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Dennis Francis is a Professor and currently, the Dean of Education at the University of Free State. Prof. Francis is also an Honorary Professor of Education at the University of the KwaZulu-Natal. He holds a PhD in Sociology and teaches in the fields of Social Justice Education and Sexuality Education. He has published extensively in the areas of education for social justice and sexuality education. He has published the edited collection Acting on Sexuality and HIV: Using Drama to Create Possibilities for Change. Dennis is a National Research Foundation rated researcher.
SEXUALITY, SOCIETY & PEDAGOGY

DENNIS A. FRANCIS
EDITOR

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Editorial

Sexuality, Society and Pedagogy

Dennis A. Francis

Concerns about high HIV prevalence and other sexually transmitted diseases amongst 15-24 year olds (Khoza, 2004; Shisana et al., 2009; UNAIDS, 2012), the dropping age of sexual debut (Bhana, 2009; Hartnell, 2005; Jewkes, Levin, Mbananga, & Bradshaw, 2002; Manzini, 2001; Richter, 1996; Shisana et al., 2009), increase and highest incidence of sexual violence in the world (Abrahams et al., 2009) and the persistent high rates of teenage pregnancies (Department of Health, 2004; Jewkes, Morrell, & Christofides, 2009; Panday, Makiwane, Ranchod, & Letsoalo, 2009; Shisana et al., 2009) is an indication of the high incidence of youth involvement in sex. By the age of 17, half of all teenagers are sexually active (Jewkes et al., 2009; Khoza, 2004). Earlier sexual debut and such high pregnancy and infection rates show that many teenagers are not only having sex, but that they are not adequately protecting themselves against undesired pregnancies and disease. The high HIV prevalence rate, dropping age of sexual debut, high rates of teenage pregnancies and increase in sexual violence are all linked to structural factors such as poverty (Campbell & MacPhail, 2002; Leclerc-Madlala, 2002), migration (Fleisch, 2008) and gender inequalities (Campbell & MacPhail, 2002; Moletsane, Morrell, Unterhalter, & Epstein, 2002; Morrell, 2003).

Many people view sexuality and HIV education programmes as a partial solution to these problems (Kirby, Laris, & Rorelli, 2007). Virtually all young people attend school before engaging in sexual intercourse and this makes schools well placed intervention sites in the context of HIV and AIDS (Badcock, 2002; Kirby, 2008). In South Africa, schools have become important intervention sites in response to the HIV/AIDS pandemic. In 1997, the Department of Education introduced Life Orientation as part of curriculum 2005 and is compulsory for all learners (Department of Basic Education, 2011:8). HIV and sexuality education are integrated into the Life Orientation (LO) curriculum mainly under the heading of Personal Well-being which is designed to account for 17% or eleven out of the sixty-six LO contact hours that the Grade 10’s and 11’s have prescribed for the academic year (Department of Education, 2011:9). However, based on research with LO teachers the time allocated to sexuality education vary and individual schools have their own
curricula and timetabling priorities (Francis & DePalma, 2013). Teachers are given a considerable amount of responsibility and autonomy in respect of implementation of the LO sex education programme, which means that in practice approach and pedagogy vary considerably.

The Department of Education clearly has a central role to play in responding to the social crisis I have outlined at the beginning of this editorial. Despite the good intentions of the Ministry of Education in integrating sexuality and HIV/AIDS education in the school curriculum, questions have been raised about the preparation of teachers to deliver sexuality education. Many writers (Baxen, 2008; Francis, 2011; Helleve et al., 2011; Rooth, 2005) have pointed out that LO teachers in most South African schools lack uniformity of training and come from a diverse range of fields which do not always adequately equip them to deliver sexuality education confidently and effectively. Life Orientation teachers have diverse professional preparation backgrounds including guidance, religious education, physical education, home economics, languages and the social sciences (Baxen, 2008; Rooth, 2005). Rooth (2005), in her study on LO teachers, points out that, “on further questioning, being a qualified or a specialist Life Orientation educator had varied meanings, ranging from attending a three-day HIV and AIDS course or a two-hour Life Orientation workshop, to being an ex-guidance, ex-religion or ex-physical education educator” (Rooth, 2005:235-236). Many of the teachers are assigned the responsibility to teach LO when they are short of a full teaching load, or, in some cases, they may volunteer for the job (Baxen, 2008). Teacher confidence in this area depends on their level of knowledge on the topics, attendance at workshops, personal comfort with the topic, clarity regarding the messages being communicated, a belief in what was being taught and support from colleagues (Ahmed et al., 2009:51). These are strongly related to teacher’s content and pedagogical knowledge and experience, which are low due to LO being a new learning area.

Understanding the social aspects of the teaching and learning of sexuality education is one of the most rapidly expanding fields of research internationally and in South Africa. *Sexuality, Society and Pedagogy* problematises some of the prevailing assumptions that frame this area of study. In doing so, it aims to make visible the challenges of teaching sexuality education in South African schools while demonstrating its potential for reshaping our conceptions of the social and cultural representations thereof. Although the book is largely situated in experiences and perspectives within the South African context, it is hoped that the questions raised, reflections, analyses and arguments will contribute to thinking about sexuality education in diverse contexts, in particular more developing contexts.

The book is divided into four main sections, offering (1) Context of the teaching of sexuality education in South Africa; (2) Teacher identity and teaching of sexuality education; (3) Curriculum and pedagogy; and (4) Sexuality education and its implications for teacher education and research.

**Context of the teaching of sexuality education**

In this section, Dennis Francis reviews the literature on sex education and examines it in relation to South Africa and educational policies that guide sex education in schools. He organises the chapter around three questions: (a) What do youth need from sexuality education? (b) Are schools an
appropriate environment for sex education? (c) If schools are an appropriate environment, what can be said about the content of sex education as well as pedagogy surrounding it? He argues that in order to effectively meet the needs of youth, the content of sexual health programmes needs to span the whole spectrum of discourses, from disease to desire. Within this spectrum, youth should be constructed as “knowers” as opposed to innocent in relation to sex. He concludes with implications for practice.

Teacher identity and the teaching of sexuality education

Section Two includes chapters by Jean Baxen and Lesley Wood; Jacqui Naidoo; and Renee DePalma and Dennis Francis. The first chapter by Jean Baxen and Lesley Wood raise the question: What is effective HIV and AIDS education in initial teacher education programmes? The qualitative enquiry reported in their chapter attempts to answer this by drawing on data gathered over a three-year period from teachers in two provinces in South Africa about their experiences as HIV and AIDS educators. The findings indicate that teachers experience tensions between what they are supposed to be teaching and the cultural, social and personal experiences that have shaped and continue to impact their own personal and professional identities. The consequences of such tensions lead to a didactic, factual (often biological or medical) approach to HIV education that not only ignores social, cultural and personal contexts teachers could draw on to make meaning of the consequences and behaviour change implications, but also undermines what teachers are able to include in the pedagogical process. Based on these findings, they make suggestions for the development of curriculum and pedagogical engagement that might better equip teachers for teaching in this age of AIDS.

Jaqueline Naidoo, in her chapter entitled, “Subjectivities and emotionality in HIV/AIDS teaching”, explores how subjectivities and emotionality of teachers are inextricably linked with their teaching of HIV and AIDS education. Despite conflicting debates around the role of teachers and schools in HIV and AIDS education, the study aimed to explore the complexities and challenges facing teachers in mitigating HIV and AIDS education. The broad question explored was: How do teachers’ subjectivities and emotionality influence their teaching of HIV and AIDS education? Data were gathered from timelines, semi-structured interviews, classroom observations, and scenario analysis from five teachers in three primary schools in KwaZulu-Natal. The co-constructed narratives of the teachers were analysed using a holistic content analysis to uncover clusters of meanings: diverse lives, multiple subjectivities; subjectivities and teaching; HIV and AIDS knowledge and teaching; and emotions, feelings and cultural complexities.

In “Letting our commitments rest on the shelf: Teaching about sexual diversity in South African schools”, Renee De Palma and Dennis Francis explore how teachers construct their responsibility for teaching about sexual diversity. In order to explain the arguments teachers construct around the address of LGBT issues in the classroom, they have chosen to focus on four key authoritative discourses that teachers draw upon as they construct their personal and professional positioning with respect to teaching about sexual diversity: scientific, religious, legislative, and policy. On the whole, teachers described very little practice involving sexual diversity. Nevertheless, based
on their moral convictions that were rooted in broader religious, scientific, and legal discourses, teachers formulated various approaches to teaching about homosexuality. Our results suggest that the South African legislative discourse is a powerful, yet underutilised tool for teaching about sexual diversity. Depalma and Francis conclude that teachers should be helped to understand the legislative framework in which they live and teach, and engage in reflection and debate about how this authority interacts with the other authoritative discourses relevant to their professional lives to guide their classroom practice.

Curriculum and pedagogy

This section begins with Jennifer Brown and David Dickinson’s chapter “Sex Education in a Coloured South African Township – Social Challenges and Pedagogical Opportunities”. The authors explore sex education within the context of the Life Orientation curriculum in a Coloured township school in Eldorado Park, Johannesburg, South Africa. They demonstrate how the content of the curriculum may be well structured and relevant to the students’ lives but that this is not fully executed in the lessons themselves, given the rote-teaching methods observed. They also explore the relationship between the teacher and students in the classroom and argue that the interaction between Life Orientation teachers and students allows the learners, especially young women, a voice which is omitted from the lesson. The chapter concludes that Life Orientation has the potential to mitigate against the problems in the learners’ lives but that this needs to be facilitated through a more open acknowledgement of actual pedagogic practices in and outside formal Life Orientation classes, as well as through comprehensive support from the state and the wider community.

Ronicka Mudaly’s chapter draws on autobiographical curriculum theory and curriculum as consciousness, to explore how Life Sciences teachers periodically reinforce and rupture disciplinary boundaries, as they utilise pedagogic strategies to deliver a new curriculum to innovate. Mudaly engages with the question how do teachers teach sexuality education and HIV & AIDS in the Life Sciences classroom? Three themes are discussed, namely, knowledge where, knowledge how, and knowledge why, as they relate to teachers’ decisions which inform their pedagogic choices to incorporate sexuality education and HIV & AIDS into their lessons. Teachers trouble the notion of valuable teaching and meaningful learning by working as intentionally conscious practitioners, as they champion change using the school as the terrain in the struggle against HIV & AIDS. The chapter ends by reflecting on how teachers, who work from a plane of consciousness, are enabled to be fully awakened to learners’ lives and requirements, in the context of HIV & AIDS and young peoples’ sexuality.

Cheryl Potgieter and Finn Reygan in their chapter “Representations of LGBTI identities in textbooks and the development of anti-homophobia materials and a training module” attempt to bridge the knowledge-practice gap in terms of teaching about LGBTI identities. Potgieter and Reygan show that, despite the focus of the Department of Education on social justice and LGBTI identities, there is a paucity of LGBTI-affirming teaching materials as well as a lack of training for educators in the area. They found that, while there were some meaningful representations of LGBTI identities in
Life Orientation textbooks, constructions and representations of these identities were more often problematic. Given the lack of training in the area for educators, Potgieter and Reygan also outline the consultative process with stakeholders through which they developed an anti-homophobia and LGBTI-affirming training module for educators. The authors conclude that much has yet to be done to challenge the exclusion of LGBTI learners in South African schools and to fully include LGBTI learners’ particular “ways of knowing”.

Paul Chappell in his chapter, “Troubling the socialisation of the sexual identities of youth with disabilities: Lessons for sexuality and HIV pedagogy”, shows that the discourse of disabled sexuality has also been subject to the same ahistorical and apolitical disregard. He argues that popular notions of disabled sexuality have usually focused around a medical paradigm that privileges ablebodiness and situate people with disabilities as asexual and sexually innocent. As a result of these negative truisms, it therefore comes as no surprise that youth with disabilities are generally invisible in relation to sexual pedagogy and research. This not only draws attention away from the sexual agency of people with disabilities, but also from the socio-cultural meanings of disability, sexual identity and desirability. In this chapter, Chappell explores how societal stereotypes of disabled sexuality impact on the socialisation of the sexual identities of youth with disabilities. It also contends that the invisibility of disabled “voice” in sexuality pedagogy places disabled youth at greater risk of sexual exploitation and HIV infection. By troubling the discourse of sexual innocence, this chapter calls for a recognition of disabled youth as sexual beings and makes key recommendations for a comprehensive sexuality curriculum that responds to learners with diverse identities.

Implications for teacher education and research

In this final section, Rob Pattman explores how qualitative research with young women and men in South Africa can contribute to good pedagogic practices in sexuality education. The idea that young people are sexual beings provides a point of connection with educational initiatives which advocate “participatory” pedagogies such as Life Orientation which was introduced into South Africa (and other sub-Saharan African countries) in response to the perceived failure of didactic teaching approaches (whether these focused on giving information or moralised about young people having sex) to stem the tide of infection. Pattman argues for forms of qualitative research, which take the research encounter or event as an important social context, which affects and influences how research participants present themselves and what they say. He discusses the implications of doing critically reflexive qualitative research, which pays close attention to the relational dynamics of the research encounters, for doing analysis and also for working with young people in sexuality education.

Gabriel Hoosein Kahn concludes this section and edition by drawing on his work as an activist and facilitator working for Gay and Lesbian Memory in Action (GALA). He explores the use of interactive drama (the Queer Jozi Tour), in engaging young people to reflect on queer sexuality. The Queer Jozi Tour is an interactive drama workshop, which works with young people to dramatise historical narratives of queer experience in Johannesburg. His analysis focuses on one of the
workshops and is based upon his own written reflections, workshop plans, workshop feedback forms and debriefing sessions with co-facilitators. He unpacks two critical questions: (1) What possibilities does this technique offer to young people in reflecting about queer sexuality? and (2) How useful is Boal’s pedagogies in engaging students to talk about queer sexuality? In answering these questions, Kahn explores the ways in which interactive drama can dislocate heterosexist assemblages and through dislocating these assemblages, offer opportunities for critical reflection on sexuality and society.

References


Sexuality education in South Africa

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Sex education is the cornerstone on which most HIV and AIDS prevention programmes rest and thus the high HIV and AIDS prevalence rates amongst 14 – 24-year-olds has added urgency to the issue of sex education in South Africa (Pettifor et al., 2004). This urgency is reflected in South African education policies such as the Department of Education (2000) document, “The HIV and AIDS Emergency: Guidelines for Educators”, which impresses on educators their role in informing youth about HIV and AIDS and sexuality. However, much focus has been on what youth know rather than on developing an understanding of the deeply discursive situated contexts where they come to know. Baxen and Breidlid (2004) remind us, 

In asking different sets of questions, researchers might come to develop deeper understandings of why, in the midst of readily available information about HIV and AIDS, youth still find themselves unable to negotiate safe-sex practices and why teachers are still challenged in teaching about HIV and AIDS.

In this chapter, I review the literature on sex education and examine it in relation to South Africa and educational policies that guide sex education in schools. I have organised the chapter around three questions: (a) What do youth need from sexuality education? (b) Is school an appropriate environment for sex education? (c) If schools are an appropriate environment, what can be said about the content of sex education as well as pedagogy surrounding it? Using the existing body of evidence, I argue that in order to effectively meet the needs of youth, the content of sexual health programmes needs to span the whole spectrum of discourses, from disease to desire. Within this spectrum, youth should be constructed as “knowers” as opposed to innocent in relation to sex. In addition, any discussion of content needs to reflect on how content is delivered in order to provide an overview of how sex education exists in practice. In the final section, the focus is on implications for practice.

In terms of policy, HIV and AIDS and sexuality are a key content area in Life Orientation (LO), a programme that was introduced as a learning area in South African schools in the late 1990s...
SEXUALITY, SOCIETY & PEDAGOGY

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