how they are usually mistreated and misunderstood in education. Both students and teachers were enthusiastic about the outcome of the play and the group discussion. This activity triggered a series of initiatives to counter homotransphobia in that school which were echoed and adopted in other schools in Granada, thus reaching one of the primary objectives of my research. The arts can offer a wonderful form of transmitting knowledge and critical thinking, so a play on gender roles, or a concert and talk given by Tara based on gender and noise, are effective and valuable ways of reaching on the subject.

In addition, towards the end of 2014, Kim, I and five other people, including a sociology university professor, a biologist, a PhD law student and an expert in intersexual issues, founded the *Association of gender identities* (*Academia de identidades de género*). The association's main objective is to assist teachers, educators, students, medical personnel, psychologists, parents of gender nonconforming minors and any interested person on how to deal with any issue related to gender and sexual identities, like homotransphobia in schools and in other social spheres.

Finally, and perhaps the most exciting of all these facilitating/learning practices was my experience in Thailand in 2015 where I offered two workshops in two different cities. The first intervention took place in the English Department of the Faculty of Humanities at the University of Chiang Mai, in northern Thailand in February of 2015. I was invited by Dr Sura Intamool, a university English-language and literature teacher. There were about fifty students in the classroom, aged between 19 and 22, all English-language and literature students and all Thai nationals. Their level of English was excellent, so there was never a problem of communication, as they understood all my English and vice-versa. The workshop I gave was about defining some queer terminology, like heteronormativity, queer, lgbti, transsexual, transgender, homophobia, transphobia, gender code and sexual

identity and orientation. The session lasted two hours which was just enough to receive proper and constructive feedback. They were able to give a rough definition of some of the terms, but they did not know others, as had been the case with the participants of the training courses in Granada. However, it was amazing to realise how they were able to give clear definitions of the difference between a transgender and a transsexual person and anything related to trans people. MtF trans are very visible in Thailand, called 'kathoey' or more commonly 'ladyboys', whilst FtM are less visible, just like anywhere else in the world, and are called 'Tom' (from 'tomboy'), who do not have to be necessarily trans. However, especially MtF trans persons, but also FtM, are occupying different working positions in Thai society, unlike Europe. Just to give an example, the first Thai person I met when I arrived in Bangkok was a police officer at passport control at the airport who was a trans person (MtF) with full make up on her face; it was a nice surprise to me, as I did not expect them to reach such 'high' social positions. I mentioned this during the workshop and the students were all very pleased to hear this. Some commented that for them having different genders, especially in some regions of Thailand, had always been a tradition which has been maintained despite the influence of the 'Western' binary globalisation. However, Thai transgenderism is also quite binary, as MtF usually look very 'feminine' and FtM 'masculine'.

Notwithstanding, the participants found it very hard to give a definition of homophobia. They translated phobia as fear, but did not mention discrimination. I asked them why they found it difficult to describe homophobia and lesbophobia, and their answer surprised me. They said that they did not normally talk about homosexuality, which is not forbidden by law in Thailand, but there is a 'don't ask, don't tell' policy. As a comparison with the participants of the training courses of this dissertation I must admit that the Thai students had a much higher awareness of trans identities and issues, but a lesser one of homosexual people; whilst for the participants of the training courses at the University of Granada in Spain it was the exact opposite.

The Thai students knew a bit about queer theory as they studied feminism where it was mentioned; although nobody had heard of the term intersexuality before, which we briefly discussed. Likewise, they did not have much idea about what heteronormativity meant. We discussed the term and we all agreed that it is used in the same way both in Europe and in Thailand, confirming that English-language textbooks are also heterosexist in Thailand. As for the gender code, I showed the kilt I was wearing which they all recognised as a Scottish

garment wore by men, but also added that it was not common outside Scotland, and that it might be read as wearing a skirt, thus breaking the gender code. I commented that, unlike in Europe, I felt relaxed and at ease wearing a kilt in Thailand. The students told me that in ancient Thailand men used to wear clothes similar to skirts, like the sarongs, which nowadays, especially in the cities, have disappeared, probably due to the ‘Western’ binary globalisation and gender code.

The workshop and class discussion at the University of Chiang Mai worked extremely well and students were enthusiastic about my intervention. This experience was extremely rewarding for me, particularly from a comparative perspective. A memory to cherish.

The second satisfying and accomplishing experience in Thailand took place in March of 2015 in Bangkok in a bar/cultural centre called ‘Jam’. It was part of a *Translaectica* event where Tara Transitory and other invited people talked about trans people’s rituals in South East Asia. I presented the workshop ‘Challenging stereotypes and myths’ and together with the twenty participants we also discussed power and privilege. It was another fascinating experience because the participants were from diverse parts of the world, including Thailand, Germany, Italy, Poland, USA, Britain, France, Indonesia, Singapore and Vietnam, aged between 20 and 70 with different cultural and social backgrounds. When I asked them to tell me some of the typical homotransphobic statements that they normally hear in their country I received many different examples depending on the person’s experience and cultural origin. Once again, the Thai participants recognised that trans people were visible and normally accepted in their society even if at times they have to struggle with their families before being reaffirmed as trans and being able to lead a normal life. Some of the participants in the group were English-language teachers who asked for suggestions and launched ideas on how to treat homotransphobic bullying in their schools and how to tackle the typical English-language expression ‘that’s so gay’. At the end of this very constructive discussion in which everybody thanked me for giving them an opportunity to openly discuss these issues and make comparisons between different countries, Tara intervened and asked a compelling question:

Is it better for a trans person like me to live in a country like Spain, where I can receive hormones for free and where, so far in Andalusia, I can change my name and gender without going through psychological and medical attention and without needing to get genital reconstruction surgery, but where I get harassed in the streets very frequently and trans people are not visible nor can they easily obtain work? Or is it better for trans people to have all their basic rights denied, like having to keep

their name and gender they received at birth all their life and to die with it, but on the other hand, they can lead a life in which they can be visible, respected and accepted?

I could tell by how the question was raised that Tara preferred the second option and this made me reflect a lot on all the work that has been done in Andalusia, for example, where, legally, trans people's rights have gained a reasonable status whereas society at large remains ignorant about trans people's reality and on top of that trans people continue to be discriminated against and harassed. We discussed this at the end of the workshop with ambivalent opinions.

Apparently, there have been promising talks in 2015 about a draft of the new Thai constitution, which intends to grant civil rights to gay and trans persons based on protection that they could have never legally enjoyed before<sup>61</sup>.

The matter raised by Tara was also discussed back in Granada with the members of the *Association of gender identities* who believed that ideally a combination of popular acceptance and legal recognition would be perfect. We also commented that these progressive laws, like the one in Andalusia, are fundamental human rights and achievements for trans persons, but people in general do not know about these laws and therefore they are not affected by them. Moreover, they are not often introduced into the educational system, for example, in which, in my opinion, school staff should be instructed on how to use them to defend cases of homotransphobia and thus support lgbt persons' rights. Teachers' ignorance on lgbt rights and on the existing laws in Andalusia was confirmed by the second project of the pilot study in which the ten in-service EFL primary school teachers did not seem to possess enough information on these laws as illustrated by their responses in the survey.

To sum up, some of these initiatives transcended academia and also Spain, as in the case of Italy and Thailand; thus supporting one of the specific objectives of this dissertation aiming at contributing to a more effective social and institutional change in favour of queer and lgbt persons.

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<sup>61</sup><http://www.lgbtqnation.com/2015/01/draft-of-new-thailand-constitution-would-protect-gay-transgender-people/>

## 2 Limitations of the study

Possibly, the main limitation of this study was the fact that at the beginning I had to start this new challenge as a novice researcher counting almost solely on my own previous teaching experience. In other words, I started this journey with many ideas but not enough experience in the field of research and training on sexual identities. Furthermore and most importantly, the resources at the University of Granada were quite limited as I could not find previous *practical* courses based on training pre-service and in-service teachers on gender and sexual identity issues, neither in English nor in Spanish, and this lack of resources to sustain my thesis was also reflected by the scarce literature I could rely on worldwide.

In addition, the findings of my study are restricted to a specific geographical area (Granada, Spain) and ethnography, mainly Spanish nationals from Granada or the rest of Andalusia. Different geographical areas and cohort groups might have given other results. Nonetheless, this was the place and the population I wanted to study and I am certain that the research methodology and objectives of this thesis could be applied to other parts of the world with some adjustments depending on each social context. Therefore, my findings should not be read as universal evidence; rather they are context-specific and could be compared with other similar studies both in Europe and the rest of the world, as I compared the European GLEE Project (Bedford, 2009) with my research study.

One limitation in the pilot study of this dissertation was that the participants decided to take part in the two projects voluntarily, thus showing a possible previous interest in sexual identity issues. Perhaps different cohort groups for the pilot study might have given different results. However, half of the pre-service primary school English-language teachers (50%) and eight (80%) of the in-service primary school English-language teachers who took part in the pilot study admitted being purely heterosexual, demonstrating an interest in sexuality issues which in my experience tends to be greater for LGBTI persons and ‘women’, thus contributing to the validity of the pilot study. Moreover, in both training courses, notably the first one, a good proportion of the participants, most of whom were cis-heterosexuals, decided to participate for other reasons than those related to an interest in sexuality issues, thus validating the courses even further.

Furthermore, the first training course given in English was the first I implemented and organised and, as a result, I made some mistakes underlined by the participants’

evaluations. Perhaps it was ambitious to offer such a course on my own since all the pedagogical materials were created and adapted by myself, although my PhD supervisor and directors always supported me a great deal. The second training course in Spanish was better organised, according to the participants' evaluations, because I had learnt from the mistakes made in the previous course. Another obvious limitation of the first course given in English was the language barrier for some of its participants, all native speakers of Spanish. However, it is quite common to have a mix-ability language class and in the end everybody was pleased that the course was offered entirely in English.

Another limitation was the different level of knowledge of gender and sexuality issues among the participants of the two training courses. In fact, those who felt more secure about the issues and possessed more knowledge of them often took the floor in class discussions; yet the other participants admitted having learnt a lot from each other.

Finally, time was also a limitation in both courses as sometimes we could not finish the class discussions at the end of each lesson and forty hours were not considered enough for such a type of course.

### **3 Course participant empowerment**

This is an important section as it specifically answers one of the sub-questions and it is related to the primary objectives of this thesis (see Chapter I-3). In order to reach this aim I had to stay in touch with the research participants who in some instances contacted me after the course and told me how the latent empowerment acquired during the training course had transformed into active empowerment in their professional and personal life. This outcome was also shared by the participants of the GLEE Project (Bedford, 2009: 215-218). The following are just a few examples of cases of participant teacher empowerment.

A participant of the course given in English informed me that she used the knowledge acquired during the course for her PhD research in Literature and Social Networks with a gender perspective. She also found all the materials from our course useful for her previous Master in gender studies. When she contacted me she was doing research in gender identity studies. Another participant from the first course in English told me that he was not teaching at that moment, but after finishing the course he had implemented some of the strategies learnt to fight against homotransphobia in his everyday life and by doing so, had

taught queer strategies to the people around him. He also said that he would feel secure in tackling sexuality issues as a primary school teacher. Another participant from the first course in English admitted that the information and knowledge received during the course served for her everyday life and the course opened her mind and she became more respectful with many different people. When she contacted me, she was working in a private primary school teaching children aged 6-12, but, unfortunately, in that school she was not allowed to talk about sexuality. This was also one of the results of Bedford's study, in which teachers' "ability to exercise was limited by institutional, cultural and structural barriers" (2009: 216).

However, another participant from the first course told me that she was teaching Spanish at a University in Warsaw, Poland, and she dedicated some of her Spanish-language classes to gender and sexual identity issues using the methodology and materials employed in the training course. She enthusiastically reported to me that her course participants enjoyed the sessions on sexuality issues a great deal and said they were needed as they had never talked about them before. This is further evidence of active empowerment after the courses. The same participant when she contacted me was doing an MA in Spanish literature and the theme of her research is lesbian Spanish theatre from the transition to the present day. She also told me that the training course affected her both academically and pedagogically, and gave her the right motivation to take up queer studies and to use queer theory, and the course is always a reference for her life and her profession. She was also invited to an international congress on social criticism in which she presented her MA dissertation. Moreover, another participant of the course given in English was finishing his PhD on legal matters related to trans identities; he is now part of the *Association of Gender Identities* of Granada, together with Kim and me.

A participant from the course given in Spanish told me that she applied what she had learnt in the course in her everyday life. When she contacted me she was working in a secondary school and she was organising a feminist fanzine for her school in which she treats gender and sexual identity issues. Another participant from the same course said that he used the course material for a workshop he gave in his secondary school for the day against homophobia. This workshop was very successful to the point that other teachers asked him to give it in another school and to pass the material he used to other teachers interested in dealing with sexuality issues. He said he was quite surprised by the positive reaction, and he believes that there is a high interest in the issue but ignorance and taboo

still prevail. During his workshops he always said he was gay, and at the end of them he was often approached by students who asked him questions about gender and sexual identities. He was also asked to collaborate with his and other secondary schools when dealing with cases of homotransphobia, for example on an occasion in which a boy attempted suicide apparently for being bullied on the assumption that he was gay. In effect, he has become a counsellor and a reference on gender and sexuality issues in his and other secondary schools of Granada. He was also asked by his headteacher to defend causes related to diversity, like migration, special needs and sexual orientation. Moreover, he was asked to collaborate with the area of Equality of the Granada Municipality to offer workshops on sexual and gender affection. He finally said that the training course gave him the courage and motivation to carry out all of these queer projects and he admitted having learnt a lot from it and especially from the rest of the participants. Finally, another primary school teacher, who took part in the training course given in Spanish, informed me that she was giving workshops on how to counter homotransphobia in the Catholic primary school where she was working and these workshops had been accepted by the school head, colleagues and pupils' parents.

All these contributions are evidence that activism is taking place in some schools and universities in Granada, and outside Spain, thanks to the participants of the training courses of this dissertation. After this research I feel even more motivated and committed to continue in this field and I also believe that there is a general interest in the issues, despite the cultural and institutional barriers which still permeate our society and education.

#### **4 Concluding comments**

These concluding comments are related to the research questions, the objectives and the contributions to queer pedagogy and literature of this thesis. First of all, the hypothesis of the pilot study predicting that its participants would find training on gender and sexual identities in EFL primary education necessary for their professional development was confirmed by the results of the whole pilot study. In fact, I also reached a point of saturation when I asked in all the four questionnaires - two for the pilot study and two initial questionnaires for the training courses – if participants found this type of training necessary as they replied affirmatively, thus the participants of the training courses confirmed the result of the pilot study. This common response together with the fact that



the research participants admitted that they had never received any type of professional training on how to deal with sexual identity issues in their previous education experience is also a case of data corroboration.

As for the main research question and objectives, this dissertation has contributed to social and institutional change in favour of queer and lgbt equity in education in many different ways. First of all, the training courses were the first of this type offered at the University of Granada, thus opening up a new space for possibilities in academia. The participant turnout for both courses was exceptional, especially for the second course in Spanish, demonstrating an interest in gender and sexual identity issues from both teachers and university students. Moreover, in the second course in Spanish, we successfully managed to justify the need to transcend academia and discuss sexuality issues in various social places and areas, and personally, I also shared the knowledge learnt during the courses and in my PhD research outside Spain, not always in academic contexts. In fact, in order to achieve real queer social transformation we need allies both inside and outside academia and therefore it is essential “to gather more support in all areas of society” (Bedford, 2009: 218).

I consider the major contributions of this study to queer pedagogy and literature the creation of new knowledge gathered from the pilot study and the two training courses, including queer pedagogical strategies to counter homotransphobia and heterosexism, and the production of original queer teaching materials aiming at countering homotransphobia, heterosexism, cissexism and the gender binary system in education, which could be used in English-language teaching (first training course) and in Spanish for general education (second training course). The research also contributed to presenting a new theoretical model for the first time in an academic context based on non-binary gender and on the theory of sex and gender fuzzy sets, a theory proposed by and introduced in the second training course by Kim Pérez Fernández-Fígares. This was innovative and surprising for the course participants not only because it was a new theory for them, but also because the founder of this theory was part of the facilitating and teaching team of the course.

Another possible contribution of this study is that it has demonstrated that, through critical thinking and real life situations, a progressive legislation in favour of lgbt rights might not be sufficient if it is not supported by a general public awareness, understanding and acceptance of the issues involved. In my opinion, this could be achieved through

teacher training programmes in all schools and university disciplines, and also outside academia and the schooling system, as proved possible and indispensable by this work.

With reference to the other research questions, the study participants' perception of the initial research problem changed in different ways. Some of the primary and secondary school teachers in Granada with whom I kept in touch during my PhD study told me that their initial denial (and indifference) was based on ignorance and fear of rejection. Once they approached these issues in their classroom they faced problems and barriers from other colleagues and the school management. These are (cis) heterosexual teachers who suffered a direct form of homotransphobia and were taken aback by this, thus demonstrating one of the specific objectives of this thesis: that homotransphobia and heterosexism affect everyone. However, through their queer pedagogical interventions not only did they realise the importance of treating these issues in education, but they also managed to create opportunities for dialogue and activities in different schools in Granada.

The perception of the problem of the participants of the two training courses was not denial and indifference as such, but rather a general recognition that homotransphobia was not as common as I first presented it in the classroom. This new realisation of LGBTI persons' difficult reality outside the course was in fact quite disturbing and sad for a good proportion of the participants of both courses. Notwithstanding, this has also triggered in them a willingness to try to transform reality by supporting LGBTI and queer rights in education and taking action through queer pedagogical activities in their teaching profession. Even if with slightly different perceptions, the participants of the courses and the teachers I met in Granada during my PhD research changed their initial idea of the problem when they realised that homotransphobia was in fact a controversial and abandoned issue in education. In this sense, the change of perception of the initial problem seems in agreement with the teachers I met in Granada and the research participants, thus discovering another case of data corroboration in this study. In addition, a slight majority of the research participants admitted that parents, teachers and headteachers are considered obstacles in their pursuit of addressing sexuality issues in the classroom. However, through constructive and critical discussions, the participants of both training courses gave practical and feasible examples on how to solve the problem. Moreover, another case of data corroboration connected with a change in awareness was reflected in the pilot study and the training courses in which, initially, the slight majority of the participants (apart from 50% of the second training course) perceived teaching sexual identity issues to secondary

school students easier and more adequate than to primary school pupils. Nonetheless, this was reversed by the vast majority of the participants through critical thinking, class interactions and active participation. Therefore, this particular result of the research conveys that, according to the participants' responses, since it seems easier to treat sexuality issues with younger children mainly because secondary school students might already have their own (often biased) ideas of these issues, queer pedagogical action should be taken as soon as possible in education, so that students can reach secondary school with a more open-minded and accepting vision on diverse gender and sexual identities.

As for teacher empowerment, it was clearly explained in the previous section. It was achieved during the courses and was accompanied by greater confidence in approaching sexual identity issues moved by a sense of social responsibility, since all the participants recognised homotransphobia, heterosexism and cissexism to be types of social discriminations and injustices which need to be tackled in education.

For all the above reasons, the research participants considered this type of teacher training essential as a first step to take in education in order to make people aware of the lack of training in queer and lgbti issues and especially the need for it. They also demonstrated that although they are sometimes problematic issues to discuss, students are usually interested in talking about them and in problematising the hegemonic role of (cis) heterosexuality in our society mainly because these issues concern everybody.

The participants of the courses discovered that by talking about our gender issues we tend to open ourselves up and get to know ourselves and each other better creating a safe space in the classroom for free dialogue and confrontation. This introspective process is needed by all students, from early childhood to higher education, as it is a process that we should all go through in our life. Regrettably, we are not given the opportunity to do so, freely and openly, neither in education nor in society at large, possibly due to the taboo that sexual and gender issues still bear. Furthermore, the need to maintain the status quo of socially accepted, although considered 'politically incorrect', homotransphobia and heterosexism, makes them even more difficult to fight against.

I am satisfied with the outcome of both training courses because they proved to be essential and necessary in education. Hopefully, other studies may benefit from this dissertation and continue proposing teacher training programmes with the objective of eradicating discrimination based on gender and sexual identities in education. Some future research possibilities will be proposed in the next and last section of this thesis.

## 5 Suggestions for future research

This being an action research study, I believe that future research should continue on the same lines, that is, creating opportunities for a contribution to social and institutional transformation in favour of LGBTI rights in education and society at large by means of direct practical pedagogical initiatives.

Firstly, in order to achieve this goal, I consider it essential to offer this type of training to pre-service and in-service teachers of all educational disciplines and levels. In addition, for this aim to be widely effective, training should be also offered to all teaching staff, including school management with a special emphasis on pupils' and students' parents/guardians, thus building an essential bridge between the schooling institutions and the students' families, so that everybody included in their own gender self-identified process could understand the importance of addressing sexuality issues. Moreover, the integration of family members in the training process is particularly essential for gender nonconforming minors who would thus be able to find the necessary support and acceptance from their parents/guardians as well as teachers, schoolmates and headteachers. Furthermore, this type of training should be offered to other professionals who are bound to treat gender and sexual identity issues in their profession, such as doctors, psychologists, therapists, lawyers, and so on. Up to now these professionals have not received any specific training on how to deal with sexual and gender identity issues at least in the faculties of the University of Granada I have had contact with, thus highlighting a gap which needs to be filled.

For other future research possibilities, I have mainly turned to the proposals made by the participants of both training courses who, I think, are the best qualified people to advise me. At first they suggested that this type of teacher training course should be part of the university curriculum, like any other university subject. In fact, training on how to deal with gender and sexual identities can enter many subject areas starting from education (pedagogy) and moving on to include sociology, gender studies, anthropology, psychology, foreign language teaching, literature, arts, music, physical education, ethics, sexual education, politics, law, medicine, and so on. As clearly indicated, there is the space and the necessity to address queer issues in practically any school and university disciplines since signs of discrimination based on gender and sexual identities are usually to be found in any classroom and workplace. As a step forward, the study participants suggested

implementing an MA programme on sexual and gender identity issues and furthermore, they recommended that these issues be part of a specific PhD programme as well as a new line of postgraduate research which, as in the case of an MA programme, would find space in almost any university faculty.

In order to enter university curricula, perhaps meetings and conferences should be held at university faculties and schools to show the importance of addressing these issues from early childhood education onwards. Once the education authorities recognise this urgency it will be easier to propose gender and sexuality issues as part of a subject in the university programme in order to train present and future teachers on how to deal with these issues. In fact, it was recognised by a participant in the second training course that a failure of professional training on gender and sexual identities could create conflicts which would be impossible to solve and could especially contribute to supporting homotransphobia and heterosexism without even realising it. Hence, local and national government departments of equality and diversity, as well as school authorities, should collaborate to fill this gap, since, as the results of this research suggest, although there is progressive legislation in Spain in favour of LGBTI rights, education authorities, school staff and school authorities do not seem to know how to take the necessary measures to counter homotransphobia in education. Therefore, it is my belief that training programmes also need to be implemented at both national and local levels dealing with equality and diversity in education to contribute to real wider institutional and societal transformation.

I would finally add that another avenue for further research studies may include a critical analysis of educational discourses on queer issues, the elaboration of queer teaching materials applicable to all educational disciplines and levels, and studies on homotransphobic bullying and hate speech in education in order to find ways to counter them.



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## Summary of the dissertation in Spanish

### FORMACIÓN DOCENTE EN IDENTIDADES SEXUALES Y DE GÉNERO EN UN CONTEXTO ESPAÑOL

#### 1 Introducción

A lo largo de mi dilatada experiencia como aprendiz y como docente de lenguas extranjeras (inglés e italiano), me he encontrado fundamentalmente con recursos didácticos que mostraban identidades (hetero)normativas. Sin embargo, en mi experiencia laboral se me han presentado situaciones donde el alumnado ha iniciado espontáneamente discursos relacionados con el sexismo y las identidades de género, en los cuáles ha quedado patente la falta de información y, a menudo, la actitud sesgada y discriminatoria por parte del alumnado hacia las personas lgtbi (lesbianas, gays, bisexuales, trans e intersexuales).

Es mi convicción que *les*<sup>62</sup> docentes no podemos mantener el silencio y perpetuar este tipo de discriminación; por tanto, es nuestra obligación enfrentarnos a estos asuntos y actuar para combatir la homotransfobia, el heterosexismo, el cissexismo<sup>63</sup> y el binarismo de género en la educación. En mi opinión, un paso importante para luchar contra estas discriminaciones e injusticias sociales es la formación docente.

Aunque existen datos fehacientes del acoso homotransfóbico y de la inequidad hacia las personas lgtbi en los entornos escolares españoles (FELGTB, 2013)<sup>64</sup>, el problema principal con el que me enfrenté al comienzo de mi investigación fue cierta indiferencia e incluso negación hacia la existencia de homotransfobia en las escuelas. Es más, colegas

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<sup>62</sup> Durante el segundo curso en español, decidimos optar para un lenguaje ‘neutro, inclusivo y no sexista’ usando la letra ‘e’. Por ejemplo: *le niñe/les niñes*; manteniendo el género (no inclusivo) masculino ‘el niño/los niños’ y el femenino ‘la niña/las niñas’. De ahí el uso ‘inclusivo’ en cursiva de *les* en este texto.

<sup>63</sup> El término ‘**homotransfobia**’ incluye todas las discriminaciones hacia las personas lgtbi. El **heterosexismo** es la creencia, a veces inconsciente, de que la heterosexualidad es superior a las otras identidades sexuales. El **cissexismo** es la creencia de que las personas **cisgénero y cissexuales**, es decir, aquellas que se sienten identificadas con su propio género, sexo biológico y sexo del subconsciente, son superiores a las personas trans (Serano, 2007).

<sup>64</sup> *Federación Estatal de Lesbianas, Gays, Transexuales y Bisexuales*. Enlace del estudio: <http://www.felgtb.org/rs/2157/d112d6ad-54ec-438b-9358-4483f9e98868/671/filename/informedefensor-17m13.pdf>

docentes de inglés como lengua extranjera manifestaron reparos en aceptar la necesidad de abordar las temáticas relacionadas con identidades sexuales y de género.

Con la inquietud de denunciar esta situación de injusticia social, a menudo invisible, cuyos efectos son devastadores para estudiantes y docentes, y de demostrar que la formación del profesorado es una de las mejores estrategias para combatirla, se organizó un trabajo piloto, que fue el germen de la tesis que ahora voy a presentar.

Esta tesis tiene una doble vertiente: por un lado, *investigación* (el trabajo piloto) y por otra, *formación* (dos cursos de formación). Los grupos-muestra del trabajo piloto, dirigido a estudiantes de Ciencias de la Educación, especialidad Inglés, y docentes de Inglés en Enseñanza Primaria, manifestaron la necesidad de recibir formación adicional específica en temas relacionados con identidades sexuales y de género en contextos escolares. Como consecuencia, se ofrecieron dos cursos en la Facultad de Ciencias de la Educación de la Universidad de Granada: uno en inglés para futuro profesorado de Inglés de Primaria y Secundaria y otro en español tanto para alumnado universitario como para profesorado de Primaria y Secundaria de cualquier área.

Este trabajo se basó en la teoría queer, en la pedagogía crítica y transformadora, y en la teoría de conjuntos difusos de sexogénero. Todo el proceso tuvo un enfoque eminentemente práctico, incluyendo la creación de proyectos educativos inclusivos y no discriminatorios hacia identidades no (hetero)normativas por parte de *les* participantes de los cursos.

## **1.1 Objetivos y preguntas de investigación**

### **Los objetivos principales de esta tesis son:**

- Justificar la necesidad de formar alumnado universitario y docentes de Enseñanza Primaria y Secundaria en identidades sexuales y en el no binarismo de género en la educación.
- Contribuir al cambio social e institucional a favor de la equidad para las personas lgbti a través de la enseñanza del inglés y de cualquier área en el sistema educativo español, ofreciendo a *les* participantes de los cursos un empoderamiento latente<sup>65</sup>.

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<sup>65</sup> Bedford (2009) ha identificado tres tipos de empoderamiento docente: latente, activo y transformador. El empoderamiento latente es aquel que se manifiesta en la capacidad de tomar acciones pedagógicas adecuadas aprendidas en el aula. Cuando de esta capacidad se pasa a la toma de acciones concretas en la educación se habla de empoderamiento activo. Si además, se consigue el cambio social e institucional estaríamos hablando de empoderamiento transformador.

**Los objetivos específicos son:**

- Concienciar a *les* participantes de esta investigación sobre la inequidad hacia las identidades no heterosexuales en nuestra sociedad y más concretamente en la educación.
- Aprender estrategias y tomar acciones para contrarrestar el binarismo de género, la homotransfobia, el heterosexismo y el cissexismo en la educación.
- Crear nuevos materiales pedagógicos equitativos para las personas lgbti tanto en inglés como en español.
- Justificar la necesidad de trascender el aula y el mundo académico para contribuir a un cambio social más efectivo.
- Demostrar que la homotransfobia y el heterosexismo afectan a todo el mundo, no sólo a las personas lgbti y *queer*.

**Hipótesis del trabajo piloto:**

- Los grupos participantes del trabajo piloto considerarán necesaria la formación en identidades sexuales para su desarrollo profesional.

**Pregunta de investigación principal:**

- ¿De qué manera esta tesis contribuye a un cambio social e institucional que favorezca la equidad para las personas lgbti y *queer*?

**Preguntas secundarias:**

- a) ¿Cómo ha cambiado a lo largo de la investigación la percepción del problema por parte de *les* participantes?
- b) ¿De qué manera los grupos participantes de los cursos recibieron suficiente empoderamiento docente para fomentar la equidad hacia las personas lgbti y *queer* en la educación?
- c) ¿De qué manera *les* participantes de los dos cursos consideraron este tipo de formación importante?

## 2 Revisión de la literatura

### 2.1 Marco teórico

#### 2.1.1 La teoría queer

La teoría queer apareció a finales del siglo pasado en los años 80 y principios de los 90 de mano de postestructuralistas, principalmente estadounidenses<sup>66</sup>. El término *queer*<sup>67</sup> nació como una expresión despectiva equivalente a *maricón* y posteriormente fue adoptado con un nuevo significado político. Lo queer incluye todas las identidades ‘subordinadas’ o ‘no heteronormativas’ como las lgbti, pero también incluye cualquier persona que se siente discriminada y marginada por su identidad sexual o de género, como personas y menores de sexogénero no normativo. En esta categoría entran también las personas *pansexuales*, que están atraídas por cualquier tipo de persona independientemente de su identidad sexual y de género; *asexuales*, que no están interesadas en el sexo; *heteroflexibles*, que son heterosexuales pero potencialmente bisexuales; *heterodisidentes*, que son heterosexuales que no reconocen como ‘natural’ su rol de poder y privilegio en nuestra sociedad; *genderqueer*, que no se reconocen en un género masculino o femenino; y personas *intergender*, que a veces se consideran más femeninas y otras más masculinas. Al mismo tiempo lo queer rechaza las etiquetas fijas y entiende las identidades como constructos sociales que fluyen y cambian en el tiempo y en diferentes contextos (Jagose, 1996).

La teoría queer retoma la idea de Foucault que nos cuenta que antes del siglo XVIII no existían categorías de identidades sexuales, sino comportamientos sexuales, o sea, hoy en día nos centramos en lo que somos (gays, lesbianas, trans, etc.) en lugar de en lo que hacemos, como se hacía antaño. Lo queer está abierto a muchas posibilidades, no puede representar ninguna categoría específica y fija de identidad, aunque se use de vez en cuando como sustituto de ‘lgbti’, por tanto, se puede emplear en un número infinito de discursos diferentes. Si entendemos el término queer como una identidad en continuo movimiento, basada sobre modelos sociales de poder (Foucault, 1976), que no considera el discurso sexual como natural, entonces podemos poner en cuestión incluso términos aparentemente no problemáticos como ‘hombre’ y ‘mujer’ que están fuertemente asociados

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<sup>66</sup> Los principios del postestructuralismo nacieron en Francia a mediados del siglo XX a través de la filosofía y de la teoría crítica (Foucault, 1976).

<sup>67</sup> A partir de ahora, ‘queer’ se usará sin cursiva.

a la heterosexualidad. Lo queer nos enseña que el conocimiento siempre es parcial y se construye en los discursos sociales y que nunca podemos conocer ‘la verdad’ en su integridad (Robinson y Jones Díaz, 2006). La teoría queer en la educación promueve y facilita la investigación y cuestiona la hegemonía de la heterosexualidad. El postestructuralismo y la teoría queer demuestran que las políticas de identidad no se ocupan sólo de las diferencias entre los sujetos, sino también de las irresolubles diferencias dentro de cada sujeto. Las posiciones ‘esencialistas’ afirman que la sexualidad es algo biológico e innato, mientras que las posiciones ‘constructivistas’, más cercanas a la teoría queer, definen la sexualidad como algo social y construido. No cabe duda de que las identidades sexuales (lgbti y también heterosexual) se leen diferentemente según qué cultura y tiempos históricos particulares. Desde un punto de vista educativo puede ser más interesante y productivo para todo el alumnado analizar las identidades sexuales como actos legibles, como comportamientos sociales cambiantes según el tiempo y el espacio, en vez de esencias universales (Butler, 1990; Nelson, 2009).

La teoría queer en un contexto escolar, cuestiona la hegemonía social de la heterosexualidad a través del pensamiento crítico. De hecho, en los cursos de esta tesis, los debates sobre el lenguaje queer y sobre la (cis) heterosexualidad eran parte fundamental, mucho más que discernir sobre la mera inclusión de las personas lgbti en la educación. Tanto en la didáctica de una lengua extranjera como en cualquier otra materia, los libros de texto, desde educación infantil hasta la universidad, presentan siempre personas y familias rigurosamente heterosexuales (Thornbury, 1999; Nelson, 2009). Por tanto, intentar incluir a personas lgbti en el material didáctico es muy importante, pero la simple inclusión, sin tener un debate libre y abierto sobre cuáles han sido las causas sociales por las que la heterosexualidad es considerada la única forma de identidad sexual y las otras (lgbti) se muestran como subordinadas, o no se muestran del todo, no es suficiente (Nelson, 2009). No incluir a personas lgbti en los libros de texto, y evitar tratar sobre identidades queer, son ejemplos de *heteronormatividad*, una norma social que habitualmente no se percibe en la educación, pero que es promotora de la homotransfobia.

En los dos cursos de formación, la pedagogía queer fue principalmente empleada para ofrecer la posibilidad al alumnado y al profesorado de reflexionar sobre diferentes definiciones, culturas y costumbres, sobre cómo queremos que nuestra identidad sea reconocida dentro de nuestra sociedad, sobre cómo nos comportamos, aunque pensemos que estos comportamientos sean ‘naturales’, y sobre qué decimos a la hora de hablar sobre

nuestra identidad sexual y la de *les* demás. El documental *It's Elementary: Talking about Gay Issues in School* (Chesnoff y Cohen, 1996), que se proyectó y analizó en ambos cursos, demuestra que es posible construir diálogos críticos sobre identidades sexuales con el alumnado de primaria y de secundaria.

### **2.1.2 Pedagogía crítica y transformadora**

Timothy Bedford (2009) adopta el término ‘pedagogía transformadora’ para describir la teoría crítica a través de la transformación pedagógica y social que permite el empoderamiento de las identidades ‘subordinadas’, en especial las lgbti. Al igual que las anteriormente usadas por Freire (1970), por Horkheimer (1976) y por Giroux (1997), esta pedagogía pretende cambiar la sociedad descifrando cómo funciona el mundo en general teniendo en cuenta las relaciones de poder.

La pedagogía transformadora comparte similitudes con la pedagogía queer dado que ambas consideran las identidades sexuales como constructos sociales e históricos. Ambas pedagogías critican el rol hegemónico de la heterosexualidad, el sistema binario de género y las relaciones de poder que existen en nuestra cultura, permitiendo a ciertas identidades ser más privilegiadas que otras. También comparten la idea de que la ‘neutralidad’ y la ‘verdad’ no existen en sí dado que cada persona es única y no posee el mismo poder que otras y la verdad es siempre construida histórica, social y culturalmente.

En los cursos que se analizan en esta tesis, esta pedagogía se usó con la idea de transformar nuestras escuelas en espacios seguros para las personas lgbti a través del pensamiento crítico. Bedford (2009) en su estudio observa que el objetivo de la pedagogía transformadora es contribuir a un cambio social a favor de las identidades lgbti y queer trascendiendo el aula y el mundo académico para alcanzar una sociedad más equitativa.

### **2.1.3 La teoría de conjuntos difusos de sexogénero**

Las bases de esta teoría empezaron a esbozarse en el Congreso Feminista Estatal de Córdoba en el año 2000 por parte de Kim Pérez Fernández-Fígares, prominente activista trans, colaboradora de la Universidad de Granada y profesora jubilada de Enseñanza Secundaria de Ética e Historia. En aquel congreso, ante la necesidad dialéctica de una nueva presentación de la transexualidad al movimiento feminista español, fuera de cualquier posible presión teórica externa, se planteó la pregunta práctica “¿Tengo yo derecho a estar aquí?”, que obtuvo su propia provocadora respuesta de que todas las mujeres presentes debían ser consideradas en realidad como ‘más o menos mujeres’ (o

aproximadamente mujeres), y que cuestionar esta respuesta llevaría a definir unos parámetros de feminidad y a obligar a las mujeres asistentes a verificar si los cumplían y a decidir que algunas o muchas tendrían que quedar fuera. Este ‘más o menos’ se vio en años sucesivos que coincidía con el criterio de pertenencia a un conjunto difuso, en lenguaje matemático, tal como fue definido por Lotfi A. Zadeh, en 1965. Estos conjuntos se diferencian de los cerrados, cuyo criterio de pertenencia es ‘sí o no’. Su aplicación al sexogénero parte de la hipótesis de que conceptos como hombres y mujeres, masculino y femenino, homosexual y heterosexual, son en realidad conjuntos difusos, abiertos, definidos todos por un ‘más o menos’, no por un ‘sí o no’, y que esta manera de entenderlos corresponde muy bien a la realidad empírica. Es posible, por ejemplo, traducir la escala de homo-heterosexualidad de Kinsey, de 1948, de siete grados, a un continuo difuso en el que no hay separaciones, sino un ‘más o menos’ infinitamente matizado cuantitativamente (Pérez Fernández-Fígares, 2012). A través de esta teoría se pueden describir personas que son más o menos varones, más o menos mujeres, más o menos intersex, más o menos masculinas, más o menos femeninas, más o menos ambiguas, más o menos *homoheterosexuales*, independientemente de su sexo fenotípico o visible.

La teoría de conjuntos difusos de sexogénero comparte similitudes tanto con la teoría queer como con la pedagogía crítica y transformadora, en cuanto no considera las identidades sexuales y de género fijas, sino fluctuantes, un más o menos no definido y cambiante en el tiempo. La diferencia más importante es que la teoría de conjuntos difusos de sexogénero se (pre)ocupa también de aspectos biológicos.

Kim Pérez presentó por primera vez esta teoría en un contexto académico en el segundo curso de formación de esta investigación. El grupo participante recibió con entusiasmo esta nueva visión sobre el sexogénero.

## **2.2 Diversidad sexual y de género en la educación**

La legislación española (y andaluza) a favor de las personas lgbti es una de las más progresistas en el mundo. El matrimonio igualitario, incluyendo la posibilidad de adopción, se legalizó en el 2005 en todo el territorio español, de hecho España fue el segundo país del mundo en adoptar esta ley. Las personas trans en España pueden cambiar su género después de dos años de seguimiento médico y psicológico sin tener que cambiar de sexo. Además, en Andalucía en el año 2014 se promulgó una ley que permite a cualquier persona

trans cambiar su género y nombre sin tener que pasar por un seguimiento médico y psicológico, despatologizando así la transexualidad por segunda vez en el mundo después de Argentina (2011). Asimismo, en 2014 en Cataluña, se aprobó una ley contra los delitos homofóbicos que se considera pionera en todo el mundo. En cuanto a las personas intersex, en España no existen leyes específicas, aunque la práctica de la manipulación genital (escoger un ‘sexo’ o el ‘otro’) después del nacimiento está siendo menos frecuente.

A pesar de que España tiene una legislación progresista para las personas lgbti, no se han tratado normalmente temas relacionados con las identidades sexuales y de género en la educación. De hecho, diversos estudios nos muestran que la homotransfobia está presente en los centros educativos españoles (por ejemplo los realizados por FELGBT, 2007 y 2013)<sup>68</sup>. Por ende, existen carencias en la formación docente para prevenir, identificar y luchar contra la homotransfobia, el heterosexismo y el cissexismo.

Los estudios de más impacto para la enseñanza del inglés como lengua extranjera, relacionados con todo el trabajo piloto y el primer curso de formación de esta tesis, han sido los de Cynthia D. Nelson (2002 y 2009), experta en el campo de la teoría queer en la enseñanza del inglés como segunda lengua. Nelson ofrece ejemplos en los que pone en práctica la pedagogía inductiva (*pedagogy of inquiry*) para evidenciar las diferencias culturales en la manifestación de comportamientos asociados a las identidades sexuales y de género. Nelson (2009) considera también que no es suficiente reprender a las personas que cometen acosos homofóbicos, sino que es importante usar cada una de estas situaciones como un pretexto pedagógico queer.

En los cursos de formación que se analizan en esta tesis se usó parte del material didáctico de la investigación ‘GLEE Project’ (GLEE, 2002; Bedford, 2009). Existen varios estudios y cursos de formación para combatir la homofobia en todo el mundo, también en inglés como segunda lengua o lengua extranjera. Sin embargo, no he encontrado otros estudios sobre cursos de formación prácticos parecidos a los dos ofrecidos en esta tesis.

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<sup>68</sup> Enlaces de los estudios de FELGBT:  
2007: [https://www.google.es/search?q=informe-actitudes-adolescentes-lpgc-ante-diversidad&oq=informe-actitudes-adolescentes-lpgc-ante-diversidad&aqs=chrome..69i57.4061j0j9&sourceid=chrome&es\\_sm=93&ie=UTF-8](https://www.google.es/search?q=informe-actitudes-adolescentes-lpgc-ante-diversidad&oq=informe-actitudes-adolescentes-lpgc-ante-diversidad&aqs=chrome..69i57.4061j0j9&sourceid=chrome&es_sm=93&ie=UTF-8)  
2013: <http://www.felgtb.org/rs/2157/d112d6ad-54ec-438b-9358-4483f9e98868/671/filename/informedefensor-17m13.pdf>



### **3 Metodología**

Para realizar este trabajo he seguido principalmente la metodología de investigación-acción en el aula, aunque también se pueden encontrar elementos de investigación etnográfica, de estudio de caso y de lingüística aplicada. Se trata de un trabajo fundamentalmente cualitativo.

En los estudios realizados en esta tesis se emplearon cuestionarios, debates de grupo, evaluaciones escritas y orales, observaciones y toma de notas en el aula. Mis roles fueron múltiples: investigador, moderador, facilitador, observador, docente, evaluador, intérprete y traductor.

Como métodos de análisis de datos he clasificado las características principales de cada grupo participante y he resumido los resultados en temas emergentes de las evaluaciones de los cursos y de las observaciones y toma de notas en el aula. En cuanto a la validez de este trabajo, he usado los criterios de credibilidad, transferibilidad, confianza y la epistemología del constructivismo.

### **4 El Trabajo Piloto**

#### **4.1 Estudio sobre identidades sexuales y de género con alumnado de Ciencias de la Educación especialidad Lengua Inglesa**

Este estudio está dividido en dos partes: un cuestionario y un debate de grupo. En el cuestionario el grupo participante (seis ‘hombres’ y cuatro ‘mujeres’<sup>69</sup>) contestó a preguntas relacionadas con las identidades sexuales y queer en la Educación Primaria especialidad Lengua Inglesa. Estos son los resultados principales del cuestionario presentados a través de diez temas emergentes:

1) La mitad del grupo participante no se consideró exclusivamente heterosexual. 2) La intersexualidad, la heteronormatividad, el heterosexismo y queer fueron los términos desconocidos por siete participantes. 3) Ocho de diez participantes creían que su ‘heterosexualidad’ fue una imposición social. 4) Nadie había recibido formación sobre cómo abordar temas relacionados con las identidades sexuales en la enseñanza de la lengua

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<sup>69</sup> Considero ‘mujeres’ y ‘hombres’ términos englobados en el sistema binario de género. No todo el mundo se considera ‘hombre o mujer’ o ‘masculino o femenino’, es por esta razón que los escribo entre comillas.

inglesa en Educación Primaria; sin embargo, todo el grupo consideró importante este tipo de formación para su desarrollo profesional. 5) Nadie supo describir una persona *straight* (heterosexual), como si la palabra fuese invisible en el cuestionario. 6) La mitad del grupo-muestra pensó que sería más fácil tratar de identidades sexuales con personas adultas que con *niñes a les* que consideraron ‘seres asexuados’. 7) La mitad de *les* participantes afirmó temer las reacciones de los progenitores si tuvieran que abordar en el aula temáticas relacionadas con las identidades sexuales. 8) Todo el grupo coincidió en que es importante tratar de temas relacionados con personas lgbt en su área. 9) La mitad consideró que tratar de estos temas al principio de la Educación Primaria podría ser problemático. 10) Todo el grupo reconoció la presencia de la heteronormatividad en los libro de textos de inglés para primaria.

Al analizar los resultado de estos cuestionarios hay que tener en cuenta que algunas respuestas pueden inducir a errores de interpretación debido a la tendencia a responder a lo ‘socialmente aceptable’; de ahí la necesidad de organizar un debate grupal sobre estos resultados y así analizarlos con mayor fiabilidad y detalle.

Siete de *les* diez participantes *originaries* acudieron a esta charla semi-controlada (cuatro ‘hombres’ y tres ‘mujeres’). Dirigí personalmente el debate a través de preguntas relacionadas con los resultados del cuestionario, mientras que el Dr. Guijarro Ojeda lo grabó en vídeo<sup>70</sup>; duró casi dos horas. Se trató de un método innovador en la Universidad de Granada, sobre todo por los temas tratados para Educación Primaria. Estos son los nueve temas emergentes derivados de los resultados del debate grupal:

1) Según *les* siete participantes la heterosexualidad no se reconoce como problemática en nuestra sociedad; cuatro admitieron que es difícil hablar de heterosexualidad porque está reconocida como ‘normal’. 2) Seis consideraron las identidades sexuales constructos sociales como ‘hombres’ y ‘mujeres’. 3) Cinco reconocieron que tratar de identidades sexuales puede resultar conflictivo entre diferentes culturas. 4) Todo el grupo reconoció que la discriminación hacia las personas lgbt es una injusticia social y debería ser tratada como tal en la escuela primaria. 5) *Todes* entendieron la importancia de aprovechar situaciones homofóbicas y heterosexistas como oportunidades pedagógicas queer. 6) Seis confirmaron temer las reacciones de *les* progenitores si decidiesen hablar sobre sexualidades en sus clases de inglés. 7) Seis admitieron que evitarían temas relacionados

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<sup>70</sup> Esta grabación está disponible en DVD en la versión impresa de esta tesis (Anexo 11).

con la sexualidad si trabajasen en una escuela religiosa. 8) Todo el grupo dio buenos ejemplos de actividades pedagógicas queer para Inglés de Educación Primaria. 9) *Todes* estaban *preocupades* por su falta de conocimiento sobre identidades sexuales y manifestaron su deseo de recibir formación adicional especializada.

Sus respuestas denotaron una voluntad de recibir una preparación de calidad para enfrentarse a estas temáticas en el aula. Además se confirmó la hipótesis del trabajo piloto al admitir que la formación sobre identidades sexuales y de género es necesaria para su desarrollo profesional.

#### **4.2 Estudio sobre identidades sexuales y de género con docentes de Inglés de Educación Primaria**

Este estudio se realizó con diez docentes (cinco ‘mujeres’ y cinco ‘hombres’) principalmente de escuelas primarias de Andalucía. Se usó un único cuestionario en el que se preguntó acerca de sus conocimientos sobre temáticas relacionadas con identidades sexuales y de género. Solo un hombre se definió ‘gay’ y una mujer ‘bisexual’, el resto del grupo se consideró ‘heterosexual’. Este grupo dio resultados parecidos al de estudiantes del estudio anterior: desconocían términos relativos a identidades sexuales y sobre todo pidieron formación profesional para combatir la homotransfobia y el heterosexismo en la educación primaria especialmente para menores de sexogénero no normativo, reafirmando la hipótesis de este trabajo piloto y justificando aún más la necesidad de esta investigación.

En el mismo cuestionario se les preguntó sobre el tipo de escuela en la que trabajan: inclusiva, abierta, resistente u hostil (GLSEN<sup>71</sup>, 2001; GLEE, 2002). La mayoría de estas escuelas (más o menos ocho) resultó ser resistente, o sea, se resisten a incluir temas relacionados con las identidades sexuales en los programas didácticos y no combaten de manera directa y decisiva casos de homofobia, ni el alumnado o el profesorado lgbti se sienten suficientemente seguros en sus centros educativos. *Les* docentes participantes en este estudio carecían de conocimiento sobre la legislación española a favor de las personas lgbti en la educación. Estos resultados son bastante preocupantes e invitan a proponer y promulgar información y especialmente formación docente sobre identidades sexuales y de género, como sugirieron *estes* docentes.

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<sup>71</sup> Gay, Lesbian & Straight Education Network: <http://www.glsen.org/>

### **4.3 Conclusiones del trabajo piloto**

En ambos estudios se coincide que es necesario tratar las identidades sexuales y de género en la formación del profesorado de Inglés de Educación Primaria, confirmando así la hipótesis de este trabajo piloto. Asimismo, los dos grupos pidieron formación adicional sobre cómo combatir la homofobia en la escuela, dato que confirma la justificación de esta tesis. En el segundo estudio la mayoría de las escuelas inclusivas o abiertas eran públicas, mientras que la mayoría de las escuelas resistentes u hostiles eran privadas (y a menudo religiosas). Este dato parece confirmar la mayor aceptación de las personas lgbti en las escuelas públicas. Otro dato importante resultante del segundo estudio es que, aunque en España existen leyes para la protección de las personas lgbti en la educación, parte del profesorado las desconoce y no sabe cómo aplicar estrategias no discriminatorias en su centro educativo.

Dado que el resultado más importante de este estudio piloto fue la demanda de formación específica en identidades sexuales y de género en contextos escolares, se ofertaron los cursos que se describen a continuación.

## **5 El proceso formativo**

En este apartado se analizan los dos cursos de formación que se impartieron en la Facultad de Ciencias de la Educación a través de la Escuela Internacional de Posgrado de la Universidad de Granada. El primero se ofertó en inglés y el segundo en español. Los dos forman parte de la investigación-acción en el aula y sus objetivos principales son: empoderar a *les* participantes a tomar acciones pedagógicas queer y contribuir a la equidad de las personas lgbti en los entornos escolar y social.

### **5.1 Curso de formación sobre identidades sexuales y de género para futuro profesorado de Inglés en Educación Primaria y Secundaria**

En el otoño de 2011 se impartió un curso de cuarenta horas sobre identidades sexuales y de género en inglés, el director fue el Dr. Ruiz Cecilia y yo fui el único facilitador-docente. Se matricularon dieciocho personas, dieciséis de las cuales asistieron regularmente, las otras dos únicamente colaboraron en la elaboración de los proyectos final de curso. De *les* dieciséis personas analizadas en este estudio (doce ‘mujeres’ y cuatro ‘hombres’) la

mayoría era alumnado universitario de Ciencias de la Educación especialidad Inglés, habiendo también estudiantes de Filología Inglesa, de Historia y de Estudios de Género.

El curso fue evaluado por el grupo participante a través de dos evaluaciones escritas (una después de la mitad del curso y otra al final del curso) y una evaluación oral de grupo grabada en la última sesión del curso. El grupo participante tuvo que proponer proyectos didácticos sobre cómo tratar temas relacionados con las identidades sexuales en la enseñanza del inglés como lengua extranjera. Recibieron un empoderamiento latente (Bedford, 2009) que en algunos casos se transformó en activo en sus prácticas docentes. Más de la mitad del curso fue dedicada a actividades prácticas (talleres de grupo). Fue el primer curso de este tipo ofertado en inglés en la Universidad de Granada.

El promedio de edad de *les* asistentes fue de 24 años, casi *todes* de nacionalidad española, excepto una argentina y un cubano; *todes* heterosexuales, excepto dos personas que se definieron “abiertas a otras posibilidades”, y un hombre homosexual. Un 60% decidió participar por los créditos universitarios y por mejorar su nivel de inglés, mientras que un 40% estaba, sobre todo, interesado en la temática. Según las respuestas del cuestionario distribuido al comienzo del curso, casi nadie tenía un conocimiento suficiente sobre temáticas relacionadas con identidades sexuales y sobre la teoría queer, aunque ocho admitieron que su ‘heterosexualidad’ fue una imposición social. Once participantes reconocieron que sería más fácil tratar de identidades sexuales en Educación Secundaria que en Primaria. La mitad dijo temer a la reacción de los progenitores si quisieran hablar de identidades lgbti en su escuela; sin embargo, trece consideraron oportuno mostrar personas queer en el material didáctico de Inglés.

### **5.1.1 Programa del curso y proyectos didácticos del grupo participante**

El programa estaba organizado en las siguientes diez unidades que incluyen los talleres prácticos:

*Unidad 1:* Introducción al Curso: Temáticas Queer en la Enseñanza del Inglés. *Unidad 2:* Lenguaje de la Diversidad e Identidades Múltiples. *Unidad 3:* Introducción a la Teoría Queer y a la Pedagogía Transformadora. *Unidad 4:* Homofobia y Heterosexismo. *Unidad 5:* La construcción del Género en la Educación Infantil. *Unidad 6:* Deconstrucción de Material Pedagógico de Inglés para Primaria. *Unidad 7:* El documental: *It's Elementary*. *Unidad 8:* Acciones Transformadoras en la Educación del Inglés Lengua Extranjera. *Unidad 9:* Presentación de los Proyectos Didácticos del Grupo Participante. *Unidad 10:* Evaluación Oral del Curso y Clausura.

Se presentaron por grupos seis proyectos pedagógicos queer originales basados en unidades didácticas y elaborados en inglés. Todos estos proyectos se diseñaron para la enseñanza del inglés a nivel de primaria y secundaria. Los proyectos originales se adjuntan en CD de la versión impresa de esta tesis (Anexo 12).<sup>72</sup>

El primer proyecto didáctico fue presentado por tres participantes y estaba dirigido a alumnado de primaria del primer ciclo; se basa en un libro para la infancia de Valentine (2004), donde aparecen dos padres homosexuales y el objetivo principal es concienciar al alumnado a respetar y entender diferentes tipos de familia.

El segundo proyecto lo presentaron tres participantes y estaba basado en el libro de Ewert (2008) sobre un niño que quiere ponerse vestidos de mujer. Dirigido a alumnado de primaria en el que se concientia sobre las variaciones sexuales y de género.

El tercer proyecto didáctico fue presentado por cuatro participantes y es para alumnado de primaria. Es una adaptación del libro de Firstein (2002) sobre un patito que rompe su código de género al querer patinar sobre hielo considerado por los otros patos como un deporte de ‘chicas’. El objetivo es reconocer los estereotipos de género.

El cuarto proyecto fue presentado por una única persona para alumnado de primaria, trata sobre lo que es la transexualidad. Se concientia a *les niñas* sobre la realidad de las personas trans.

El quinto proyecto fue presentado por tres participantes y está dirigido a la educación secundaria. Está basado en el filme *Brokeback Mountain* (Ang Lee, 2005). El alumnado aprende nuevo vocabulario queer, analiza la homofobia y el heterosexismo presentes en la película a través del pensamiento crítico, y de cómo podemos luchar contra estas injusticias sociales.

El sexto y último proyecto didáctico fue presentado por cuatro participantes y está dirigido a alumnado de secundaria. Está basado principalmente en la película *Boys don't cry* (Kimberly Peirce, 1999) y también en la homónima canción del grupo británico ‘The Cure’. Los objetivos principales son tratar las diferentes estructuras familiares, aprender vocabulario queer y romper con el binarismo de género, con la transfobia y el cissexismo, a través de una película que trata de una persona transgénero.

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<sup>72</sup> Disponible en formato PDF para cualquier persona interesada.

### **5.1.2 Temas emergentes de los resultados de las evaluaciones del curso y de las observaciones en el aula**

Estos son los siete temas emergentes basados en su frecuencia y relevancia:

#### *1. Había demasiada teoría*

La mayoría del grupo participante comentó que los textos teóricos que tenían que leer antes de cada clase eran demasiados largos. Propusieron textos más cortos o sólo resúmenes de las partes teóricas para presentar en el aula.

#### *2. El problema del tiempo*

Les participantes comentaron que se necesitaba más tiempo para ir asimilando los contenidos teóricos y poderlos debatir en clase adecuadamente. Manifestaron su preferencia por sesiones más cortas pero más dilatadas en el tiempo, lo que permitiría una mayor asimilación de contenidos y la puesta en práctica en el aula de lo aprendido.

#### *3. Apreciación de los talleres prácticos*

Todes apreciaron las actividades prácticas en las cuales dijeron haber aprendido sobre identidades sexuales y también haber mejorado su nivel de inglés. Asimismo, tuvo buena acogida el documental *It's Elementary*.

#### *4. El inglés como barrera lingüística*

Seis participantes admitieron poseer un nivel de inglés más bajo que el resto del grupo y esto les había limitado a la hora de participar en debates de clase. Afortunadamente, todo el grupo apreció que el curso se diera enteramente en inglés dado que fue una de las razones principales para participar en el mismo.

#### *5. Cambio de la percepción inicial sobre los temas relacionados con las identidades sexuales y de género*

Al principio la mayoría del grupo participante consideraba más fácil tratar sobre identidades sexuales con alumnado de secundaria que con el de primaria. A lo largo del curso esta posición cambió y al final la mayoría pensó que era más fácil en la escuela primaria a través del pensamiento crítico, de los ejemplos mostrados en el aula y de *It's Elementary*. Aprendieron también que se puede hablar con *niñes* de identidades sexuales sin hablar de actos sexuales. Hubo sorpresa al tomar conciencia de la presencia de la heteronormatividad en los materiales didácticos de la enseñanza del inglés y de que la homotransfobia estuviese tan presente en los contextos educativos.

### *6. Uso del material del curso para futuras experiencias pedagógicas*

Les participantes admitieron que iban a usar el material del curso, incluyendo sus proyectos didácticos, para su experiencia docente, dándole sobre todo importancia al lenguaje que iban a usar. *Algunes* usaron lo que aprendieron en el curso para hacer frente a situaciones de homofobia en su periodo de formación.

### *7. La importancia de la formación docente*

Todo el grupo participante consideró necesaria la formación docente para saber abordar las identidades sexuales y de género en la enseñanza del inglés. *Algunes* participantes consideraron que la homofobia y el heterosexismos deberían ser tratados como injusticias sociales y discriminaciones, y, como tales, deberían estar reflejados en el currículum escolar. El grupo participante recibió un empoderamiento latente que se puede transformar en activo en su experiencia docente. Asimismo, se reconoció que un curso de este tipo debería ser ofrecido en todas las materias y para todos los niveles educativos.

## **5.2 Curso de formación docente en español sobre identidades sexuales y de género**

En la primavera de 2013 se ofreció un curso sobre identidades sexuales y de género de cuarenta horas en castellano, dirigido tanto a alumnado universitario como a profesorado en activo de primaria y secundaria de varias disciplinas. El director del curso fue el Dr. Guijarro Ojeda y Kim Pérez Fernández-Fígares colaboró conmigo como facilitadora-docente durante la mitad del curso. Ésta última, fue una presencia muy importante especialmente porque presentó su propia teoría en el curso.

Participaron veintidós ‘mujeres’ y ocho ‘hombres’. Tenían entre 21 y 48 años; todo el grupo era de nacionalidad española, menos dos personas, una peruana y una sueca. Diecisiete personas se consideraron heterosexual. Por otro lado, había dos trans femeninas, dos hombres gay, una lesbiana, dos personas bisexuales, una heteroflexible, dos intergender y queer, y otras que no se reconocían en identidades sexuales fijas. Un 55% decidió acudir al curso por su interés en la temática, mientras que el restante 45% participó principalmente por los cuatro créditos universitarios.

Debido fundamentalmente a la participación de Kim Pérez, en este curso se profundizó más en las identidades trans e intersexuales, y en su teoría de conjuntos difusos de sexogénero.



### **5.2.1 Programa del curso y proyectos didácticos del grupo participante**

Para este curso se desarrollaron doce unidades didácticas que incluyeron también los talleres prácticos:

*Unidad 1:* Introducción al Curso y al Lenguaje de la Diferencia. *Unidad 2:* Identidades Múltiples - Poder y Privilegio. *Unidad 3:* Introducción a la Teoría Queer y a la Teoría de Conjuntos Difusos de Sexogénero. *Unidad 4:* La Legislación Española sobre los Derechos de las Personas Lgbti. *Unidad 5:* Pedagogía Queer y Transformadora. *Unidad 6:* Homotransfobia y Heterosexismo. *Unidad 7:* El Documental *It's Elementary*. *Unidad 8:* La Construcción del Género en la Educación. *Unidad 9:* Deconstrucción de Materiales Didácticos. *Unidad 10:* Acciones Transformadoras en la Educación. *Unidad 11:* Presentación de los Proyectos del Grupo Participante. *Unidad 12:* Clausura del Curso: Evaluación Oral y Actividades Extra Curriculares.

Se presentaron en grupos seis proyectos pedagógicos basados en unidades didácticas, todos en lengua española, que se pueden consultar en el Anexo 12 en CD de la versión impresa de esta tesis (disponible en PDF para cualquier persona interesada).

El primer proyecto fue presentado por tres participantes dirigido a la educación primaria. En la primera actividad, el alumnado reconoce diferentes tipos de unidades familiares. En la segunda, a través de la publicidad y otros medios, se deconstruyeron las identidades de género.

El segundo proyecto didáctico está dirigido a Educación Especial. El objetivo principal es concienciar e informar sobre la importancia de abordar las identidades sexuales en la educación especial, promoviendo la libertad de género y el respeto a la diversidad a través del pensamiento crítico. Lo interesante de este proyecto es que las cuatro participantes lo aplicaron a la realidad usando cuestionarios y entrevistas en un centro educativo para personas con necesidades especiales.

El tercer proyecto didáctico fue ofrecido por cinco participantes y está dirigido a Educación Secundaria. Sirve para desenmascarar la heteronormatividad y todos los problemas relacionados con la homotransfobia. Se presentan actividades para entender lo que significa salir del armario, juegos de rol entre parejas de diferentes identidades sexuales; asimismo, se analizan la deconstrucción de roles típicamente masculinos y femeninos, un corto, la importancia de una legislación progresista a favor de la equidad de las personas lgbti, y también la ruptura con los estereotipos de género tradicionales.

*Algunes* de *les* participantes ofrecieron en el aula ejemplos de juego de rol de parejas con diferentes identidades de género y sexuales.

El cuarto proyecto didáctico fue presentado por seis participantes y está dirigido a Educación Primaria. El objetivo principal es aprender nociones básicas sobre las identidades sexuales y de género, y concienciar sobre los estereotipos y prejuicios hacia las personas queer. Las actividades ofrecidas son todas dinámicas usando música, vídeos musicales, películas, y representaciones teatrales basadas en cuentos infantiles modificados.

El quinto proyecto didáctico fue presentado por cinco participantes y está dirigido a Educación Infantil. El objetivo es entender la necesidad de tratar diferentes identidades de género y hablar con *niñes* con naturalidad sobre estas temáticas puesto que pueden pensar críticamente. Se muestran diferentes modelos familiares, un vídeo para Educación Infantil para entender y aceptar la diferencia, y una historia sobre cómo nuestros géneros se han construido socialmente.

El sexto y último proyecto está dirigido a jóvenes adolescentes en educación no formal, presentado por cuatro participantes. El principal objetivo es empoderar a *les* jóvenes sobre cómo usar un programa de radio para debatir críticamente las diferentes posibilidades dentro de las sexualidades y de los géneros. Lo interesante de este proyecto fue su simulación en el aula con todo el grupo participante del curso, incluyendo a *les* facilitadores.

### **5.2.2 Temas emergentes de los resultados de las evaluaciones del curso y de las observaciones en el aula**

Los siete temas emergentes basados en su frecuencia y relevancia son:

#### *1. Compañerismo y ambiente relajado*

Durante todo el curso, debido a la temática y a la metodología, se disfrutó de un ambiente relajado donde cada persona pudo intervenir sobre su sexualidad y género con total libertad. El haber trascendido el aula varias veces contribuyó a un sentimiento de compañerismo desde las primeras sesiones del curso; de hecho, las personas heterosexuales dijeron haberse sentido incluidas completamente en los discursos. Todo el grupo y Kim apreciaron también *It's Elementary* donde las dinámicas de clase del documental se parecían a las del curso.

## *2. Proceso de introspección personal*

Por las mismas razones, el grupo participante tuvo que enfrentarse a sí mismo, en el sentido de que cada persona se vio motivada a hacer un proceso introspectivo en el cual se cuestionaron las construcciones de género en nuestra cultura. Los ejemplos más claros de esta introspección personal sucedieron en el aula. En una ocasión una participante (sueca) dijo que no le gustaba que usáramos el género femenino para hablar con ella (o él), nos explicó que algunos días se siente más masculina y otros más femenina, comentó que hay que usar un lenguaje neutro para las personas como ella/él. Otra participante dijo no sentirse mujer y experimentar mucha confusión con su género. También casi todo el resto de *les* participantes en varias ocasiones puso en cuestión su identidad y orientación sexual y entendieron que no es necesario tener una identidad sexual fija y que, como nos enseña Kim con su teoría, somos un ‘más o menos’ hipotético.

## *3. La falta de tiempo*

Al igual que en el curso anterior, el grupo participante puso de manifiesto la escasez de tiempo para los debates finales de cada clase y para las presentaciones orales de sus proyectos educativos. Se comentó la posibilidad de profundizar aún más en esta temática incluyendo cursos similares en los programas Máster dirigidos a *futures* profesionales de la educación, a través de alguna materia específica en el programa de estudios reglados de la universidad o a través de una nueva línea de investigación.

## *4. Sensación de sentirse ‘empoderades’ para tratar temas relacionados con las identidades sexuales y de género en la educación*

Todo el grupo reconoció la importancia de este tipo de formación que les dio las herramientas para poder usar su empoderamiento latente en la práctica en algunas escuelas, transformándolo así en empoderamiento activo.

## *5. Apreciación por tener dos facilitadores-docentes y las personas invitadas*

Este curso fue generalmente valorado mejor que el curso anterior, en parte porque yo tenía más experiencia y había aprendido de mis errores previos. Todo el grupo participante resaltó la importancia de tener dos facilitadores-docentes con perspectivas parcialmente diferentes pero compatibles. Además, se valoró positivamente la participación de tres personas invitadas para hablar de sus experiencias de vida y compartirlas con el resto del grupo.

### 6. Toma de consciencia de la realidad de las personas lgbti y queer

Algunes participantes admitieron que el conocer la realidad de varias personas lgbti en contextos educativos y en la sociedad en general, les provocaba cierto sentimiento de tristeza e impotencia. Sin embargo, entendieron la importancia de trascender la academia y el aula para conseguir un cambio social más real y tangible. También reconocieron que ésta no es una tarea sencilla debido a la inercia social.

### 7. Originalidad del curso: ventajas y limitaciones

La mayoría de *les* participantes consideró el curso innovador, especialmente porque fue interactivo, dinámico y diferente a la mayoría de otros cursos en los que habían participado. Se valoró muy positivamente la posición de equidad entre el grupo y *les* facilitadores-docentes. Aprendieron mucho de las actividades didácticas, del lenguaje inclusivo y no sexista, de sus proyectos educativos, de la metodología didáctica y de la nueva teoría de Kim Pérez. Apreciaron también haber salido del aula y haber introducido el arte como herramienta de aprendizaje (teatro, música, cine). Por otro lado, parte del grupo me pidió ofrecer explicaciones más claras antes de cada actividad práctica y un mayor control del tiempo de las intervenciones de *les* participantes que tenían más experiencia y conocimientos sobre estas temáticas.

## 5.3 Conclusiones del proceso formativo

Los grupos participantes en estos dos cursos demostraron la necesidad y la relevancia de este tipo de formación docente. Las evaluaciones de los cursos fueron en general positivas, especialmente la del segundo curso donde no hubo barrera lingüística y había aplicado algunas sugerencias de *les* participantes del primer curso. Ambos grupos reclamaron menos horas por clase y un curso más dilatado en el tiempo para poder asimilar y poner en práctica todo lo aprendido. En mi opinión, todos los proyectos didácticos presentados por los dos grupos fueron excelentes. Asimismo, se confirmó la aplicación práctica de la teoría queer en los dos cursos, además de la pedagogía crítica y transformadora, y de la teoría de conjuntos difusos de sexogénero en el segundo curso. Ambos grupos se dieron cuenta de las dificultades que existen en nuestra sociedad para tomar acciones pedagógicas queer, también en el ámbito educativo, aunque admitieron sentirse *preparades* para tratar de estas temáticas cambiando su empoderamiento latente en activo en sus centros educativos.

## 6 Conclusiones de la tesis

Esta investigación-acción en el aula se basa en el estudio piloto y fundamentalmente en los dos cursos de formación expuestos en esta memoria. Aún así, paralelamente a estos estudios, mi proceso investigador se ha visto enriquecido con la participación en charlas y talleres en otros contextos del mundo académico, como en otras facultades de la Universidad de Granada, en la Universidad de Padua en Italia y en la Universidad de Chiang Mai en Tailandia, y asimismo del mundo social y cultural. Todas estas experiencias me han influido, me han enriquecido como persona y, sin lugar a dudas, han conformado mi devenir como facilitador-docente-investigador.

Esta tesis se planteó con la idea de justificar la necesidad de formar y empoderar a docentes y estudiantes en las identidades sexuales y el no binarismo de género, a favor de la equidad de las personas lgbti. Estos aspectos quedaron constatados desde el comienzo de mis intervenciones. De hecho, *les* participantes tanto del trabajo piloto como del proceso formativo, manifestaron su convicción sobre la necesidad de formarse en esta temática para su desarrollo profesional, comprobando además la viabilidad de su empoderamiento docente al ponerlo en práctica en sus entornos laborales y personales, no sin enfrentarse a barreras y limitaciones institucionales y sociales.

El proceso formativo redundó en que los grupos participantes de ambos cursos se concienciaran sobre la situación de inequidad que existe actualmente hacia las personas lgbti y queer en los entornos escolares. Asimismo, a través de un ejercicio de introspección personal, reconocieron que la homotransfobia y el heterosexismo afectan a cualquier persona. Tomaron también conciencia de que exponer estos temas al alumnado desde edades tempranas hace que el proceso formativo sea más efectivo.

A través de esta investigación se ha contribuido a la pedagogía y literatura queer creando nuevos conocimientos, presentando por primera vez en un ámbito académico la teoría de conjuntos difusos de sexogénero y diseñando estrategias pedagógicas queer para contrarrestar la homotransfobia, el heterosexismo y el cissexismo en el aula. También se han producido nuevos materiales didácticos inclusivos y no discriminatorios hacia identidades no (hetero)normativas, tanto en inglés como en español.

De este estudio se ha concluido que para contribuir al cambio social e institucional es necesario establecer contactos con todos los niveles educativos, con las autoridades locales y nacionales, y, para que la transformación sea más efectiva, con gran parte de la sociedad.

Asimismo, esta investigación destaca que la mera existencia de una legislación progresista a favor de las personas lgbti, como la que hay en España, no es suficiente para contribuir al cambio deseado. Estas leyes, a veces, pasan desapercibidas para gran parte de la ciudadanía. Un claro ejemplo lo tenemos en el sistema educativo, donde el desconocimiento del respaldo legal en la adopción de medidas tendentes a erradicar la homotransfobia en las escuelas, limita posiciones y compromisos más firmes por parte de profesionales, progenitores y alumnado.

Por todo lo comentado, me siento satisfecho con los resultados de mi trabajo que responden a las preguntas de investigación y confirman sus objetivos. Es mi convicción que se debe continuar en esta línea de investigación y propiciar la creación de espacios que fomenten el diálogo y el análisis crítico, sobre temáticas relacionadas con identidades sexuales y de género, entre el alumnado de todas las edades, progenitores, profesionales de la educación de todos los niveles y todas las personas que trabajan en estas temáticas. La implantación de formación, como la ofrecida en la Facultad de Ciencias de la Educación de la Universidad de Granada, sería un paso importante a favor de la equidad sexual y de género.

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## **Appendix 1 Pilot study – First research project**

### **QUESTIONNAIRE FOR PRE-SERVICE PRIMARY SCHOOL ENGLISH-LANGUAGE TEACHERS ON SEXUAL IDENTITY ISSUES**

Please, feel free to write either in English (preferably) or Spanish. Answer after each question using **bold** characters or capital letters. Add any suitable information and your own experience where appropriate. Do not write your name as this is an anonymous questionnaire.

#### **I. PERSONAL INFORMATION**

1. Gender
2. Age
3. Where are you from?
4. Are you religious?
5. What is your educational background?
6. Would you say you are lesbian, gay, straight, bisexual or transgendered? Do you recognise yourself in a clear-cut sexual identity?
7. Do you find this particular issue (sexual identity issues at primary school level) pertinent to your field of work?

#### **II. KNOWLEDGE OF QUEER ISSUES AND SEXUAL IDENTITIES**

1. What do 'queer' (as in queer theory) and 'lgbti' mean? And what are heterosexism and heteronormativity?
2. Is it easy to identify someone as gay/straight/lesbian in Spain, in Granada?
3. What do you think caused your 'heterosexuality'?

#### **III. SEXUAL IDENTITY ISSUES IN PRIMARY SCHOOL**

1. Have you ever experienced cases of homophobic bullying in primary school?
2. Have you ever received any kind of training in how to deal with homophobia in primary school? If yes, where and how?

3. Would you consider this type of training important for your professional development? Why?
4. Do you think it is easier to discuss sexual identity issues with children or adults? Why?
5. Would you worry about parental reaction if you considered addressing queer issues?
6. Have you ever discussed queer issues in a class, with an individual student or with your teachers?

## **VI. QUEER ISSUES IN EFL PRIMARY EDUCATION**

1. Why is (or is not) discussing LGBTI issues in primary school EFL education important?
2. Would you integrate LGBTI themes and discussions into the existing primary school curriculum for English-language teaching? If yes, how?
3. How is 'family' usually represented in a primary school EFL textbook? What vocabulary do children learn? What don't they learn?

THANK YOU VERY MUCH FOR PARTICIPATING IN THIS STUDY.

THE INFORMATION CONTAINED HERE WILL BE ANONIMOUSLY PROCESSED FOR PURELY SCIENTIFIC PURPOSES.

BY COMPLETING THIS FORM, YOU GIVE YOUR CONSENT TO PARTICIPATING IN THIS RESEARCH PROJECT.

## **Appendix 2 Pilot study – Second research project**

### **QUESTIONNAIRE FOR IN-SERVICE PRIMARY SCHOOL ENGLISH-LANGUAGE TEACHERS ON SEXUAL IDENTITY ISSUES**

Please, feel free to write either in English (preferably) or Spanish. Answer after each question using **bold** characters or capital letters. Add any suitable information and your own experience where appropriate. Do not write your name as this is an anonymous questionnaire.

Lgbti: Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender and Intersexual (sometimes ‘Queer’ can be used to include all the above)

Heterosexism: refers to the belief that heterosexuals are superior to non-heterosexual identities.

Heteronormativity: is the way that everyday interactions, practices and policies construct heterosexuality as the normal and natural subject.

#### **A. PERSONAL INFORMATION**

1. Gender
2. Age
3. Where are you from?
4. Would you consider yourself as lesbian, gay, heterosexual, bisexual, transgender/transsexual or intersexual? Do you recognise yourself in a clear-cut sexual identity?
5. What is your political inclination?
6. Are you religious?
7. Do you have any relatives or friends who are queer?
8. Do you have any children?

#### **B. KNOWLEDGE OF LGBTI ISSUES AT WORK**

1. Do you think that the inclusion and discussion of sexual identity issues in your English class is needed? Why?
2. Do you think primary school children already possess some knowledge of lgbti issues?

3. Have you ever used any inclusive lgbt/queer material or discussion in any of your classes? If yes, please give information.
4. Do you deal with themes such as ethnicity and race, different religions, physical and mental disabilities, sexism, classism, multiculturalism and interculturality in your English class?
5. Would you discuss sexual identity issues with your pupils from the first year of primary school?
6. Do lgbt themes come up spontaneously in your class?
7. Would you feel confident discussing sexual identity issues with your pupils?
8. Would you fear parental reaction if you intended discussing lgbt issues? Why?
9. Would you consider knowledge of lgbt issues important for your pedagogical/professional development and training? Why?
10. Would you say that some of your pupils are 'gender-variant children' or 'gender nonconforming children'? ('Feminine' boys who dress like girls or behave like most girls and vice-versa, or simply children who do not respond to the roles dictated by heteronormativity).
11. Would you like to receive formal training in how to counteract homophobia and heterosexism in primary school? If yes, why?

### **C. ASSESSING YOUR SCHOOL**

1. Where do you teach and how long have you been teaching as a primary school EFL teacher?
2. Are you teaching in a state-run or private school?
3. Is your school religious?
4. Does your school include non-discrimination and anti-harassment policies?
5. Does the school curriculum include sexual orientation, sexual identity, lgbt or gender identity issues?
6. Does it include multicultural and/or diversity policies?
7. Do you know if lgbt staff members are protected by an employment non-discrimination policy?
8. Do your teaching materials include sexual and gender identity themes? How?
9. Would you be free to use lgbt inclusive materials or discussions in your school?

10. Do you know if your school makes any effort to include lgbti issues in the school curriculum?
11. Are any lgbti persons visible in your school?
12. Have you ever received any training in sexual identity issues (how to deal with homophobia and heteronormativity) in your school or previously?
13. What is the general attitude of adults in the school community towards lgbti persons or people perceived as such?
14. What is the general attitude of pupils in the school community towards lgbti persons or perceived as such?
15. Do you think gender nonconforming or non-heterosexual pupils and teachers feel safe in your school?
16. When homophobic harassment occurs, do you know if the school staff intervene? How?

## **VI. FINAL QUESTIONS**

1. What would you like to learn most about this subject?
2. What do you think primary education needs to do in order to integrate sexual identity issues into its curricula and programmes?
3. Please feel free to add any additional comments.

THANK YOU VERY MUCH FOR PARTICIPATING IN THIS STUDY.

THE INFORMATION CONTAINED HERE WILL BE ANONIMOUSLY PROCESSED FOR PURELY SCIENTIFIC PURPOSES.

BY COMPLETING THIS FORM, YOU GIVE YOUR CONSENT TO PARTICIPATING IN THIS RESEARCH PROJECT.

## Appendix 3 English course: Pre-course questionnaire

### *Training course in gender and sexual identities for pre-service English-language teachers*

Stefano Barozzi  
Universidad de Granada  
7<sup>th</sup> November – 15<sup>th</sup> December 2011

Please, write preferably in English. Answer after each question using **bold** characters or capital letters or another colour. Add any suitable information and your own experience where appropriate. Do not write your name as it is an anonymous questionnaire.

#### I. PERSONAL INFORMATION

1. Gender
2. Age
3. Where are you from?
4. Are you religious?
5. Where and what do you study? / Where do you work and what is your occupation?
6. Would you consider yourself as lesbian, gay, straight (heterosexual), bisexual, transgender/transsexual or intersexual? Do you recognise yourself in a clear-cut sexual identity?
7. Do you have any relatives or friends who are non-heterosexual?
8. Have you ever taught English or any other subject to primary or secondary school pupils? If yes, where and for how long?

#### II. SEXUAL IDENTITY ISSUES

1. What do 'queer' (as in queer theory) and 'lgbti' mean? And what are heterosexism and heteronormativity?
2. How would you describe the term 'homophobia'?
3. What do you think caused your 'heterosexuality'?

### III. QUEER ISSUES IN EDUCATION AND IN ENGLISH LANGUAGE TEACHING (ELT)

1. Why (or why not) do you think that sexual identity issues need to be discussed in English-language classes?
2. Do you think that the subject of English-language teaching, in this case English as a Foreign Language (EFL), at primary and secondary school level, offers possibilities of inclusion and discussion of LGBTI issues? If yes, where and how?
3. Have you ever experienced cases of homophobia (ridicule, bullying, harassment, abuse) at school or university? If yes, what was your reaction? And that of other students, teachers and school personnel? Please, explain.
4. What consequences could homophobic bullying provoke in the affected boys or girls?
5. Have you ever received any kind of training on how to deal with homophobia and heterosexism in primary or secondary school? If yes, where and how?
6. Do you think that a primary and secondary school teacher should work to prevent prejudicial attitudes towards non-heterosexual students?
7. Is discussing sexual identities the same as discussing sex?
8. Do you think primary school children are capable of discussing sexual identity issues through critical thinking?
9. Would you worry about parental reactions when/if you considered addressing LGBTI issues?
10. English-language textbooks (or any other subject) at primary and secondary school level tend to show 'traditional', heterosexual families with children. Do you think, for example, that homosexual family units should be included in the school material since homosexual marriage and adoption are legal in Spain?

#### **IV. ABOUT THIS COURSE**

1. What is your level of English?
2. Do you think you could actively participate in a course in English on sexual identity issues in education?
3. Why did you decide to participate in this course?
4. What are your expectations for this training course?
5. How could you contribute to the course?
6. Do you find this particular theme (sexual identity issues in English at primary and secondary school level) pertinent to your field of work/study?

**Thank you for your collaboration.**



## Appendix 4 English course: Mid-course written evaluation

### *Training course in gender and sexual identities for pre-service English-language teachers*

Stefano Barozzi  
Universidad de Granada  
7<sup>th</sup> November – 15<sup>th</sup> December 2011

Please answer after each question on a computer with **bold** characters or CAPITAL LETTERS or another colour. Do not write your name as it is an anonymous evaluation.

1. After the first five classes (half of the course), how do you feel about this training course and its organisation?
2. Is the course, so far, meeting your expectations at least partially?
3. Which sessions did you find most useful so far and why?
4. Which sessions did you find least useful so far and why?
5. Could you understand all, or almost all, the English used in the classroom?
6. Do you find it difficult to express yourself in English in the classroom? Would you prefer to speak in Spanish sometimes?
7. Was the queer terminology difficult to understand? Which terms would you like to discuss more in depth?
8. Were queer theory and transformative pedagogies difficult to grasp?
9. Did you find the workshops/group work interesting? Which one did you prefer so far and why?
10. Please use this space to make any further comments and/or suggestions.

**Thank you for your collaboration.**

## Appendix 5 English course: Final course written evaluation

### *Training course in gender and sexual identities for pre-service English-language teachers*

Stefano Barozzi  
Universidad de Granada  
November 7<sup>th</sup> – December 15<sup>th</sup>, 2011

Please answer after each question with **bold** characters or CAPITAL LETTERS or another colour. Do not write your name as it is an anonymous evaluation.

1. How did you feel about this training course and its teaching methodology?
2. How well do you think the course met its stated objectives?<sup>73</sup>
3. What would you say overall were the three best things about the course?
4. Which sessions did you find least useful and why?
5. Did you understand all the English used in class?
6. Was there a good balance between theory and practice?
7. What would you have done differently and why?
8. Do you think you have learned something from this training course? If yes, what?
9. Do you feel more empowered now to begin working on challenging homophobia and heterosexism in education (primary or secondary school)? Please, explain.

---

<sup>73</sup> Most important course objectives for the participants to:

- Reflect on and raise awareness of the extent of homophobia and heterosexism in education and its destructive effects
- Learn new queer terminology in English as well as improve participants' level of the language
- Develop strategies to counter homophobia, heterosexism and other forms of discrimination in EFL for primary and secondary education
- Create queer pedagogical activities in EFL for primary and secondary education

10. After this course, do you think you would be able to discuss sexual identities with your pupils as part of your teaching programme? Or would you wait for the issue to come up spontaneously in the class? Why?
11. What obstacles do you think you might find in your future school if you intended discussing sexual identities (lgbt people)? How would you try to overcome these obstacles?
12. Are you more aware now of heteronormativity and homophobia in education (especially in English-language teaching) than before the commencement of the course?
13. After this course, would you say it is easier to discuss sexual identities with primary school pupils or secondary school students? Why?
14. Do you think that English-language teachers should be trained in how to treat sexual identity issues? Why?
15. Would you recommend this training course?
16. Please use this space to make any further comments and/or suggestions.

**Thank you very much for participating in the course and for your collaboration.**

## Appendix 6 English course: Transcription of oral course evaluation

December 2011. Length: 30 minutes

**F (Facilitator)**

*P (Participant)*

*Pp (Participants)*

**Participants are numbered in chronological order.**

F: So, your impressions.

*P1: I really liked this course, but there were too many texts to read.*

F: Ok, do you think the same, there were too many texts?

*Pp: Yes.*

*P1: In a very short time, I think it was too much.*

F: Yeah.

*P1: For me it would be better a little less, make a summary of them, use pictures, make them somehow more dynamic, it's too much to read and we have to read it.*

F: Do you understand why I did this?

*P2: Yes, we need to learn the concepts, you said it many times.*

F: Yes, you need concepts because without a basic theory it is very difficult for me to do the practice without knowing the theories. But the other reason I gave it to you it wasn't for you to study it, because I've never asked about it in class, this is also important, it is not part of the evaluation. It's for you to keep.

*P1: I think it is very important that we have all the texts, but the course must, should, be longer because there was so much material to read and there were many things to do; it's better to have more time to do it slower, it is really important to have everything.*

*P3: Also I recommend, there are many uses of 'queer' and 'gender' theories, it would have been interesting to show us how to improve the difference, because not for everything you are going to use the same method, the same way to introduce to the students. Maybe like the theme for sexual orientation, it could be introduced that way, depending on the area, transsexuality, hermaphrodites, you know? I'm really glad about the course, I can say it met my expectations. The only problem was when you were playing the documentary 'It's Elementary', you were stopping it like every five minutes to show something, I would have been more happy to see the whole of the documentary and then discuss it.*

F: Yes, ok. Did you all feel the same?

*P3: I don't know, it's just my idea.*

*P4: I understand why you did it because maybe you were afraid that we hadn't been understanding everything, you wanted to solve the points, but yes, I would prefer fewer stops, but maybe not the rest of the class.*

F: Yes, but there is also another important thing. Some of you came with a background, with lots of information about this, some of you didn't have any information about this.

*P1: I think the big problem for this course was the time, we needed more time.*

F: But we had this time.

*P1: Yes, I know, but...*

*P4: Maybe less hours per week.*

F: I could not choose that, I was given these days and hours.

*Pp: Yes, we know.*

F: I'm only telling you how it works. They gave me the rooms and a timetable and the only possibility was this.

*P3: Sorry, don't get me wrong, (F: No, no, it's ok) I'm glad about the course, I just did not like how you kept stopping the documentary. It's my impression. If some people don't understand something you can explain it later.*

F: It's very difficult to go back, and since we had little time, to show you those parts I would have needed to go back every time and it would have been impossible.

*P3: Yes, but...*

F: Ok, so, how would you do it? Because some people's background is different from other people, so your knowledge, maybe something I had said, for you was easier, but for other people maybe not.

*P3: Maybe one day instead of giving texts to read you give us the link for the video so we can watch it at home, this process is gonna be quicker.*

F: But who would watch it?

*P3: But it would be better than the reading.*

F: No, reading is to give you a basic information for your future references, I said it many times in class, I'm not going to judge you from the readings, this is for you to keep. And in class we had summaries. It was a lot and I apologise, I understand that, but, it was for you to keep, for future references. The film we had to use in class because I think it is very important, because if I tell you to do it at home you don't do it.

*P3: Yes, but we can do it in class and at the same time we can do it at home. Maybe just for fun, because it was really interesting.*

F: Ok, maybe you were not in class when I said it, but I said I had a copy of it for you to take.

*P3: This I know...*

F: Anybody could have got it and anybody could have watched it even as a group, I had offered this, but nobody did it, only one participant asked for it.

*P2: And one thing, you don't have to apologise because there was too much theory, we are all very big, we're at university, we're adults, if we want we read it. You did not ask us to read it as if we were little children 'Have you read it?', so it is our responsibility.*

F: Because I knew it was impossible to go through the theory in a short time. I wanted you to have the material, to use it for the future, when you are going to teach or if you want to do your activities like today, but to read everything and understand everything I knew it was impossible. In fact, at the end I kept a summary with the main concepts, (*Pp: Yeah*), and we went through it in ten minutes, (*Pp: And this was very good*) because this I wanted you to remember and the reading you keep it at home. If the reading had been more important than the rest, then I would have asked you and I would have made an evaluation on the reading, it was a background that most of you needed, maybe some of you didn't, but most of you needed it, and yeah, it was long, I know that, yes. It was long in a short time, but it is summaries of summaries that I've written, you know.

*P5: Yes, I think the problem is the time not the theoretical part, because I know we need it to understand everything, to analyse the books, to watch the movie, to understand what heteronormativity is and whatever, but I think we need more time to go through all it.*

F: Yes, you got a good point. The texts were probably too long and maybe some aspects I could have left out, it's possible, maybe I made a mistake by giving you too much information.

*P3: No, I don't think so, I think it was ok, because as you said we're going to use this information for the future.*

F: Or maybe I should have made it clearer from the beginning...

*P2: Yes, maybe you can just say that it is just the basic of the theory and we can read it during our free time.*

F: Ok...

*P4: We had the programme, so I think that you have covered every main subject, this is quite difficult to see, because in these years I've been to university, any teacher, no teacher, covered the programme.*

F: Yes, I almost covered everything.

*P4: You just jumped something that was less important.*

F: Let's concentrate now on something that you enjoyed and then move to the critiques.

*P1: I want to talk again, but somebody can stop me. I really enjoyed this course, because I know I'm going to use a lot of what I learnt here in my practice, classes, also I practiced here with all the things that I learnt, I'm going to be aware with the words that I choose, you know, like when I talk about families, when I talk about love or when I talk about gender, body...*

F: How do you feel about this? Are you going to be more careful about what you use?

*P1: Of course, also something happened in my practice, they talked to a guy..., and I said 'what happens here?' and I decided to talk to them and to use things I've learnt, so I'm happy for this course.*

F: So, you managed to use it in your work situation, good. Other opinions? You can say it in Spanish if you want to talk in Spanish. How did you feel in the course, you can say it in Spanish. No podéis decir vuestro nombre, pero podéis hablar en español.

*P5: Vale. Me he sentido bien, hemos aprendido mucho, muchas estrategias, herramientas, y puede ser útil en el futuro, me ha gustado bastante.*

F: Mmm ok, at the back?

*P6: Me ha gustado porque ha sido en inglés y sobre hablar de estos temas.*

F: But English can be a problem. This was a mixed-ability class, so it was difficult to find the right level, but as I said, I'm not judging you for your English, this is very important, there's no judgment for it, I'm judging your participation, what you showed today and I'm not judging the English. But, was it difficult to follow? To follow me speaking?

*Pp: No, no, no.*

F: Did anybody have problems in understanding me?

*Pp: No, we understood you well.*

F: So, the problem is to talk in English.

*P7: I also liked the confidence of the people, to express themselves, sometimes we had the opportunity in the class to talk; I also liked the day that you made the activity group, that was quite remarkable!*

F: I had many more activities, but there was no time... I had at least three or four more, but...

*P8: I was not expecting it was going to be like that, people were talking to each other a lot and discussing.*

F: We also did another activity in group similar to that one, and I was meant to do another one, but we had to walk in the class and we were in the other class and it was impossible to move the chairs. So, you had to walk in the class and move accordingly to what people consider your social status, etc. I thought it would have been too much. At the end I wanted to keep it more related to sexual identities and teaching.

F: Other people back there?

*P9: I think sometimes it was difficult to talk about it because we did not have enough information, now we have some information, and for some people it was difficult to say what they really wanted to say.*

F: Of course. I understand that. As we said before it is not something that you've been taught at school, you don't normally do it. Ok, other comments?

*P10: For me it was a very useful course because we learned new concepts, and I learned how to deal with these issues at school, before this course I would have not known how to do it.*

F: Ok, this is interesting. What about the others? Thinking about how to deal with homophobia and heterosexism, before this course would you have behaved the same way in a class situation?

*P11: Es importante para mi futuro como maestra porque te puedes encontrar en estas situaciones, y la verdad es que antes, aquí en la facultad no nos enseñan cómo tratar problemas con niños, no solamente de este tipo, entonces la verdad es que he encontrado varias cosillas que te pueden servir para el futuro.*

F: So, for the majority of you there is a little bit difference in how you would deal with it at school, yeah? This is very important, and... strategies and the exercises that you did, do you think you had enough information, do you feel, what's the word? Empowered? Empowered to use it at school, do you think you have enough information and material or what's missing there? There could be something missing, I don't know. (Silence). I'm asking. Do you feel you have a kind of latent empowerment?

*Pp: Yes.*

F: You can only use it when you go to school. Do you think you have the basic at least to face it?

*P1: With things about that at least it makes you aware of what it's happening, maybe before it was 'blind' for us.*

F: Are you more aware?

*Pp: yes*

*P2: At the beginning I was not able to see heteronormativity and now I see it everywhere, every day, it's terrible!*

F: Ah! Does it happen to you? Remember when you asked me about heteronormativity? Now you've said that you see heteronormativity everywhere because it is everywhere!

*P2: And I've also changed my mind about some concepts, for example how to deal with the issue with small children, at the beginning I was against it, and now I think it's important and it's easier.*

F: Yeah, do you think the same? Do you think it's easier with children, primary school students?

*Pp: Yes.*

*P13: It's good to do it.*

F: Why is it good to do it from an early age?

*P13: They haven't got any prejudices.*

F: Some might, but ok, other reasons?



*P3: It's easier to listen to the children than to the adults.*

F: It's easier for the children to listen? And for the adults?

*P3: No, to be listened.*

F: To be listened, it's easier if they are children, yes, ok. What is, maybe one, maybe two things that you enjoyed the most in the course? You can say it in Spanish or English.

*P8: The games, the activities, group works, workshops, the video.*

F: For you?

*S12: También. Pero yo quería hacer hincapié en la didáctica, en este yo he utilizado el tema de la transexualidad. Me ha gustado mucho porque vi el video y el documental, personajes que francamente lo han encajado mal o incluso se lo están haciendo pasar mal, mucha gente ante su ignorancia de no saber cómo piensan, como se sienten, porque esta ignorancia hace daño. Para mí ha sido súper, muy inspirante porque nos engrandecemos.*

F: So, you learned about this aspect by the didactic unit and by constructing your activity you learned about transsexuality. This is very interesting. It's like growing yourself.

F: Any more important aspects?

*P5: The workshops, the practices, and the theory.*

F: At least the theory was mainly at home, can you imagine doing all the theory in class for you?

*P13: The activity.*

F: All of them, which one in particular?

*P13: The one in group, exchanging partner.*

F: Yes, that was very good. Just activities, yes?

*P9: Yes, but also 'It's Elementary'.*

F: What about these activities, the presentations...

*P10: For me the film 'It's Elementary'.*

F: Even if I stopped many times!

*Pp: (laughing...), (F1: sorry!).*

*P3: It was just a comment!*

*SS. (laughter...).*

F: Of course. For you?

*P11: The class, the teaching, to expose our works...*

F: Did you like the activity we did today, to expose your work?

*Pp: Yes...*

*P1: Can I say something?*

F: Yes

*P1: For me one of the most important things that I enjoyed was the use of the language.*

F: Ok, that is important because not many times you do this in courses in general, even about English, not many times they are in English, most of the times they are in Spanish, so this is important. In fact, when I presented my course I was asked 'do you do it in English?', they're were shocked because...

*Pp: (surprised)*

*P4: This is the main reason I chose this course (other Pp: Yeah).*

F: So, this was your main reason. Were you pleased that the course was in English?

*Most Pp: Yes.*

F: Even if it was difficult for some people, but you were pleased, yes?

*Pp: Yes.*

*P13: It is 8 hours a week we I can speak English and listen to English (F: and concentrate in English).*

*P1: Also, it is a challenge, because it is difficult to talk about this topic in Spanish even more in English, we try to understand everything in English, also talking in English, I mean, also explain to them, to children, make it more easy for people of 8, 10 or 12 years, it's a challenge for us.*

F: I like it the fact that it is a challenge, it's very important.

*P2: Another challenge: sometimes I was nervous because I was afraid to be misunderstood when I speak in English (F: interesting) and I was all the time, but because you act not like a traditional teacher it was not like very serious class, very, a lot of fun there was mhhh, all these things but not a traditional class, so I was comfortable, also to state other things....*

F: What do you mean by a traditional class?

*P2: Well, the teacher sits down there, he never stands up, he speaks and allows to listen (F: he or she), yes, he or she (Pp laughing), everybody is quiet, so we are only allowed to make political correct questions in the end, and....*

F: But did you expect the course to be like this, participative?

*Pp: Yes (F: at least).*

F: You did not expect to be there taking notes (SS: no), I don't like that either.

F: Thank you. One positive aspect for you? One or two (S11: in Spanish?), in Spanish, yeah.

*P11: La dinámica del grupo que hicimos aquí me costó mucho trabajo hablar en inglés...*

F: I realised when you were doing group work that you really enjoyed it, not only because you get to know each other, but because you get to know things about the other person, different mentalities, you gonna get together, and you practice English and you're less afraid because you're not talking in front of the class. That's very important. I'll try to put more groups, as I said I had more exercises because I wanted to arrive here with the presentations, I thought that the teaching part was the most important part for you at the end here. Thanks, for you?

*P5: Lo mismo, la dinámica que hicimos, porque tuvimos que defender un tema que a lo mejor no estamos de acuerdo en este tema, dar nuestra opinión, después la actividad ésta que presentamos.*

F: Vale, something negative?

*Pp: Too much theory...*

F: Ok, so for everybody there was too much theory. I know it... did you read all of it?

*Pp: (laughter).*

F: Keep it for home, please; I probably exaggerated with the theory. For you?

*P6: ¿Negativo? (F: Both, negative and positive). Bueno positivo lo que han dicho, las actividades me han gustado mucho porque es una manera de practicar el inglés, (F: entonces hay que hacer más, en otro curso, vale, hay casi que olvidarse de la teoría, casi), (laughter), ¡estaría bien! y lo que ha dicho ella, la temática es algo muy interesante porque nunca lo hacemos, nunca, así que es muy interesante eso, y también el documental que vimos, y los videos, el vídeo del chaval ese del último día, vídeos musicales, (F: sí, es muy bonito, and I had more 'The only gay in the village', I had another one).*

F: For you?

*P2: I recommend, sorry, just for the course, to continue sending, maybe you find information...*

F: Do you want me to send you more information?

*P2: Maybe a course, maybe something around this topic.*

F: And if I repeat the course, maybe next Spring time, some of you would like to do it again or do you think 'no'?

*Pp: The same course?*

F: Similar, it could be similar.

*Ss: It depends on the course.*

F: Yes, I think this is directed more to people who have some level of English.

*P8: If it was free! (F: what? - student repeated -).*

F: That's the problem, the economic problem (some participants leaving for their next class)...

F: I know you have to go, so one negative thing? Something that you didn't like, I think you said it...

*Ss: The theory.*

F: Ok, too much theory on the whole. Did you find it also 'heavy' in the class? Or the explanations (power points) were easier to follow?

*P5: Sometimes.*

*P9: Sometimes it was too much (F: you could not take in all the information?)*

F: It's good for me to learn. One of the biggest mistakes is that I wanted to give you lots of information, and this information is for you to keep at home, otherwise... also the summary, you just have to read the summary. For you, something that you didn't like much?

*S11: ¡Mucha teoría!*

F: Ok, same with you, the theory?

*P6: Sí, la teoría, también es importante saber cosas, hay muchas (F: claro, y hay que tenerla para el futuro también, para poder...).*

*P12: Sí, puedo utilizarlo, por eso.*

F: Ok, would you recommend a course like this to somebody else?

*SS: Yes.*

F: Ok, another thing you want to add?

*P6: For me the course is really good, but the most important thing is that I can't speak in English but I could make it.*

*Pp: That's good.*

F: So, you think you have improved your English? (*Pp: Yes*). This is another aspect which is important. You too? You think you improved your English?

*P6: Yes.*

F: Everybody?

*Pp: Yes.*

F: Do you feel more confident now about talking?

*Pp: Mmm, yes...*

F: How did you feel about the presentation?

*P3: Nervous...*

F: Did you feel nervous?

*Pp: Yes...*

F: But you did it very well, you talked in English...

*S10: Speaking in front of people is not so easy...*

F: Yes, but I think it went quite well, I was really pleased.

F: Thank you very much!

*Pp: Thank you!!*

## Appendix 7 English course: Short story adapted by the facilitator

Stefano Barozzi

Adapted from *Little Daylight* by George MacDonald (A fairytale from his volume *At the Back of the North Wind*, 1871)

### *Little Night Boy*

No house can be called a palace unless it has a wood nearby. And there was a very big wood beside the palace of the queen who was expecting to give birth to Night Boy.

One glorious summer morning, a baby was born, but it was not a baby boy, it was a baby girl. The king and queen had been expecting a boy. Disappointed, they called the baby girl *Daylight*.

At her christening, a wicked fairy put a spell on the baby and said: “She shall always sleep during the day and her physical appearance shall change with the movements of the moon. Ha-ha!”. But a kind fairy added: “The spell will be broken when a prince kisses her on the lips!”

So the little princess always fell asleep when the first rays of the sun appeared. When there was a full moon, she was beautiful and very feminine. But as the moon waned, she would slowly turn into a boy. When the moon was not visible at all, the transformation was complete: s/he was a boy. But the following day/night s/he would slowly start changing back into a girl, a process which was repeated on a daily basis. It was all very confusing. Princess Daylight felt like a girl but s/he was a boy when there was no moon to be seen in the sky and kept waiting for a prince to kiss her/him.

At first, when she was a little boy, no one seemed to notice much difference, but as she grew older her body, with the waning of the moon, was taking on a masculine form and her voice was getting deeper and deeper. It felt really strange to be trapped in a boy’s body and she did not like it at all. At the palace, the royal family tried to keep it a secret. At first they were ashamed of their daughter’s transformation but finally got used to it.

As s/he grew older s/he became a beautiful girl when there was a full moon and a normal boy when no moon was visible. The king and the queen were wondering how s/he could ever be kissed by a prince, especially when s/he was a boy!

Little Daylight/Little Night Boy was now 17 and s/he enjoyed spending much of her/his time in the forest near the palace at night. S/he loved dancing under the moonlight.

Meanwhile, in a neighbouring kingdom, a prince had to leave his family in search of a beautiful princess. He travelled far and wide until he arrived at the kingdom where Daylight/Night Boy lived. He was fed in the forest by a kind fairy who discovered he was a prince and tried to help him find Daylight/Night Boy, knowing that this prince could break the spell at last.

One night, under an almost full moon, the prince was walking near Daylight/Night Boy's palace and saw a figure dancing under the moonlight in the forest. When he got closer he realised it was a beautiful girl and fell in love with her immediately. He observed her all night and then fell asleep in the forest. When he awoke the beautiful girl was no longer there.

He returned to the same spot the following night and after a while the same girl arrived and she looked even more beautiful under the light of the full moon. The prince hid behind a tree and observed the princess dancing and singing. As the princess danced very close to the prince's hiding place she finally saw him!

"Who are you?" she asked. The prince replied: "I am sorry. I did not want to frighten you", and she said: "It does not matter. You can go now". The prince, feeling very sad, was slowly walking away when she suddenly called to him: "Come back. I like you because you do what I say" and she added: "Can you tell me what the sun looks like?" The prince was very surprised and said: "Why do you ask that? Everybody knows what it looks like". And she replied: "I've never seen the sun" and added: "I think you must be a prince", and he said: "How do you know?" "Because you do what you are told and speak the truth. Tell me, is the sun very bright?"

"As bright as lightning", said the prince. "I want to see the sun", said the princess. Then she felt really sad because she could not tell him the truth and ran back towards the palace. The prince tried to follow her but she told him not to and he sadly returned to the forest.

The prince tried to go back to that same spot in the forest, but the wicked fairy put a spell on him so he could not find the place where he had met Daylight. The wicked fairy broke the spell exactly two weeks later when there was no moon to be seen in the sky.

That moonless night the prince found the spot in the wood where he had first met little Daylight. It was very dark so he decided to light a fire. After a while he saw somebody dancing towards the fire. The prince thought it was the princess. But then he realised it was a boy, who was wearing the same dress that the princess had been wearing two weeks earlier.

The prince jumped out and said: "Who are you?" Little Daylight was now Little Night Boy as there was no moon in the sky. He was very frightened because he did not recognise the prince at first but at last he said: "Oh, it is you. Where have you been all this time?" The

prince replied: "I don't know you and I am here because I wanted to meet the beautiful princess".

Night Boy said: "You don't recognise me, do you?" And he started to cry. The prince said: "No, I don't know you, but why are you crying and why are you wearing the princess's dress?"

"I'm crying because I have a secret that I cannot reveal to you."

"But where is the princess? I would do anything to see her again."

"Absolutely anything?" said Night Boy.

"Yes, absolutely anything."

"Then kiss me on the lips", said Night Boy.

"But you are not my princess!"

"Come closer and look at me."

The prince came closer and realised that the boy resembled the princess in many ways. He had the same features, the same blond hair, the same beautiful scent, only she was now a boy!

Night Boy smiled and the prince fell in love with that smile and kissed him on the lips. The prince was full of joy. Night Boy told the prince the whole story.

"You are Daylight, the beautiful princess? Why didn't you tell me before?", asked the prince. And Night Boy said: "Because I wanted to be sure you fell in love with me as a person and not just because I am a beautiful princess. And you kissed me when I was a boy and I am still a boy now. You broke the spell. I shall never sleep during the day again but I shall never be a woman again. Do you mind?"

"No, I don't, because love is blind and I would love you as a boy or as a girl."

"This is the happiest night of my life!" cried Night Boy, "I love you too".

"Shall we get married?" said the prince. "Well, we cannot get married at the palace because they would not accept the marriage of two men", replied Night Boy sadly.

"Well, we could get married in the forest and live with the fairies", said the prince.

"But we couldn't be king and queen! Do you mind?" asked Night Boy.

"Not at all, as long as I am by your side", replied the prince.

"That's wonderful!" exclaimed Night Boy. "Let's go to the fairies and get married! I am the happiest boy in the world!", and then he asked: "Is that the sun coming?"



## **Appendix 8 Spanish course: Pre-course questionnaire**

### **CUESTIONARIO PREVIO**

#### **IDENTIDADES SEXUALES EN LA EDUCACIÓN**

**Stefano Barozzi – Kim Pérez Fernández-Fígares**

**Facultad de Ciencias de la Educación**

**Universidad de Granada**

**12 de marzo – 30 de abril de 2013**

**Se trata de un cuestionario anónimo. Por favor, no escribas tu nombre.**

#### **I. INFORMACIÓN PERSONAL**

1. Género
2. Edad
3. ¿De dónde eres?
4. ¿Qué estudias o cuál es tu ocupación laboral?
5. ¿Te consideras lesbiana, gay, heterosexual, bisexual, transgénero, transexual, intersexual, o cualquier otra identidad? ¿Te reconoces en una identidad sexual fija?
6. ¿Conoces a familiares, amigas y amigos o docentes que no son heterosexuales?

#### **II. TERMINOLOGÍA RELACIONADA CON LAS IDENTIDADES SEXUALES**

1. ¿Entiendes el significado de ‘lgbti’ y de ‘queer’ (relacionado con la ‘teoría queer’)?
2. ¿Entiendes los conceptos de ‘heterosexismo’, ‘heteronormatividad’ y ‘cissexismo’?
3. ¿Cómo podrías describir el término ‘homofobia’ u ‘homotransfobia’ (queerfobia: homofobia, lesbofobia, bifobia, transfobia)?
4. ¿Qué crees que causó tu ‘heterosexualidad’?

#### **III. IDENTIDADES SEXUALES EN LA EDUCACIÓN**

1. ¿Por qué crees (o no crees) que es necesario debatir sobre temáticas relacionadas con las identidades sexuales en la educación?
2. ¿En qué asignaturas crees que se podría analizar más fácilmente las identidades sexuales? ¿Y por qué? ¿Y en tu campo de estudio o laboral?

3. ¿Cuáles podrían ser las consecuencias del acoso homotransfóbico (queerfóbico) en la persona afectada (alumnado o profesorado)?
4. ¿Has recibido alguna vez formación sobre cómo tratar la homotransfobia y el heterosexismo en la educación?
5. ¿Crees que docentes de primaria y de secundaria (o cualquier otro tipo de educador/a) deberían trabajar para prevenir prejuicios hacia las personas no heterosexuales?
6. ¿Crees que el alumnado de primaria es capaz de discutir sobre identidades sexuales a través del pensamiento crítico?
7. ¿Si tú fueras un/a docente, te preocuparías de las reacciones de los progenitores de tu alumnado si considerases hablar sobre personas lgbti en el aula?
8. Los libros de texto de inglés (por ejemplo), y de cualquier otra asignatura, muestran familias heterosexuales (casadas) con su prole (niños y niñas). ¿Crees que, por ejemplo, una unidad familiar homosexual debería ser incluida en el material didáctico dado que el matrimonio homosexual y la adopción por parte de parejas del mismo sexo son legales en España?

#### **IV. SOBRE ESTE CURSO**

1. ¿Has recibido suficiente información sobre el curso antes de su comienzo?
2. ¿Cómo te has enterado del curso?
3. ¿Es el tipo de curso que te esperabas?
4. ¿Cuáles son las principales razones que te motivaron a participar en este curso?
5. ¿Cómo podrías contribuir con tu experiencia y tus conocimientos al curso?
6. ¿Son los temas relacionados con las identidades sexuales pertinentes a tu carrera o tu trabajo?

**Gracias por la colaboración.**

## Appendix 9 Spanish course: Final course written evaluation

### EVALUACIÓN DEL CURSO

#### IDENTIDADES SEXUALES EN LA EDUCACIÓN

**Stefano Barozzi – Kim Pérez Fernández-Fígares**

**Facultad de Ciencias de la Educación**

**Universidad de Granada**

**12 de marzo – 30 de abril de 2013**

Contesta a cada pregunta en **negrita** o en otro **color**. Una vez completado mándalo a la dirección de **correo electrónico** que te ha sido facilitada. No escribas tu nombre dado que es un cuestionario anónimo.

1. ¿Cómo te has sentido durante el curso y con su metodología didáctica?
2. ¿Has sido el tipo de curso que te esperabas?
3. ¿Te ha gustado tener, además del facilitador principal (Stefano), también a Kim y a las otras personas invitadas en el curso? Explica por qué.
4. ¿Crees que el curso ha conseguido sus objetivos principales?<sup>74</sup>
5. ¿Qué han sido para ti las tres cosas mejores del curso?
6. ¿Cuáles sesiones te han parecido menos útiles y por qué?
7. ¿Crees que el curso ha tenido un equilibrio entre teoría, práctica (talleres de grupo/presentaciones finales) y debates?

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- Reconocer y justificar la necesidad de tratar temas relacionados con las identidades sexuales y el no binarismo en la educación.
- Familiarizarse con las definiciones y el lenguaje *queer*; así como con la teoría *queer* y la teoría de conjuntos difusos de sexogénero.
- Concienciar sobre la inequidad que existe en la sociedad y en la educación en relación con las identidades *lgbti*, así como desafiar los estereotipos existentes.
- Reflexionar y concienciar sobre los efectos destructivos de la homotransfobia, del cissexismo y del heterosexismo en la educación.
- Desarrollar capacidades críticas y estrategias para combatir la homotransfobia, el heterosexismo, el cissexismo y todo tipo de discriminación en la educación.
- Aprender a tomar acciones pedagógicas *queer* adecuadas.

8. ¿Y crees que ha conseguido su intento de ser un curso interactivo y crítico?
9. ¿Qué habrías hecho de manera diferente y por qué?
10. ¿Qué has aprendido en este curso? ¿Y qué te ha sorprendido más?
11. ¿Puedes ver ahora más claramente la heteronormatividad, la homotransfobia y el cisexismo en la educación que antes del comienzo del curso?
12. ¿Te sientes más empoderada/e/o ahora si tienes que enfrentarte a la homotransfobia, al cisexismo y al heterosexismo en la educación? Explica por qué.
13. ¿Serías capaz de enseñar y debatir sobre identidades sexuales con tu alumnado (presente o futuro) como parte de tu programa didáctico? ¿O esperarías a que la temática surgiera espontáneamente en el aula? ¿Por qué?
14. ¿Cuáles serían, en tu opinión, los obstáculos que podrías encontrar a la hora de tratar las identidades sexuales en tu clase? ¿Y cómo te enfrentarías?
15. ¿Crees que todo profesorado debería recibir formación sobre cómo abordar en el aula temas relacionados con las identidades sexuales? ¿Por qué?
16. ¿Recomendarías este curso de formación?
17. Por favor, usa este espacio para dejar cualquier comentario y/o sugerencia.

**Muchas gracias por tu participación en el curso y por tu colaboración.**

## Appendix 10 Spanish course: Transcription of oral course evaluation

June 2013. Length: 45 minutes

**F: Facilitador/Facilitator (F1: Stefano y F2: Kim, who took part in the discussion)**

**P: Participante/Participant. Pp: Participantes/Participants**

**Participants are numbered in chronological order. It was carried out in Spanish.**

F1: Vuestras impresiones sobre el curso.

*P1: Maravillosas. A mí me ha encantado para mi terreno personal, no sólo profesionalmente que era destinado a educadores, sino como persona. A mí me ha ayudado mucho y me ha, no sé, he aprendido muchas cosas que no tenía tan claras.*

*P2: Es algo que esperaba desde hace mucho tiempo. Creo que hay cosas que se tienen que tratar desde la educación que son las cuestiones de identidades sexuales e identidades de género y orientación sexual que no se tratan; que no tenemos instrumentos para hacerlo, que nos sentimos incómodos a la hora de hablar de ello porque no estamos acostumbrados a hablar de ello, entonces ha sido crear un espacio en la universidad, en la educación que es dónde se tiene que crear, para empezar a transmitir esto. Entonces, en este sentido muy bien. A nivel personal también, porque he conocido a gente joven, muy motivada que está aprendiendo.*

F1: ¿Es el tipo de curso que te esperabas?

*P2: Yo me esperaba más teoría, quizás también porque mi época transgresora se acabó y ahora soy más convencional, entonces me esperaba más teoría y en este sentido no he visto mucho.*

F1: ¿Os pareció que había poca teoría, o que había más práctica que teoría, os gustó eso o habrías preferido más teoría?

*P3: A mí me ha gustado que había más práctica que teoría.*

*P2: Yo no lo digo como si no me gusta, sino me esperaba que habría más teoría, a mí el curso me ha gustado en general, vamos, me ha gustado el contenido del curso, pero he echado en falta más teoría.*

*P3: Yo soy partidario de que se aprende más con la práctica que con la teoría, mucho más, a la hora de poner casos prácticos, a la hora de vivencia, la gente empatiza y además creo que se aprende mucho más con la práctica, ¿no?*

F1: Es interesante lo que acabas de decir porque en el curso anterior se lamentaron que había demasiada teoría, entonces, quisieron ir a la clase para hacer prácticas, para tener

debates, para hacer ejercicios, y casi la mitad del curso era teoría bastante más pesada de la que hicimos nosotros.

*P3: A mí me ha sorprendido que ha sido uno de los pocos cursos que he tenido en el cual hablaban tanto los alumnos como el profesor en tus clases, es verdad, ¡tú hablabas un montón pero lo mismo nosotros y eso ha sido genial!*

F1: Era uno de los objetivos principales del curso, que sea participativo e interactivo, además de la temática, claro.

*P4: Yo creo que quizás un curso más largo o que hagáis otro que podría ser un máster, porque a mí también me ha faltado teoría, depende de los conocimientos de cada uno, yo entiendo perfectamente que si partimos de un curso en el que hay gente que no sabe lo que es transexual, no sabe lo que es el feminismo, no sabe ciertas cosas, que se aclaren, además es muy constructivo para los que sabemos.*

*P3: Tenemos que partir de la base que es un curso.*

*P4: Vale, yo he hecho cursos que han sido súper teóricos de este tiempo que han empezado en quinta, pero me ha dado la sensación que mucha gente no se ha enterado, este curso la verdad que súper chulo porque lo que se ha predicado se ha hecho, que eso me parece de aplauso para Stefano, para Kim. (Aplausos generales).*

F1: Me parece muy interesante lo que has dicho porque es verdad que hay varios cursos, no tanto sobre esta temática, sabemos que no hay, como se dijo antes, hay muchos cursos de género que se basan casi siempre en la teoría, yo quisiera que fuese un curso de formación y para hacer formación solamente con 40 horas no había tiempo para poner más teoría y por eso entiendo tu demanda de un curso más largo o de un máster, ahí sí que cabría una parte de teoría mucho más amplia, mucho más profunda y una práctica aún más profunda incluso, porque vuestras presentaciones a mí se me quedaron cortas, porque fueron todas estupendas pero me habría gustado cinco o seis clases de presentaciones.

F2: Como me hace muchísima ilusión que os haya interesado la teoría, yo soy una persona muy teórica, si queréis los que tenéis interés de profundizar la teoría podéis poneros en contacto conmigo por Facebook, mi nombre .... y estamos en contacto. A mí me encantaría seguir en contacto con vosotros.

F1: Sí, de todas formas ya hemos empezado a intercambiar textos, películas, cortos. Esa forma de contacto tiene que seguir, y cualquier pregunta o si queréis saber más de teoría yo y Kim podemos mandar textos, esto queda abierto. De hecho lo que quería hacer sobre la teoría no era pasar demasiado tiempo en clase y hacer una clase frontal, no era mi intención, la intención era más bien de daros material teórico para leer en casa y hacer dos o tres pequeñas intervenciones que hicimos yo y Kim en clase que queremos que han sido importantes para aclarar sobre todo la temática pero también el vocabulario que va con ella. ¿Quién quiere hablar?

*P5: A mí de las cosas que me han parecido más interesantes del curso aparte de encontrarme con gente, alguna gente ya la conocía, y me ha encantado volver a encontrar, y otra que pues que he conocido nueva que me ha resultado quizás de lo más alimenticio del curso, ¿no? El contacto con gente que viene de vivencias muy diferentes, y os felicito el acierto a nivel humano, emocional, yo creo que nos has mimado también fuera de clase con tus mails permanentes. El curso ha trascendido el aula, el curso ha posibilitado que la gente se reúna para hacer un trabajo, luego en el trabajo ha habido propuestas muy interesantes, muy creativas; me parece que un curso que es capaz de propiciar todas estas experiencias emotivas, humanas, pues es un curso bastante potente, yo creo ya que a esta altura, algunas personas de una edad y de otra, todo el material teórico tenemos las herramientas de encontrarlos en muchos sitios, en cualquier idioma, pero hay otras cosas que no son tan fáciles de encontrar y si somos capaces de seguir manteniendo un vínculo, donde vayamos cada uno y cada una de esta experiencia esto ya tiene como las gafas de género pues las gafas del arco iris. Todas estas pequeñas cosas yo creo que hacen crecer, y cada persona teníamos niveles diferentes como pasa en todos los cursos, este nivel es muy difícil de establecer a menos que no sea en la segunda parte empezar con más nivel, es lo que yo pienso. Y lanzo una propuesta porque me gustó mucho cuando hicimos lo del taller de teatro que si la gente quiere de cara al curso que viene podemos hacer un grupito de teatro y hacer una propuesta para sensibilizar a la gente sobre esta temática sobre todo en la escuela, entonces bueno a mí personalmente me ha parecido interesante. Y los méritos son estos, la gente que has invitado, bastante abierto, una perspectiva bastante abierta.*

F1: Me parece una propuesta súper interesante, gracias. ¿Quién más?

*P6: Yo no me esperaba nada. Sí porque me lo comentó... que iba a estar muy bien, pero como no me esperaba nada he tenido de todo. Pasé de sentirme a ratos muy mal y muy fea a luego disfrutar mucho, de no saber nada ahora que sé un poquillo, la tranquilidad que yo tenía, que sigo a tener que estar saliendo y me he comprado un libro muy bonito que me estoy leyendo y luego os contaré (F1: Estupendo) y entonces yo no sé a partir de este curso que puedo aportar a las personas lgbti, sí que sé todo lo que me ha aportado este curso sobre temáticas lgbti que es mucho y no tengo como agradecerlo.*

F1: Claro, y tú has dado ejemplos ejemplares en clase cuando nos has hablado de tu familia, cuando has hablado de tu hija, cuando has hablado de tu marido; has sabido reconocer parte de lo que llamamos heteronormatividad en nuestra vida y un poco frenarla y pensar ‘un momento, no existe sólo esta oportunidad o no existe sólo esta posibilidad que nos han inculcado, ¿no?’. Hay otras y tú has sido estupenda en esto, y además lo has practicado con tus clases, ¿no? (P6: sí), en la escuela. Porque a mí lo que me interesa sobre todo en este curso es que en el futuro o en el presente podáis utilizar parte del material o de los recursos que hemos usado en el curso que son también vuestros, claro, y en vuestro trabajo, creo que esto es lo fundamental, así que personas a lo mejor como tú que decías que no tenías mucho conocimiento ha sido muy enriquecedor para todo el curso, para ti y

para las personas que te rodean, y no tiene que ser una persona lgbti, cualquier persona se puede abrir mentalmente hablando de estas temáticas.

F2: Si yo hablaba con personas lgbti yo me sentía muy libre, siempre muy a gusto hablando, mientras que en el momento que entraba una persona hetero la sensación era de mucha más rigidez, mucho más formalismo, etc., entonces lo interesante es que en este curso en un mes y medio ahora tengo la sensación con todos vosotros de que hablo con la misma libertad de que podía estar hablando en un ambiente lgbti, es decir, la sensación que esto lo hemos asimilado de tal manera que simplemente somos personas que consideran esto como normal.

F1: Claro, es un ambiente seguro, donde nos sentimos personas seguras.

*P7: Para mí ha sido importante lo que hemos aprendido, los cambios que nos ha aportado, es verdad que he echado de menos más teoría, pero lo que ha aportado más este curso no ha sido a nivel teórico sino a nivel personal, a nivel de fomentar en nosotros el espíritu crítico, es decir, por qué no nos hemos conformado con esto o por qué tenemos esto, y que ha provocado cambios transformacionales, más profundos de nosotros, entonces ha sido muy experiencial, yo por ejemplo me he sentido muy cómoda, por mi transexualidad sabía que no podía hablarlo con tranquilidad en ningún sitio, pero en el curso me he sentido súper cómoda con la gente, sintiéndome yo, he podido hablar de cosas con toda naturalidad. Es importante que todo esto de una forma lo podemos generalizar a nuestras vidas, a nuestras amistades, que seamos más auténticos.*

F1: Muy bien, estamos en la misma línea.

*P2: Quería compartir lo que has dicho... sobre lo vivencial, te da seguridad, nosotros hemos empezado, hemos hecho actividades, lo estamos trabajando con los chavales, sobre homosexualidad y el día 17, el día internacional contra la homofobia mi colega (una participante) tuvo la idea de hacer algo, de repente lo comenta, venga, vamos a hacerlo, de repente ya hemos organizado unas charlas con los chavales y colegas, vamos a hablar en bachillerato. Para mí, como profesor y como homosexual, me ha dado la seguridad de poder seguir adelante. Esta mañana he mandado un mensaje a la directora, vice-directora sobre el día 17 de mayo y tenemos que organizar esto y esto.*

F1: ¿Y te has sentido más libre de poderlo hacer?

*P2: Sí, más seguro.*

F1: Si no me equivoco, te han preguntado también para dar un curso, una charla en otoño en la escuela sobre temáticas lgbti, me dijiste, ¿no?

*P2: Eso lo planteamos desde el principio al profesorado. Existía antes.*

F1: Vale, pero ahora te da más seguridad.



*P2: Claro, porque toda la vivencia como ha sido tan personal, de alguna manera ha servido para fortalecer la base de esto y llevarlo a la práctica que de hecho lo estamos llevando a la práctica en nuestro instituto.*

F1: Estupendo, esto es lo que me interesa más. Para mí el curso además de conocernos, de aprender, es intentar un cambio social.

*P8: También personal (F1: Sí, también personal), porque esto no va a ser un cambio mundial, las personas que estamos aquí podemos hacer lo mismo con nuestro entorno.*

F1: Esto es personal, pero se lleva al social como tú bien dices. Si actuamos como personas, invitamos personas en institutos, por ejemplo, esto es un cambio social y tenemos que hacerlo desde la educación que es la base.

F2: Yo quería decir además que dentro de la experiencia nuestra, una experiencia dentro de la experiencia ha sido ver 'It's Elementary'.

F1: ¿Os pareció importante ver ese documental?

*Pp: Sí.*

F1: ¿Quién quiere hablar?

*P5: Quería decir una experiencia muy relacionada al curso ha sido que (una participante trans de curso) ha venido a mi tutoría a hablar con el alumnado y tenemos un artículo de periódico, una experiencia quedar con ella y visibilizar para mí es fundamental también, ¿no? Así hay posibilidades de que surjan cosas.*

*P9: Yo venía muy ignorante, la verdad, totalmente ignorante (F1: Me gusta que lleguen a este curso personas sin expectativas o sin conocimientos), ciertas cosas tenía conocimiento, muy poco, la verdad me sentí muy ignorante y me voy muy satisfecha, claro que siempre hay que estar al tanto, todos los días aprender, informarse, leer, pero la verdad muy a gusto y satisfecha. (F1: Estupendo).*

*P10: Yo la verdad que creía que sabía muchas cosas pero a la hora de la verdad te das cuenta de que poquito sabía conforme a lo que pensaba y la verdad que me ha sorprendido mucho la cantidad de cosas que me ha enseñado el curso y veo posible ese cambio del que se habla y participar en él, ser participe y la verdad que es una cosa muy bonita que me gusta colaborar con ello. (F1: Estupendo).*

*P11: A mí me parece muy interesante porque yo por ejemplo estoy muy relacionada con educación y a raíz de este curso he visto la gran necesidad que hay en educación especial, que ya de por sí los tienen apartados, ¿no?, y con respeto a este tema muchísimo más, y son los propios niños que piden saber más (F1: Hay que enseñar el corto que vimos en clase del niño ciego, por ejemplo), claro, y darme cuenta cómo los profesores ignoran el tema y aún así, no sólo lo ignoran, sino que encima les resulta molesto que lo saque. Me*

*parece un curso muy interesante por eso, y a parte como ella creía saber muchas cosas pero no tenía ni idea y me parece súper enriquecedor, la verdad.*

*P12: Yo me he sentido afortunada, la verdad. De tener mucha suerte a conocer el material que habéis presentado en clase y presentado por parte de compañeras y compañeros, tener el contacto con vosotros. Encontrar la publicidad del curso fue pura casualidad (F1: La publicidad es un problema, tuve que hacerlo casi todo solo).*

*P13: La verdad que yo no me había enterado del curso, fue a través de (otra participante) que me lo dijo, yo entonces llegué al curso sin saber nada, ni había leído los contenidos, sabía el título un poco así de pasada y le dije a (otra participante) el primer día que igual no lo podía hacer y me dijo: '¡Ya te lo he pagado!' (risas generales), me gustó que me lo pagara pero al principio me agobié un poco y me daba pena porque a mí el curso me ha pillado en un momento muy estresante de mi vida y entonces me daba pena el sentir que no lo he aprovechado tanto, pero es verdad porque al principio estaba muy estresado con otras cosas, entonces llegaba al curso y no podía desconectar; pero todo esto poco a poco ha ido cambiando y la verdad que me he gustado mucho, he disfrutado mucho con muchas partes del curso, he disfrutado la elaboración y presentación del trabajo con la gente de educación infantil y me ha gustado un montón, ha sido un curso muy importante, me ha hecho pensar en muchas cosas. Yo también creo que necesito un poco de tiempo para asimilar y para decidir en qué me ha servido esto; me hizo pasar muchos momentos el curso, el vídeo 'It's Elementary' eso me impactó muchísimo, o sea, me saltaban las lágrimas, no sé, creo que en determinadas ocasiones me ha revuelto demasiado, ¿no?, y entonces más adelante te escribo un mail y te cuento. (F1: Ah, estupendo).*

*P14: Es verdad lo que dices, porque a veces no sabes lo estresante decir lo que te ha aportado el curso, luego necesitas tiempo para digerirlo, y luego decir que éste era un curso que te cagas (risas generales). Y bueno, yo quería decir que gracias a todos por venir, estoy muy contento (risas generales), me parece estupendo que haya tanta afluencia.*

F1: ¿Os pareció un poco corto como dijo alguna persona?

*P15: Un poco corto y como decía una compañera que se habría agradecido a lo mejor un conjunto de bibliografía comentada, recomendada, para facilitar que la gente que nos ha parecido corto tengamos documentos que de verdad podemos seguir con una progresión de más fácil a más complicado.*

F1: Muy bien. Quien quiere añadir algo sobre esto.

*P5: A mí me habría gustado más largo.*

F1: Es difícil hacer un curso más largo, lo mejor sería que fuera un curso de la universidad o como máster, porque a lo mejor algunas cosas han sido precipitadas por el tiempo. El hecho por ejemplo de presentar la teoría en un par de días con textos resumidos a lo mejor en un curso más largo habría permitido poderlos discutir más detalladamente en clase, cosa

que casi no hicimos, y darle más tiempo también a la práctica, justar lo teórico con lo práctico, llevarlo a la práctica en vuestros trabajos. ¿Otras cosas que queréis decir?

*P12: Yo me he sentido confusa (F1: ¿Sigues confusa?), sí, y seguiré confusa mucho tiempo (F1: ¡Yo también! A mí me gusta estar confuso). Yo me he sentido confusa durante el curso porque no he terminado de digerir, he como tirado un trozo de mí, de una parte que soy yo (F1: Me acuerdo cuando dijiste que antes te reconocía como mujer ¿y ahora?), ahora estoy trabajando en ello, es que no me puedo poner en el femenino o masculino, no me puedo colocar en ningún sitio, tampoco me agobia como me agobiaba al principio del curso. Ahora no me agobia, entiendo que da lo mismo. (F1: Lo bueno de la confusión es que te da libertad de pensar de poder ser diferente).*

*P8: Yo no me lo planteo ni siquiera. O sea, yo me dejo llevar, hago lo que siento, yo soy que soy una mujer y que soy un hombre, las dos cosas.*

*P15: ¿Pero la pregunta de lo qué eres?*

F2: Nosotras estamos haciéndonos esta pregunta toda la vida.

F1: Hay personas que justamente tienen que hacerse esta pregunta de muy pequeñas y otra persona que no, que a lo mejor empiezan a preguntárselo más adelante porque se han reconocido en los cánones sociales y estaban muy cómodas en estas identidades que no se lo han planteado, entonces me parece bien que una persona se lo piense. Me parece positivo. ¿Más?

*P6: ¿Aunque te sigas encontrado en el mismo sitio? Porque yo me lo he planteado y me encuentro en el mismo sitio.*

*P3: A mí también me gusta mucho eso, lo que el curso ha querido, que tanto a los homosexuales como a lo bisexuales y como a los heterosexuales se les ha puesto en el mismo saco, o sea, no se les ha tratado de forma distinta, ¿no? Yo me he visto como heterosexual, que parecía el curso para homosexuales pero no, te ves súper identificado en el curso (F1: Estupendo), y es por eso que por lo menos me ha gustado a mí.*

F1: Me parece interesante lo que se está preguntando... porque no significa que otra persona se lo pregunte, que se lo piense, puede seguir así.

*P1: Pues así ya sabes lo que hay.*

F1: Y así te sientes más libre de aceptar a otra persona, de acercarte a otras sexualidades, eso es lo importante.

*P6: Lo de controlarte por cómo eres y te sientes libre, a veces no somos cocientes de eso.*

*P18: Es que hay que tener en cuenta todas las variantes de género y de orientación, no vamos a separarlos, y si se separan ya empieza el problema.*

F1: Vale. Para terminar, cada persona tiene que decir dos cosas: la más positiva del curso y la que os ha gustado menos, o las que os han gustado y las que os han gustado menos.

*P6: Lo que más: interactuar, la práctica, el vídeo (It's Elementary) la verdad que me ha abierto mucho para poder poner en práctica un modelo de clase. (F1: ¿Y algo menos?) Tal vez el tiempo, y a veces también que el aula no estaba en condiciones que tuvimos que cambiar mucho de aula.*

F1: Sé que había personas que tenían que irse al final con prisa, a mí me habría gustado hacer las actividades con más relajación porque el tiempo era lo que era. Muy bien gracias. ¿Para ti?

*P10: Lo que más es que hayamos aprendido la una de la otra, yo es lo que más agradezco del curso, porque muchos cursos que he hecho desde que salí de la universidad, acabé la universidad fatal por el sistema educativo y de la educación formal, y después hice muchos cursos de formación profesional para desempleados de cinco horas diaria y no se podía faltar, y era peor todavía, lo que agradezco en verdad es que cuando se hace un curso todo el mundo tiene que enseñar a otra persona, no sólo los maestros, (F1: Todas las personas tienen su conocimiento), he aprendido de todas vosotras y además te agradezco a ti porque es una labor súper importante, a ti y a Kim. De los profesores que se cree una cohesión y que haya buen rollo entre el grupo, porque yo creo que para aprender y para aprender mucho, yo he dado algunas clases en mi experiencia docente y esto es fundamental.*

F1: ¿Y qué te ha gustado menos?

*P10: Pues que ha sido corto.*

*P4: A mí lo que me ha gustado más ha sido el compañerismo, los vínculos, crear confianzas entre nosotros, y poder hablar de cualquier tema que uno sienta (F1: La seguridad que tuvimos para decir lo que queremos; es difícil encontrar una situación similar), sí, es verdad; y lo que menos yo diría personalmente que tenía que ir a mi pueblo y muchas veces tenía que ir antes y me costaba llegar, lo que me ha gustado menos ha sido desplazarme.*

*P11: A mí lo que me gustado más ha sido poner en práctica todo y que nadie se siente diferente, el que todo seamos iguales totalmente, que cada uno pueda expresar lo que quiera sin, sea, con total libertad. Y lo que me ha gustado menos es cómo este tema está tan invisibilizado, repito, en la educación que es lo que a mí me toca, y cómo el sentimiento de necesidad que hay. Es lo que me ha gustado menos fuera del curso, en el curso todo bien, pero fuera darme cuenta de la realidad no me ha gustado.*

*P5: Un poco lo que se ha dicho: las relaciones, la dinámica del curso; negativo no se me ocurre nada, ¡ha estado muy bien!*

*P2: Yo la gente como positivo desde luego es lo que más destaco. Y luego tu motivación, porque de verdad que encontrarse a profesores que son capaces de ganar poco para hacer el curso y que lo intentaron desde el mes de septiembre creo que es digno de admiración (F1: Gracias). Luego como negativo ya lo he dicho antes, en mi caso encontraría un poquito más de teoría me hubiese gustado a mí personalmente y ya está. (F1: Muy bien, gracias).*

*P12: Como positivo lo que ya han dicho, lo venía pensando antes de que lo dijeran, ese ambiente, como se veía en 'It's Elementary' que cómo se hablaba y no se juzgaba y todo el mundo se sentía cómodo y libre y ver que fluía un 'te entiendo, te lo explico, no te entiendo, te lo pregunto', y lo hablamos del mismo nivel y no me permita no tenerte paciencia y juzgarte, tratarte mal, hablarte mal, ese ambiente me ha parecido fantástico, no lo he visto en ningún sitio. Y como negativo creo que se nos ha ido un montón el tiempo, porque a veces la sensación del tiempo era el caos, no sé si porque eran casi cuatro horas seguidas, había mucho que teníamos que hacer, o por qué se no iba un montón charlando y no lo controlábamos. Yo tenía la sensación de que lo habríamos podido hacer mejor.*

F1: Sí, además creo que cuando empieza un debate interesante para mí y para Kim, las personas facilitadoras del curso, es muy difícil bloquearlo porque al fin y al cabo el debate, yo creo personalmente pero creo que la mayoría del grupo también, es fundamental para obtener esto pensamiento crítico y para llegar a tener opiniones y para compartirlas. Claro, a lo mejor se habría podido ofrecer un tiempo para el debate y otro tiempo para seguir, pero la verdad que algunas veces, sobre todo en clase, yo y Kim hemos decidido que 'ya está, hoy en clase dejamos a la clase debatir', lanzamos algunas cosas porque vimos que era muy fundamental y nos escapó un poquito lo que era el programa decidido por el curso, pero era una forma de darle poder al grupo, de tomar poder, bueno, 'queremos decir esto, queremos seguir debatiendo, debatimos'.

*P12: Mi sensación negativa era como si algo se escapaba, podía hacerse mejor pero no sé cómo.*

F1: Claro, esto también es muy queer, de no tenerlo demasiado programado, yo intento hacerlo programado pero al final es imposible. Pero es verdad.

*P12: Lo negativo no ha sido como si los tiempos fueran súper limitados, sino la sensación de que el tiempo se escapaba, se iba rápido y no se podía estrujar más.*

F1: Vale, estupendo, yo lo he vivido de igual manera, a veces estaba muy agobiado, 'ya nos tenemos que ir', estaba mirando la hora, a veces nos quedamos hasta las ocho y media, ¿no?, para seguir debatiendo, el problema del tiempo siempre es importante.

*P7: De positivo las relaciones que se han establecido, la relación de igualdad entre los profesores, los alumnos, igualitario, asimétrico, la metodología queer, ¿no? Quizás en negativo, más o menos positivo, bueno, la falta de contenidos, de estructuración, de un*

*curso como estamos acostumbrados. Quizás esto ha costado más porque ha roto los esquemas que teníamos.*

F1: Hay algo programado y de repente no lo hago porque el curso ha tomado otro camino (P7: *Exactamente, como si con más contenidos es más positivo*).

F1: Muy bien, gracias.

*P8: Positivo las personas, las vivencias de las otras personas, sobre todo verlas desde su perspectiva, o sea, la metodología, dando las herramientas, era lo que yo quería. Y lo negativo fue tener que estudiar, llevar las clases y el curso con tantos correos, yo madre mía no puedo más (risas generales), yo estaba ya otro correo y otro correo (risas), mira ¡yo ya no lo leo! (risas), (F1: Es verdad, es verdad), ¡luego no lo encuentro!*

F2: Para mí lo más positivo, lo más nuevo ha sido también el método, el método (F1: Ah, quería decir una cosa: ¡sin Kim no habría podido ser posible!), muchas gracias, pero lo que tú has enseñado ojalá yo lo hubiera aprendido hace veinte años porque mis clases hubieran sido completamente distintas, y era una manera de comunicarse con tanta naturalidad que ahora, lo que te decía antes, que nos sentimos ya amigas, después de un mes y medio y esto es un curso. (P8: *Yo lo veo normal*). Claro, y entonces esa participación ha sido una cosa espléndida, y lo hay que agradecer. Como parte negativa lo que he estado escuchando, que a lo mejor se le puede dar una versión positiva que desde luego salimos de este ambiente y nos encontramos con la cruda realidad y la cruda realidad es la que es en este 2013, la parte positiva es decir: ‘bueno, ya sabemos lo que tenemos que hacer, que por lo menos en 2015-16-17, las cosas vayan cambiando y justamente está en nuestras manos, en estas manos concretas, las manos vuestras, e ir cambiando estas cosas. Espero que sea un desafío muy interesante y que nos veamos en 2017 y o 2018 y digamos: ‘¡Oh, hay que ver lo que hemos hecho, lo que hemos conseguido! (F1: ¡Esperamos!).

*P3: Lo positivo lo que estábamos comentando: la gente, yo cuando llegué, cuando vi el tema yo me consideraba, ahora menos, nulo, nulo en el tema. (F1: ¿Qué ha sido para ti el interés hacia el curso?). Hombre, no te voy a engañar, yo buscaba créditos de libre configuración (risas generales), (F1: ¡Está muy bien saberlo!). Ya, te encuentras las cosas y te llegan de sorpresa, y es lo que más se valora, y que te haga decir ‘¡jode!, lo que he aprendido!’, la cantidad de cosas que me ha aportado esta gente, toda la gente súper distinta, toda la gente genial, tanto los profesores como los alumnos, y ya te digo como negativo pues veo eso, que me ha faltado tiempo para conocerlos a todos y que ahora llega el punto en que diría yo ‘me gustaría seguir, me gustaría conocer más a la gente y eso’.*

F1: Lo que pasa es que sois un grupo muy grande (P3: *Claro*), de 30 personas había una media de 24 personas por clase, casi siempre 4 o 5 faltaban por trabajo, por sus razones, pero un grupo tan grande es muy raro en un curso de posgrado.

*P3: Ya, y al ser tantas personas llega el momento en el que dices 'me estoy llevando muy bien con la gente y estoy aprendiendo muchísimo de cada uno que quiero, seguir, que nos tenemos que ir', y es por esto que no me gustaría que se acabara aquí la cosa.*

*P15: En primer lugar agradecer a todos vosotros porque me ha encantado conocer a todos y he estado súper a gusto, me he sentido libre en todo momento de hablar de uno mismo, que muchas veces es muy difícil, y he conocido gente encantadora, por ejemplo con las personas con que hice grupo estuve genial, increíble, y luego me ha aparecido fundamental por ejemplo la presencia de personas trans en el curso porque me ha parecido imprescindible, o sea, lo necesitábamos totalmente (F1: Opino lo mismo), yo por lo menos lo necesitaba. (F1: No quisiera otra vez que las personas trans fueran marginadas, más de lo que ya lo están en la sociedad, porque los cursos en general en todo el mundo, hemos visto en 'It's Elementary', es verdad que es de los años '90, pero las personas trans no salen). Y luego todo lo que me ha podido remover este curso para todas partes y que me ha hecho armarme un poco de cara a mi círculo más cercano, y lo voy a hacer, me voy a abrir. Y como negativo lo que ha dicho Kim y otra participante, que luego a mí me da mucha pena porque salgo y me encuentro un muro que le dices esto y le cuentas cosas súper bonitas y humanas, y para la gente es como '¡Uff, eso hasta que llegue!', y no ven que en ello puede estar el cambio, no lo ven, hay un muro ahí enorme. ¡Y muchas gracias!*

*P13: Podría decir que lo positivo y lo negativo es un poco lo mismo para mí, o sea, cómo me hace sentir, las cosas que estoy sintiendo, quiero decir, o sea, cuando han terminado las cosas que he visto o que he conocido en el curso me he sentido muy mal, me ha hecho sentir muy mal la discriminación, como se han podido sentir determinadas personas y es verdad que hay veces después de ver el documental, después de hablar de determinadas cosas o que gente pudiera contar su experiencia en las clases, pues que me he ido a mi casa jodido, salido mal; que me removi6 un mont6n esa sensaci6n de que todavía al día de hoy haya esa discriminaci6n, que haya gente que se pueda sentir que le haga sentir mal otras personas y luego también en ese sentido esos sentimientos para mí creo que son positivos o sea que es como una mezcla porque son sentimientos y hay que concienciarse. Yo estoy trabajando también de profe y bueno, pues, sabes, intentar también acoplar todas estas cosas a mi profesi6n. Entonces eso, yo creo que para mí lo negativo es cómo me he podido sentir en determinadas ocasiones, pero creo que luego desemboca en algo positivo. (F1: Estupendo, gracias).*

*P6: Yo lo que he dicho durante todo el curso, que he pasado por un mont6n de etapas. Yo la lectura que hago es totalmente positiva, si no me hubiera sentido tan mal algunas veces no estaría en el punto que estoy ahora, y sigo avanzando (F1: Y ahora no estás nada mal), no estoy estupenda. (Risas generales). Pues muy bien, lo veo totalmente positivo. Para mí que no haya habido tanta teoría y más práctica también muy positivo porque así lo he entendido mejor y la parte negativa del curso por mis circunstancias me he tenido que ir como la Cenicienta a la hora en punto y me he ido a veces con la sensaci6n de que se quedaba lo más bonito del debate que se estaba concluyendo.*

F1: Es lo que decimos antes que a veces el tiempo nos se escapaba. Porque claro cuando empieza un debate y estamos todas las personas metidas y ya es la hora para algunas personas de irse, y pasa más a menudo en una clase grande.

Os quiero dar las gracias porque no solamente ha sido un curso exitoso en todos los aspectos, sino he conocido también a personas maravillosas y sin vosotros y vosotras y vosotres el curso no habría sido lo mismo. Yo creo que hemos aprendido de una a otra y vuestra presencia ha sido fundamental, a veces antes de comenzar el curso me pregunto, y Kim también, '¿qué tipo de persona vendrá? A lo mejor viene que puede ser un poco en contra, que nos puede poner pegas'. Porque a veces hay personas que no saben lo que se encuentra y después, me pasó también en el curso anterior, sí que les gusta, porque el ambiente, porque se habla con toda tranquilidad y porque cada persona puede decir lo que quiera. Así que quiero daros las gracias porque vuestras presentaciones han sido fenomenales y nada, creo que ahora podemos abrazarnos, ¿no? (Aplausos generales).