

The Transgressive Potential of a Discourse of Erotics in Sex Education:

*A Critical Analysis of the Long Live Love (2013) Program in Consideration of
how to Disrupt the Heterosexual Matrix within High Schools in the Netherlands*



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Introduction

Contextual Positioning

Sex education classes in high school are typically the first instance of official information young people encounter about sexuality, health and sexual identity. This is a pivotal and formative introduction into the construction of what young people recognise as valid and legitimate identities within school institutions. Visibility within sex education curriculum works to normalise some expressions of gender and sexuality and marginalise others. It has been widely demonstrated that schools frequently engage in ongoing exclusionary processes which produce normative standards. These processes of regulation are embedded within routine practices of traditions, facilities, curriculum content, classroom habits and the general day-to-day life of schools.

Schooling institutions can be understood as reflecting the broader societal norms which police expressions of gender and sexuality that deviate from the heterosexual norm. Homophobic bullying within schools can be considered a manifestation of gender policing and regulation which produces gender and sexual inequalities (Formby, p. 631). It has been demonstrated that gender non-conforming, queer and trans students face higher rates of harassment and repudiation within school institutions than students who comply to normative standards of gender and sexuality expression (Frohard-Dourlent, p. 64). The presence of gender non-conforming, queer and trans students has been considered to reveal the limiting assumptions of heteronormativity which function within school instructions. As this has the potential to destabilise the hegemonic power, these non-normative expressions face social policing in the form of bullying, marginalisation and erasure (Frohard-Dourlent, p. 64).

A growing body of scholarship continues to document the heightened rates of poorer outcomes in mental and physical health and education in LGBTQ+ students in comparison to their heterosexual peers (Snapp et al., p. 580). Studies have noted the potential impact of bullying on LGBTQ+ young peoples' mental and emotional well-being and school engagement. In particular, highlighting the continued effects this has on subsequent educational attainment and employment/promotion opportunities (Formby, p. 627). As such, there has been surmounting research engaging with schools' roles in creating safe and supporting environments for LGBTQ+ students, striving towards enabling an equal environment for their development and contribution within schooling institutions.

The intrinsically formative role schools have in effecting young peoples' development is obvious. It is imperative to consider ways in which LGBTQ+ young people can obtain equal opportunities within schools and feel supported and empowered in their development. I consider sex education curriculum to be a significant place for the experiences of LGBTQ+ young people to be made visible in complex, nuanced and equal ways. This visibility can work to disrupt the function of heteronormative limits within high schools which regulate the expressions of gender and sexuality young people consider to be valid and possible. As such, engaging with a diverse range of gender and sexuality expressions transgresses the hegemonic norm and works towards creating an environment where all expressions of gender and sexuality are recognised as equal and legitimate.

This contextual positioning informs my research into the regulatory role of high schools as informing the expression of gender and sexuality which young people deem possible and valid. The regulation of heteronormativity in high schools works to marginalise and erase experiences of LGBTQ+ young people who do not recognise themselves within the positions offered in sex education curriculums. I seek to consider how sex education can be developed to be more inclusive of experiences of LGBTQ+ young people in an attempt to transgress normative limits which impose upon the identities young people consider legitimate within the school environment.

Sex Education in High Schools in the Netherlands

This research seeks to consider the way experiences of LGBTQ+ young people can be made visible within sex education curriculums in an attempt to disrupt the perpetuation of heteronormativity in high schools. As I engage with making non-normative identity expressions visible in sex education programs, I work with the term LGBTQ+ to consider expressions of gender and sexuality outside of gender normative heterosexuality. I resist boxing young people into identity categories, but similarly I realise the potentially empowering experience of identifying with a category and feeling connected to a community and visible within that. In this sense, I include LGBTQ for the purpose of visibility, and I consider the + to include any expression of gender or sexuality that resists identifying with categories.

I frame my understanding of heteronormativity as shaped by the heterosexual matrix which informs standards of gender intelligibility (Butler 1990). The heterosexual matrix has normalised expressions of gender and sexuality over time to create a hegemonic standard.

That being, biological sex determining gender expression and desire (for the opposite sex). The heterosexual matrix positions heteronormative bodies and desires as natural which works to regulate all expressions beyond this as deviant, invalid and invisible. The heterosexual matrix aims to maintain concepts of sex, gender and sexuality as stable and coherent categories. These categories are considered markers of identity which constitute personhood. Consequently, when a person expresses gender in ways which fail to confirm to the norms of cultural intelligibility, their very personhood is called into question (Butler, p. 17). In this way, the heterosexual matrix regulates which bodies are granted personhood based upon their adherence to current standards of gender intelligibility. Subsequently, queer expressions of gender and sexuality are positioned as invalid and deviant. Within sex education, the heterosexual matrix informs standards of gender intelligibility which regulates the representations of gender and sexuality that are made visible within the curriculum. Normative assumptions are reinforced and expressions outside of this continue to be marginalised, oppressed and policed.

I will conduct a literature review of scholarship in the field of sex education to inform my discursive understanding of high schools regulating students' expression of gender and sexuality. I will consider the normative standard reproduced in sex education curriculum influencing which gender and sexuality identities young people deem possible and valid. I will argue that a lack of representation of bodies outside of the heterosexual norm reinforces the hegemonic power of heterosexuality, and similarly limits all expressions other than this as deviant and invalid. This treatment of non-normative expressions of sexuality and gender works to marginalise students who do not comply with the heterosexual mould, and as such reinforces inequalities within school environments, whereby deviations of the assumed norm are oppressed or erased. This impacts upon the way young people explore expressing their sexual and gender identity and similarly how they respond to others whose expression may differ from their own.

I am informed by a queer engagement with identity categories as I consider the differences among people as opposed to the differences among categories of people (Pinar, p. 23). I consider identity categories to be partial, temporal and fluid and resist reproducing ideas of a homogenous and universal category. I seek to make the heterosexual matrix visible and subsequently, open for critique.

I will work with a critical discourse analysis of the Long Live Love (LLL) program in the Netherlands as a case study to demonstrate how the heterosexual matrix functions in high schools to regulate young peoples' expressions of gender and sexuality. I draw upon scholarship from high schools in Canada, the United States of America, the United Kingdom, Australasia and the Netherlands to consider how heteronormativity is perpetuated in high schools and demonstrate ways to potentially disrupt this. I consider this range of scholarship applicable for my specific engagement in the Netherlands based upon two similarities within these high school environments: (1) the prioritization of learning pursuits of the mind rather than the engaging with the body and (2) the schools regulation of young peoples' sexuality and gender expression. My analysis of the LLL program will consider the ways heteronormativity is perpetuated in high schools and similarly consider ways to transgress this.

Long Live Love is a national sex education curriculum developed in the Netherlands "from a lengthy needs-assessment process, including focus groups, interviews, and surveys with students and teachers" (Ferguson, Knijn & Vanwesenbeeck, p. 101). The program was developed over three years by a collaboration of Rutgers, SO AIDS, Maastricht University and the GGD. The program was first implemented in 1993 and has since been revised multiple times to include a stronger focus on cultural and gender diversity. I am working with the 2013 English version of the program, designed for students aged 13-15 years old.

My decision to focus on this particular program in the Netherlands is informed by the similar discursive positioning of traditional high schools in affluent western countries. Education of the mind is prioritised over information of sexual bodies, which informs the way teachers approach the topic and the amount of time designated to its engagement. I am interested in the ways in which the Netherlands cultural attitude of a progressive and liberal engagement with sex, manifests in the LLL sex education program which is developed independent of high schools, but intended to be implemented within them. I will consider the transgressive potential of this independent program to disrupt the reproduction of heteronormativity within high schools in the Netherlands.

I will consider how a discourse of erotics can be developed into the program to make non-normative expressions of sexual and gender identity visible within high schools, and how this can resist reproducing limiting assumptions of heteronormativity within school environments. A discourse of erotics as conceptualised by Louisa Allen and Moira Carmody (2012) moves

away from typical prevention focused sex education to recognise and respond to young people as sexual agents. A discourse of erotics offers information relevant to young peoples' sexual subjectivities by engaging with discussions of pleasure and desire, and acknowledging the positive aspects of sexuality. Pleasure and desire are discussed as temporal and fluid. Within a discourse of erotics, pleasure is positioned broadly in an attempt to avoid standardisation and regulation of what constitutes pleasure. The transgressive potential of pleasure is realised through avoiding standardisation, which means any individual can constitute pleasure any way they wish. By resisting reducing pleasure to a normative mould, pleasure remains temporal, partial, free and personal.

Similarly, desire is demonstrated to have the potential to 'unhook' young people from identities which assume a particular response based upon gender or sexual identity (Allen & Carmody, p. 463). Exploring experiences of pleasure without framing them in gender and sexuality categories is a way to position desire and pleasure as fluid and temporal, and not delineating a gender or sexuality identity. A discourse of erotics can also be considered within a queer framework as rejecting the reproduction of identity categories and similarly critiquing the assumed natural status of heterosexual desires. In this way, a discourse of erotics moves beyond identity categories and engages explicitly with expressions outside of the heterosexual norm, as a way to highlight the limitations of such categories and similarly critique the assumed natural status of heterosexuality. The analysis of the LLL program will reveal the ability of a discourse of erotics to transgress gender and sexual categories which disrupts the logic of heteronormativity. Similarly, making experiences of LGBTQ+ young people visible works to expand upon the expressions young people deem valid and possible, and challenge the hegemonic power of heterosexuality.

This research engages with the material of the LLL program as a starting point for demonstrating how a discourse of erotics could be included in sex education, and how this could respond to the needs of students. Within the scope of this study it was not feasible to directly engagement with young people to respond to the specific needs of a particular group. I will argue that for sex education to be most effective, there must be space to respond to the needs outlined by the students themselves. Without direct contact with a specific group of young people I recognise it is not possible to respond to the intersections of difference within a particular group of students, such as cultural or religious experiences. This must be considered when engaging with a sex education program within a schooling context. This research incorporates considerations of young people who identify with feelings of A-

sexuality by positioning feelings of pleasure and desire as a possible experience rather than the assumed norm. In this way, I hope to avoid producing a normative standard for feelings of pleasure or desire. Discussions of young people with intersex variations have not been engaged with in this particular study, however it is recognised that this is an important inclusion for future developments of a discourse of erotics within sex education, in an attempt to further disrupt standards of heteronormativity within high schools.

Research Questions

In this research I seek to consider how a discourse of erotics can be developed within the Long Live Love program to disrupt the perpetuation of heteronormativity within high schools in the Netherlands. I will explore:

How do schools function to regulate young peoples' expressions of sexuality and gender?

How can a discourse of erotics be utilized to resist reproducing heteronormativity within high schools in the Netherlands?

How can the transgressive potential of a discourse of erotics reveal the limitations of identity categories?

Theory and Methodology

I will engage with Judith Butler's canonical text *Gender Trouble* (1990) to frame my research within a post-structuralist understanding of gender performativity. This post-structuralist understanding of gender identifies the socially constructed nature of gender expression and reveals there to be no homogenous group of 'woman' or 'man', as established in previous feminist considerations. This engagement with the social and historical processes which construct norms of gender expression informs my understanding of gender and sexuality categories to be temporal, fluid and partial. Such an understanding of identity categories will be considered as a way of disrupting normative expectations that shape young peoples' expression of gender and sexuality in a high school environment.

Butler suggests that categories of woman or man work to regulate and reinforce ideas of gender expression in binary terms. This logic limits the possibilities for people to explore and express their gender and as such, creates a regulatory norm for people to position themselves within. Instead, Butler considers the construction of gender as a relational process specific to historical and cultural contexts. In this sense, gender is not a single fixed attribute but is rather a malleable variable which responds to various contexts and times. Within this understanding Butler rejects the logic that equates biological sex with gender expression and informing desire. By rejecting this supposed link, Butler considers gender and desire to be free-floating and fluid expressions that are not determined by biological sex and therefore, remain open to contextual influences.

In my research I am focusing on disrupting the logic that links biological sex to gender expression and desire, as materialised in sex education curriculum. As such, I work with *Gender Trouble* to engage with Butler's initial critique of fixed binary assumptions of gender expression. In *Bodies that Matter* (1993) Butler makes a further consideration of the social and political practices which construct heterosexuality as the hegemonic mould, as she engages with ritualised socialisation that (re)produces gendered norms. While this text is similarly applicable for my current study, I choose to frame my work within the theory of gender intelligibility as constructed in *Gender Trouble*, as I am looking specifically at the process of linking biological sex to gender expression and desire and considering the possible ways to disrupt it.

In *Gender Trouble* Butler positions gender expression as the “repeated stylization of the body, a set of repeated acts within a highly rigid regulatory frame that congeal over time to produce the appearance of substance, of a natural sort of being” (Butler, p. 33). This understanding of gender rejects an essentialist logic that considers gender as a stable concept defined in relation to biological sex. Through revealing the contextual and stylised nature of gender, Butler renders cultural gender as separate from biological sex, suggesting the expression of gender is a cultural product related to a specific context, as opposed to an inherent expression of a preconceived identity. In this sense, cultural gender can be understood as an expression of gender identity which is informed by specific historical and social rituals that constitute a certain gender identity at a certain time.

Butler rejects the connection of biological sex (male/female) as determining gender (feminine/masculine), which in turn shapes desire (for the opposite sex). By positioning gender as independent from biological sex, this system of lineage is disrupted which enables gender and desire to be considered in new ways that have the potential to transgress a normative mould. As Butler states, “when the constructed status of gender is theorized as radically independent of sex, gender itself becomes a free-floating artifice”. Once gender is understood as independent from sex, gendered norms are challenged, as such “*man* and *masculine* might just as easily signify a female body as a male one, and *woman* and *feminine* a male body as easily as a female one” (Butler, p. 7). When gender and desire are considered as independent from biological sex, it is possible to explore these expressions in ways which transgress normative limits. In this way, expressions of gender and desire can be understood as fluid, relational and partial. This understanding of temporality challenges notions of fixed and universal identity categories. Thereby, gender and sexuality are considered to be uniquely informed by social, cultural and historical contexts; as such the impossibility of a stable homogenous identity category is exposed.

Butler reveals that certain cultural configurations of gender expression have been positioned as ‘natural’ within the current historical context and as such, have hegemonic power. The hegemonic expressions are those which adhere to the logic that biological sex determines gender and shapes desire. Butler reveals the cultural matrix which makes gender identity intelligible, and suggests that this matrix requires “that certain kinds of “identities” cannot “exist”- that is, those in which gender does not follow from sex and those in which the practices of desire do not “follow” from either sex or gender” (Butler, p. 17). Within this cultural matrix, heteronormative bodies and desires become naturalized. Their status as the

norm works to regulate expressions of gender, sexuality and desire that fall outside of this hegemonic framework. Through positioning heterosexuality as the natural expression, the matrix similarly positions all expressions that differ from this as invalid, deviant and invisible.

The matrix is built around heterosexuality and seeks to maintain concepts of sex, gender and sexuality as stable and coherent categories. These categories are used as markers of identity which constitute personhood. Butler suggests that when individuals express gender in “incoherent” or “discontinuous” ways which fail to conform to the norms of cultural intelligibility that define a person, “the very notion of “the person” is called into question” (Butler, p. 17). The heterosexual matrix works to regulate which gendered bodies are considered persons, based upon their adherence to current standards of cultural gendered intelligibility. As such, queer expressions of gender and sexualities are positioned as invalid and deviant. Queer in this sense stipulates expressions of gender and sexuality which are outside of the heterosexual norm, such as same-sex desires and expressions of gender in ways which differ from assigned biological sex. However, the very fact that gender identities exist beyond these norms of intelligibility exposes the limitations of the matrix. This exposure critiques the matrix and creates space for potential subversion and disruption.

I will consider this theory of gender intelligibility within the discourse of sex education, as I seek to expose ways in which this matrix of heterosexuality informs high school spaces in the Netherlands. I will engage with scholarship that considers the similarities between traditional western, affluent, high schools as institutions that prioritize pursuits of the mind, and regulate young peoples’ expression of gender and sexuality. I will consider this regulation materialising through which representations of gender and sexuality are granted visibility, and how normative assumptions are embedded within sex education curriculum. I will narrow my considerations to engage with a particular case study of the Long Live Love (LLL) program. The LLL program was developed originally in Dutch in the Netherlands 23 years ago in collaboration with a variety of health and sexuality and educational institutions. The program has since received multiple developments and an English version was released in 2013. The LLL program focuses on themes of sexuality and relationships and is aimed at students aged 13-15 years old and is implemented in high schools all over the Netherlands. A focus on this program will consider how the specific cultural attitude of an open, progressive and liberal engagement with sex makes this an applicable context for the inclusion of a discourse of erotics in sex education. A discourse of erotics will be considered as a way to

challenge the heterosexual matrix that functions within schools which positions biological sex as determining gender and sexuality.

A discourse of erotics in sex education will be examined as revealing the limitations of gender and sexuality categories by encouraging young people to consider pleasure and desire as fluid, partial and free-floating. By considering the fluidity of pleasure and desire young people are encouraged to think beyond identity categories that assume desire dictates sexuality. A consequence of this is recognising desire and gender to be unique and partial and thus, the limits of a universal, homogenous identity category are revealed. By engaging with heterosexual desires within the broader spectrum of all desires, heterosexuality loses its hegemonic position as the assumed fixed and natural state. A discourse of erotics will be examined as challenging the heterosexual matrix which shapes gender intelligibility as functioning within high schools in the Netherlands.

I will draw upon Butler's theory of gender performativity and the heterosexual matrix to inform my analysis of the LLL program. I consider gender to be a free-floating category in the sense that it is relational to specific cultural, historical and social processes of identity constitution. In this way gender expression must be understood within specific contexts and cannot be considered as a homogenous or universal category. This engagement with gender works to disrupt the heterosexual matrix that assumes biological sex to determine gender and inform desire.

Through an analysis of the LLL program I will consider the instability of gender and sexuality categories. I draw upon queer theory to emphasise "multiple identities and multiplicity in general" as I engage with how "categories themselves are created, sustained, and undone" (Pascoe, p. 11). C.J Pascoe's critical engagement with sexuality regulation in high school environments informs my understanding of high schools as discursive regulatory spaces. Pascoe's book *'Dude, You're a Fag': Masculinity and Sexuality in High School* (2007) depicts the results of a one-year ethnographic study revealing the routine ways masculinity is performed, constructed and policed in a public high school in California. Pascoe reveals interactions, discourses and social traditions such as prom, sports and drama to inform the contemporary construction of masculinity and inequality within high school environments. I seek to consider the ways high schools regulate young people's expression of gender and sexuality. As such, in my analysis of the LLL program I seek to "make the taken-for-granted explicit" (Pascoe, p. 10) through highlighting the naturalization of

heteronormativity in high schools in the Netherlands. I will consider how the naturalization of heteronormativity works to impact upon the expressions of gender and sexuality young people deem valid and possible.

In *Queer Theory in Education* (2012) (ed. Pinar) a collection of scholarship engages with homophobia and heterosexism and aims to expand upon the visibility of queer experiences in education. 'Queer' is used as a temporary coalition between people who identify as gay and lesbian, in an attempt to create a common place from which to consider intellectual, political and pedagogical interventions into education. The series of work aims to open discussions of identity and identity politics from various points of view, in the hope that a queer discourse in education remains profoundly conversational (Pinar, p. 3), in this sense the discourse seeks to be open, responsive and multiple.

In the introduction William Pinar considers how a queer curriculum might materialise. Pinar suggests that within a queer curriculum, differences among people are considered rather than differences among categories of people (Pinar, p. 23). A queer curriculum engages with sexuality and identity as relations rather than objects and enables space to explore the complex, intertwined experiences of this. I consider his suggestions for a queer curriculum as I analyse the LLL program, and highlight how elements of a queer curriculum have the potential to disrupt heteronormative assumptions within sex education in the Netherlands.

This approach transcends identity categories that seek to position people in relational, homogenous groups and rather considers the multitudes of complex intersections of difference among people. This understanding of acknowledging difference and moving beyond categories can be applied to moving beyond the heterosexual matrix. I will analyse the LLL program as a case study to consider how gender and sexuality categories function in sex education to regulate and shape young peoples' identity expression. Engaging with difference in a way which transcends categories will be examined as a possible mechanism for disrupting the heterosexual matrix in high schools.

Similarly, Pinar highlights how a queer curriculum may engage with matters of desire, pleasure and sexuality and explore how to "interrupt our understandings of these" (Pinar, p. 23). I frame this interruption as engaging with pleasure and desire as temporal and fluid which challenges the linkage of sex to gender and desire. Pinar states that "[a] queer curriculum creates forms where the heterosexual matrix is made visible, available for interpretation and critique" (Pinar, p. 23). I will examine the way queer experiences can be

made visible within the LLL program as a way to highlight the limits of normative assumptions and create space for critique. Making the heterosexual matrix visible and open for critique creates space for young people to understand themselves beyond normative limits and begin to explore the complex and nuanced expressions of gender and sexuality.

Within Pinar's consideration of a queer curriculum, I explore how a discourse of erotics can be developed into the LLL program to destabilise normative links between sex, gender and desire, which in turn challenges the standards of gender intelligibility which function in high schools. Through a discourse of erotics, feelings of pleasure and desire are considered to be temporal and fluid. In this sense, desire is no longer figured in relation to biological sex and gender expression. Gender and sexuality are considered to be free-floating and flexible thereby disrupting the logic of the heterosexual matrix which positions biological sex to determine gender and desire. As such, a discourse of erotics opens up transgressive space for young people to express themselves beyond normative limits. Similarly, making experiences of LGBTQ+ young people visible in the LLL program would open up a range of expressions that were previously unacknowledged, and would suggest heterosexuality to be one expression amongst many rather than the natural norm.

I begin my research with a critical analysis of the perpetuation of heteronormativity in high schools by engaging with a literature review, primarily from scholarship within the journal *Sex Education*. *Sex Education* is published by Taylor and Francis from 2001 to the present date with six issues per year and is one of the leading international journals in the field. I choose to engage with this journal as its cross cultural interdisciplinary engagement with sex education is relevant to my approach, as I consider the similarities embedded in high school institutions in western, affluent Anglophone countries. The journal publishes on all aspects of sex, sexuality, sex and relationship education and considers the diverse contexts sex education takes place; such as the roles of the school, the home, the media and the broader community. *Sex Education* publishes contributions from various academic disciplines such as education, cultural and media studies and sociology. Consequently, the journal includes both quantitative and qualitative studies, as well as historical and theoretical analyses.

I choose to engage with articles based upon their consideration of high schools as spaces which regulate gender and sexuality expression, and examine how this produces and polices a normative standard. Similarly I engage with scholarship which explores how discussions of pleasure and desire within sex education can disrupt normative standards through revealing

limitations of identity categories. I draw upon scholarship from high schools in Canada, the United States of America, the United Kingdom, Australasia and the Netherlands. I consider this work applicable for my specific engagement in the Netherlands based upon two similarities within these high school environments: (1) the prioritization of learning pursuits of the mind rather than the body and (2) the schools regulation of young peoples' sexuality and gender expression. The scholarship within this journal combines various methods, contexts and disciplines to provide a rich discursive illustration of the recent developments and engagements within the field of sex education. I will critically engage with this literature to shape my understanding of the ways in which the heterosexual matrix functions in high schools to inform standards of gender intelligibility, which impacts upon the expressions of gender and sexuality young people deem possible and valid.

Within this literature review I will engage with an academic dialogue to consider how young people are positioned within sex education in a way which assumes a heterosexual subject. I will consider scholarship which explores how language, visibility and normative assumptions position young peoples' sexual subjectivity. This positioning will be revealed to regulate a normative standard which provides limiting space for young people to identify within. I am informed by scholarship in the field as I examine how this normative positioning marginalises young people who do not recognise themselves within this mould. I will consider how this works to regulate the expressions of gender and sexuality young people deem possible and valid. Engaging with a literature review informs my approach of a critical discourse analysis of the LLL program, as I consider how a discourse of erotics can be developed into the program to disrupt the heterosexual matrix which functions within high schools in the Netherlands.

When considering a discourse of erotics as termed by Louisa Allen I work in dialogue with the scholarship of Michelle Fine (1988) and Louisa Allen (2001, 2004, 2005, 2006, 2007, 2008 and 2012). Fine's influential essay 'Sexuality, schooling, and adolescent females: the missing discourse of desire' (1988) explores the potential of a discourse of desire to be implemented in sex education in high schools in the US in 1988. Although dated, her work is considered a foundational piece for the development of the potential positive effects of including a discourse of desire within sex education in high schools. Her work must be read as a product of its historical and social context and it lacks an intersectional perspective when considering the lived realities of young people. As such, I am informed by Allen's

contemporary development of Fine's concept, as she expands upon it to be inclusive of gender non-conforming and queer young people. Allen develops the concept into a 'discourse of erotics' which considers the potential of pleasure and also desire within a sex education curriculum. I examine how Allen has expanded upon the initial ideas of Fine and consider how engaging in a dialogue with these works can inform my understanding of schools as institutions which prioritise purists of the mind over the body and likewise, regulate student bodies within a heterosexual matrix which informs standards of gender intelligibility.

Ultimately, this interdisciplinary engagement with literature in the field of sex education will eventuate into a critical discourse analysis of the LLL program. I will work with Norman Fairclough's (2013) understanding of a critical discourse analysis as "not just analysis of discourse...it is part of some form of systematic transdisciplinary analysis of relations between discourse and other elements of the social process" (Fairclough, p. 10). I will apply this form of analysis to the six lesson outlines in the 2013 English version teaching guide of the LLL program. The teachers' guide outlines the objectivities, themes and activities within each of the six lessons and provides step-by-step instructions and discussion points for the teachers to use in the delivery of the program. An analysis of the teacher's guide will engage with the themes and content of the LLL program as stipulated by the instructions for the programs implementation.

I will be informed by the scholarship from the literature review in order to consider elements of the broader social process which effect the function of this program within the discursive space of high school institutions. I will use a "detailed textual analysis" (Fairclough, p. 8) to consider how the program works in relation to the heteronormative matrix within high schools in the Netherlands. The analysis will include considering the positioning of young peoples' sexual subjectivity by examining regulatory practices embedded within the program. Regulatory practices will be examined as materialising in assumptions, language and visibility. I will consider how the program's assumption of gender and sexuality as stable and fixed categories is informed by the heterosexual matrix. Language will be examined as a way of positioning representations of bodies and identity expressions as positive or negative, possible or impossible. Similarly language informs the visibility that is available for certain gender and sexuality expressions. I will consider how this visibility works within gender intelligibility to shape the expressions young people deem possible and valid.

Applying a critical discourse analysis to the case study of the LLL program will examine how the heterosexual matrix functions in sex education in high schools in the Netherlands. The analysis will consider how standards of gender intelligibility privilege some expressions as normal and visible and others as invalid and invisible. This analysis will reveal the regulatory effect this has on young people exploring and expressing their sexual and gender identity. From this recognition of regulatory practices it is possible to deconstruct these systems and offer alternative ways of engaging with gender and sexuality which transgress normative limits. Enabling young people to explore their identity beyond normative limits is vital in making experiences of LGBTQ+ young people visible and destabilising the heteronormative hierarchy. Increased visibility of diverse identities expands upon the expressions young people deem possible and legitimate, which in turn challenges the assumed hegemonic power of heterosexuality.

Within this analysis I will consider how a discourse of erotics could be developed into the LLL program as a vehicle for engaging with categories of sexuality and gender as fluid, partial and unique. This queer engagement with categories can make visible and challenge the heterosexual matrix and open transgressive space for young people to explore and express their gender and sexual identities.

Chapter 1: High School Spaces as Regulating Heteronormativity

1.1. An introduction to Heteronormativity in High Schools

In this research I consider how the heterosexual matrix of gender intelligibility works within high school institutions. I will examine how sex education regulates normative standards by positioning biological sex to determine gender and desire. I will consider how this works to naturalise heterosexuality and as such, regulate the gender and sexuality identities young people deem possible and valid. I will engage with the LLL program as a case study to analyse the ways in which heteronormative assumptions work within a sex education program. I will similarly consider ways in which the program can be expanded to include a discourse of erotics which works to disrupt heteronormativity within high schools in the Netherlands.

I will argue that a lack of representation of bodies outside of the heterosexual norm reinforces the hegemonic power of heterosexuality, and similarly limits all expressions other than this as deviant and invalid. This treatment of non-normative expressions of sexuality and gender works to marginalise students who do not comply with the heterosexual mould, and as such reinforces inequalities within school environments, whereby deviations of the assumed norm are oppressed or erased. This impacts upon the way young people explore expressing their sexual and gender identity and similarly how they respond to others whose expression may differ from their own.

I suggest that making identities that are outside of the heterosexual norm visible will offer young people more ways to express themselves which are acknowledged and accepted within their schooling institution. I seek to engage with gender and sexuality identities as fluid and partial and disrupt the essentialist logic that positions biological sex as determining gender and sexuality. I am informed by a queer understanding of categories to consider all identity categories as partial and temporal. This will challenge the assumed natural state of heterosexuality and resist reproducing identity categories as universal or homogenous. A queer engagement with gender and sexuality categories will inform my analysis of the LLL program as I consider ways to disrupt the heterosexual matrix in high schools. As previously outlined, I work with the term LGBTQ+ to consider expressions of gender and sexuality outside of gender-conforming heterosexuality.

I will engage Michelle Fine's influential essay 'Sexuality, schooling, and adolescent females: the missing discourse of desire' (1988) and the subsequent contemporary development from Louisa Allen, as I consider the potential of a discourse of erotics to disrupt assumed heterosexuality within high schools. Allen's work is situated in Australasia from 2001 to present. She engages with the broader context of high schools in affluent western Anglophone countries to consider the regulatory systems in high schools that function to position young people in certain ways. Allen considers the controversy surrounding young peoples' sexuality as informing traditional approaches to sex education in high schools. The controversy is figured by the engagement with bodies and sexualities in schooling institutions, which are typically considered to focus on education of the mind. Considering this mind and body tension, Allen states "a dominant view of the function of schooling in anglophone countries is that education of the mind is a priority and that issues of sexuality and the body are a distraction to be managed" (Allen, 2005, p. 223).

This dominant view that positions schooling institutions as primarily focusing on education of the mind, is applicable to high schools in the Netherlands also. This understanding of mind/body tensions within high school institutions impacts upon the way sex education is delivered and approached. Rebecca M. Ferguson, Trudie Knijn and Ine Vanwesenbeeck (2008) engage with sex education in the Netherlands and suggest "with numerous subjects competing for attention, sexuality education often gets reduced to just a few lessons focused on teaching what are regarded as the basics: biological aspects of reproduction and safe sex" (Ferguson, Knijn & Vanwesenbeeck, p. 103). In this way, sex education in high schools in the Netherlands is considered to be a lower priority than other subjects in the curriculum. As such, it is the sex education program which is reduced in favour of dedicating the time to the traditional subjects which are in line with education of the mind.

It is the similarities in the discursive positioning of sex education in high schools in affluent, western countries which informs my decision to engage with Allen's work in Australasia, within the context of the LLL program in the Netherlands. The two main similarities I am working with are; (1) the prioritisation of pursuits of the mind, and (2) schools regulatory influence on young peoples' expression of gender and sexuality. I will apply this understanding of the regulatory effects of high schools to the specific context of the Netherlands, which will be explored as possessing open and progressive attitudes to sex. These particular cultural attitudes inform my decision to engage with the LLL program as an

applicable site for the inclusion of a discourse of erotics, which will work to challenge the heterosexual matrix as functioning within high schools in the Netherlands.

1.2. Sex Education in High Schools' in the Netherlands

I consider the specific context of sex education in the Netherlands delivered through the LLL program as I examine how the heterosexual matrix functions within high schools to regulate the gender and sexuality identities young people deem possible. Within my analysis of the program I will consider the potential of including a discourse of erotics to disrupt the perpetuation of heteronormativity in high schools in the Netherlands.

My decision to focus on the Netherlands is informed by the similarities of the discursive positioning of traditional high schools in affluent western countries. Education of the mind is prioritised over information of sexual bodies, which informs the way teachers approach the topic and the amount of time designated to its engagement. I am interested in the ways in which the Netherlands cultural attitude of a progressive and liberal engagement with sex, manifests in the sex education curriculums which are developed independent of high schools, but intended to be implemented within them, such as the LLL program. I will consider how making LGBTQ+ experiences visible in the program can disrupt the (re)production of heteronormativity within high schools in the Netherlands. A discourse of erotics will be examined as a way to engage with identity categories as partial and fluid and thus, challenge the heterosexual matrix which links biological sex to gender and desire.

Rebecca Ferguson, Trudie Knijn and Ine Vanwesenbeeck (2008) draw upon a previous study by Weaver, Smith and Kippax to explore the link between sex education policy and adolescent sexual health in the Netherlands, the United States, France and Australia. The study noted the Netherlands in particular to be 'sex positive', as it "accepts adolescent sexuality and teaches youth about sexual responsibility" (Ferguson, Knijn & Vanwesenbeeck, p. 93). This is an example of the cultural specifics which inform my decision to engage with the Netherlands. I believe it is this acceptance of youth sexuality which positions the Netherlands as an enabling environment for an inclusion of a discourse of erotics, as the first step of recognising young people as sexual agents is already achieved. In the upcoming sections I will examine the tension surrounding recognising young people as sexual agents and how this informs high school approaches to sex education.

The Dutch approach to sex education is focused around a message of safe sex which recognises young people as sexual agents and supports their development of sexual

responsibility (Ferguson, Knijn & Vanwesenbeeck, p. 100). This message is characterized by pragmatically responding to young peoples' sexual agency by highlighting birth control as the best protection against pregnancy, and condom use as the best protection against STI's. The overall recommendation is "if you have sex, use a condom and the pill together" (Ferguson, Knijn & Vanwesenbeeck, p. 100), a method commonly referred to as 'Double Dutch'. While this message responds to the prevention of STI's and adolescent pregnancies, it similarly "normalizes and accepts adolescent sexuality" (Ferguson, Knijn & Vanwesenbeeck, p. 104). Through assuming contraception use, adolescent sexuality is positioned as less 'risky' or problematic within Dutch culture. By presenting topics of sexual health and responsibility in a positive light, young peoples' sexual feelings are normalised rather than positioned as shameful (Ferguson, Knijn & Vanwesenbeeck, p. 104).

This message differs from the traditional prevention focus in most sex education programs, as this 'positive' approach recognises the sexual agency of young people and responds to this with pragmatic options for maintaining a healthy practice. A typical prevention focus includes providing biased information revolving around the potential negative aspects of sexuality, such as STIs and adolescent pregnancy. The prevention focus neglects to respond to young peoples' sexual agency through omitting any discussion about the potential positive aspects of sexuality that they might explore. As such, young people are presented biased information based upon what adults deem necessary, as opposed to responding to the information young people request. I will engage more thoroughly with the function of the prevention focus in the upcoming sections.

Similarly, a comparison study between sex education within the Netherlands and England (Lewis and Knijn 2011) concluded that "while Dutch and English sex education covered similar topics, Dutch materials were more comprehensive and classroom discussions in The Netherlands were more open" (Ferguson, Knijn & Vanwesenbeeck, p. 94). This highlights the similarities between sex education in affluent western countries, as the foundational topics covered are alike. However, it also indicates the unique position of the Netherlands. Comprehensive discussions and an 'open' attitude to sexuality are elements of the positive approach in the Netherlands towards sex education. Within the sex positive approach, young peoples' sexual agency is recognised and responded to with relevant material, rather than educators providing biased information in an attempt to regulate young peoples' sexuality.

An example of the positive approach in sex education in the Netherlands is the portrayal of masturbation “as a normal activity for which a young person should not be ashamed” (Ferguson, Knijn & Vanwesenbeeck, p. 100). This understanding acknowledges young peoples’ sexuality and recognises the pleasurable and positive aspects of sexuality. It is this recognition of the positive aspects of sexuality which highlights the difference in the approaches to sex education in the Netherlands and other affluent Anglophone western countries, and informs my decision to engage with the Netherlands in particular.

Recognising young people as sexual agents must also involve allowing discursive space for that agency to be explored, without reproducing normative limits of how and what that sexual subjectivity should be. Through the analysis of the LLL program I consider how pleasure and desire can be further included to create space for young people to explore their sexual subjectivity. Acknowledging young people as sexual agents creates an enabling environment for their explorations of sexual subjectivity, which can move beyond normative standards and encourage young people to consider their gender and sexuality as free-floating and partial, unrestricted by biological sex.

The approach to sex education in the Netherlands can be considered within a rights-based approach, as it “emerges from an understanding that young people are curious about sex and sexuality and that they need, want, and have a right to accurate and comprehensive information about sexual health” (Ferguson, Knijn & Vanwesenbeeck, p. 102). Recognising young peoples’ right to accurate and comprehensive information is a vital step away from biased, preventative focused sex education. Acknowledging the rights of young people recognises them as sexual agents. Responding to young peoples’ sexual agency enables sex education to offer information that the young people deem relevant, which opens up possibilities for discussions of pleasure and desire. Similarly, within a rights-based approach, all expressions of sexuality and gender must be considered and specific information on sexual health or support resources for LGBTQ+ young people made available.

Considering the similarities between sex educations in affluent, western traditional high schools, I explore how the dominant focus on sexual health outcomes has “lead to a general absence of pleasure in most sex and relationships education worldwide” (Ferguson, Knijn & Vanwesenbeeck, p. 104, citing Ingham 2005). This research will consider how the specific context of the Netherlands and the positive and open approach to sex education as depicted in the LLL program, positions this as an enabling environment for the inclusion of a discourse

of erotics. A discourse of erotics will engage with discussions of pleasure and desire to reveal gender and sexuality to be fluid and temporal. This will in turn transgress the logic of the heterosexual matrix which assumes biological sex to determine gender and sexuality and regulates young peoples' identity expression in high schools in the Netherlands.

1.3. *The Long Live Love Program*

The LLL program is a national sex education curriculum developed in the Netherlands "from a lengthy needs-assessment process, including focus groups, interviews, and surveys with students and teachers" (Ferguson, Knijn & Vanwesenbeeck, p. 101). The program was developed over three years by a collaboration of Rutgers, SO AIDS, Maastricht University and the GGD. The program was first implemented in 1993 and has since been revised multiple times to include a stronger focus on cultural and gender diversity. I am working with the 2013 English version of the program, designed for students aged 13-15 years old.

Evaluations of the program and its revisions indicate "a positive impact on student knowledge, attitudes, beliefs, and intention for condom use" (Ferguson, Knijn & Vanwesenbeeck, p. 102). Since the revision of a stronger focus on cultural and gender diversity, the evaluation reports "a greater increase in knowledge, more liberal attitudes toward homosexuality, and increased ability to communicate their sexual wishes and boundaries" (Ferguson, Knijn & Vanwesenbeeck, p. 102). The ongoing development reveals the program to be versatile and adaptable to identified social and cultural needs.

As the program has already been developed to focus on including cultural and gender diversity, I consider the program to be receptive to a further development of a discourse of erotics, as a way to heighten visibility for non-normative expressions of gender and sexuality. It is promising to see the program developing towards cultural and gender diversity with results indicating a more 'liberal' attitude towards homosexuality. This positions the current program to be an appropriate foundation through which non-normative expressions of gender and sexuality can be further included. The programs flexibility in response to cultural developments shows the potential for a further intervention to disrupt perpetuating heteronormativity within high schools.

Safe sex is the central message of the program and one of the main goals "is to increase young peoples' competence to ensure that sexual experiences are safe, mutual, and pleasurable" (Ferguson, Knijn & Vanwesenbeeck, p. 101). This recognition of pleasure within sex education is indicative of the sex positive approach of the LLL program. I seek to

examine how this inclusion of pleasure can be further developed in correlation with discussions of desire, to make LGBTQ+ experiences visible and disrupt the perpetuation of the heterosexual matrix functioning within high schools.

While this Dutch sex education program provides an enabling foundation for further explorations of the potential for an erotics discourse, it is not without its limits. Municipal health departments train teachers how to use the program on a regional basis; as such, the implementation of the program may differ between municipalities, trainers and teachers. Likewise, as previously noted it is common for teachers to reduce the scope of sex education material. As numerous subjects compete for attention within the school curriculum, sex education is often the first to be reduced (Ferguson, Knijn & Vanwesenbeeck, p. 103). Within these compressed sessions often not all topics are covered, which impacts upon the effectivity of school-based sex education. In order for the LLL program to be most effective it is vital that the lessons are delivered in sequence and the program is completed in its entirety. Each lesson builds upon the main themes of relationships and sexuality to enable a complex engagement with the topics, as such this sequential development is necessary for the program to be most effective.

Lisette Schutte et al. (2014) examine the multiple variables specifically effecting the implementation of the LLL program in high schools in the Netherlands. Schutte et al. highlight the effect of teacher curriculum-related beliefs influencing the implementation of the program. Within teacher curriculum-related beliefs are: perceived importance and feasibility of student learning outcomes, personal advantages the curriculum may have for the teacher, and the practicality of the program use (Schutte et al., p. 585). Teachers' personal attitudes can affect the implementation of the program, as can demographic variables such as gender, age, years of experience with the LLL program, school's religious affiliations and the class composition (Schutte et al., p. 587). Schutte et al. suggest the importance of training teachers and supporting them with knowledge and skills for the implementation of the LLL program as, "it has been shown that the provision of pre-implementation training increases the likelihood that teachers will implement the curriculum fully and with integrity" (Schutte et al., p. 587). A pre-implementing training can also influence the teacher's personal belief in the program and ultimately affect their implementation. Within the analysis of the LLL program I will consider how a discourse of erotics could be developed into the program. For this to be implemented effectively it is vital to expand the teacher training to stress the

importance of not skipping discussions of pleasure and desire, in favour of reinforcing the biological basics of traditional sex education.

The comprehensive and sex positive foundations of which the LLL sex education program is built upon presents an enabling environment for the integration of a discourse of erotics. I will consider how a discourse of erotics can expand upon recognising young peoples' sexual agency and including experiences of LGBTQ+ realities which reject reproducing heterosexuality as the norm. Creating visibility for diverse expressions of gender and sexuality can encourage young people to expand upon the identities they deem possible which transgresses normative standards of gender intelligibility.

1.4. *Heteronormativity in High Schools*

There has been extensive research documenting “how schools are constituted by an investment in ‘institutional value systems that privilege gender conformity and heterosexuality’... thus marginalising gender and sexual diversity” (Frohard-Dourlent, p. 64). The prevalence of gender conformity and heterosexuality within school institutions is manifested through reproducing “gender binaries in curriculum, pedagogy and school culture” (Dinkins & Englert, p. 393). These binaries assume gender confirming heterosexual students, which subsequently positions any deviation from this hegemonic framework as abnormal and invalid.

Elizabeth G. Dinkins and Patrick Englert (2015) consider heteronormative school environments in the US as contributing to the potential vulnerability and disengagement of LGBTQ+ students. They suggest “schools are enmeshed with heteronormative practices underscored by administrators, teachers and students” (Dinkins & Englert, p. 393). These heteronormative practices contribute to circulating limiting expressions of gender intelligibility which are considered valid and possible within the school environment.

Through reproducing a narrow range of acceptable gender and sexuality expressions, schools limit the identities that young people deem possible and as such, impact upon young peoples' identity expression.

Hélène Frohard-Dourlent (2016) considers the regulatory power of schools in British Columbia, Canada. She suggests that schools' institutional investment in gender and sexual conformity undoubtedly has ramifications for all students; however, “its effects are heightened for queer, trans and gender-nonconforming students, whose presence disrupts these systems by drawing attention to their assumptions” (Frohard-Dourlent, p. 64). Frohard-

Dourlent points to the regulatory systems in high schools which enforce gender and sexual conformity, and highlights educators' roles in reinforcing these systems. Regulatory practices of normativity are embedded within routine practices of traditions, facilities, curriculum content, classroom habits and the 'everyday life' of schools. Educators are implicated as naturalizing these discursive practices through allowing and disallowing certain behaviour. The constant repetition of these practices solidifies their position as the institutional norm, which works to regulate the constitution of people as intelligible in relation to this naturalised standard of gender and sexuality expression.

When high schools maintain heterosexuality as the norm "schools reflect a broader culture in which trans subjectivities are erased and repudiated" (Frohard-Dourlent, p. 64). By erasing experiences of trans and gender non-conforming students, schools feed into the heterosexual matrix that positions all non-normative expressions of gender and sexuality as invalid and unintelligible. In this sense, schools can be considered as reflecting the regulatory systems that function within broader societies which police expressions outside of the norm in a variety of systematic ways. Consequently, gender non-confirming and trans students "face higher rates of marginalisation and harassment in schools" (Frohard-Dourlent, p. 64), as their identity is constituted as deviant/ invalid in relation to the institutionally accepted norm. Considering high schools as institutions which reflect broader societal norms, scholars have argued that homophobic bullying within schools is a manifestation of gender policing and regulation that "reproduces gender and sexual inequalities" (Pascoe 2013, cited in Formby, p. 631).

Likewise, Eleanor Formby (2015) demonstrates the harmful effects of limiting engagement with LGBTQ+ experiences solely within bullying narratives. Formby states that reiterating this dominant narrative can "contribute to one-dimensional understandings of LGBT lives as only/either 'suffering' or 'resilient'" (Formby, p. 628). If schools position LGBTQ+ students only within bullying, victim or survivor narratives, the complex and nuanced realities of LGBTQ+ students are omitted. While the intention may be to educate students against homophobia, the engagement with narratives that focus on bullying can in practice contribute to the marginalisation of LGBTQ+ young people. Through offering limited visibility for LGBTQ+ students to recognise themselves within, LGBTQ+ students risk isolation and disengagement with school curriculum, as they feel their lived experience is not acknowledged within the school environment. Similarly, this reductive visibility does not

challenge heterosexuality as the assumed norm and as such works to reiterate its position as the natural state.

A holistic approach to deconstructing heteronormativity within schools must consider the multiple ways LGBTQ+ identities can be made visible in the curriculum, ensuring to explore complexities of LGBTQ+ lived realities. “LGBT identities should be visibly embedded within a curriculum that seeks to challenge all forms of oppression and normativity” (Formby, p. 637). Exploring varied realities of LGBTQ+ experiences offers students a more nuanced way to engage with these representations. In turn, this increased visibility could open space for the identities young people deem possible and valid, and as such work to destabilise the hegemonic power of heterosexuality.

Taking a queer approach to identity categories could also involve engaging with heterosexuality as an option, rather than an assumed norm. Working with the framework of gender intelligibility, I understand heteronormativity as formed by an essentialist logic that equates biological sex with gender identity and desire for the opposite sex. Butler considers this process to create a heterosexual matrix in which standards of gender intelligibility are produced. Through this process, heterosexuality is positioned as the ‘natural’ expression and as such, any expression outside of this is considered to be deviant and abnormal. High schools perpetuate the power of heterosexuality as the natural state by only making visible identity expressions that are within this normative standard. In an attempt to challenge this heteronormative standard schools must make explicitly visible expressions of gender and sexuality which transgress the normative mould. Making LGBTQ+ experiences visible across high school curriculums expands upon the identity expressions young people deem valid and possible.

An analysis of the LLL program will consider how discussions of pleasure and desire can explore the limits of identity categories and disrupt the logic that links biological sex to gender and sexuality, thus creating space for young people to transgress normative limits of identity expression. I will work with queer theory to inform my engagement with identity categories as partial and fluid and free from biological sex. From this position I will critique the assumed natural position of heterosexuality in order to disrupt the regulatory role of the heterosexual matrix within high schools in the Netherlands.

1.5. Regulation of Sexuality through the Positioning of the ‘Ideal’ Non-sexual Student

Louisa Allen researches extensively within the field of sexualities, sexual education, youth, gender and schooling. Her work is informed by feminist post-structuralism, queer theory and theories of embodiment and masculinities, and her primary focus is high schools in Australasia. My research will draw heavily upon Allen's work to inform my consideration of gender and sexuality regulation within school institutions and shape my engagement with a discourse of erotics. I consider her work with high schools in Australasia to be applicable for my specific focus on high schools in the Netherlands based upon two main similarities of high schools in these affluent, western, Anglophone countries. The main similarities I'm working with are the prioritisation of pursuits of the mind, and the regulation of young peoples' expression of gender and sexuality. I will consider these similarities as the backdrop for my engagement with high schools in the Netherlands, from which I examine the specific cultural attitudes towards sex and how this can be utilized to develop a discourse of erotics within the LLL program. I hope for this development to increase visibility for LGBTQ+ young people and disrupt the perpetuation of heteronormativity in high schools.

As mentioned previously, Allen suggests that a dominant view of the function of school institutions in Anglophone countries is that education of the mind is a priority and sexuality and the body are rather issues that distract from this purpose and as such, require institutional regulation (Allen, 2005, p. 223). Allen reiterates that within this framework, "students' bodies and the sexuality they imply are often ignored or perceived as in need of regulation" (Allen, 2008a, p. 570).

It is this 'regulation' of young peoples' sexuality which informs the prevention focus in sex education. The prevention focus considers young peoples' sexuality as a potential risk which needs to be managed. Schools are revealed as "risk-conscious spaces consumed with student safety, a role that shapes their approach to student sexuality and sexuality education" (Allen, 2007, p. 576). The risk management manifests through a prevention focused sex education, which stresses the possible negative consequences of sexuality, such as STI's and adolescent pregnancy. Within the prevention focus it is assumed that young peoples' sexuality is risky and requires adult intervention. In this way, young people are positioned as 'child like' and denied their sexual agency. Schools are thereby positioned as paternalistic institutions which must manage young peoples' 'problematic' sexuality.

Relating back to the specific context of the LLL program in the Netherlands, it is notable how the Dutch 'sex positive' approach moves beyond constituting young peoples' sexuality as

risky. Within the Dutch approach, young peoples' sexual agency is recognised and pragmatically responded to with information of contraception and protection which moves beyond the social stigma of young peoples' sexuality.

However, within the prevention focus, avoiding STI's and adolescent pregnancy is the primary engagement, while the positive and pleasurable aspects of sexuality are omitted. Limited and biased information is circulated in which "the school institutes a hierarchy of power where it becomes the 'substitute parent' determining what its 'child' can/can't do, should/should not know" (Allen, 2005, p. 228). This overriding authority rejects young people as sexually autonomous agents and subordinates their sexual agency. The prevention focus posits incomplete and biased information which may be inconsistent with young peoples' personal experience and understanding of their sexuality. "To feel that programme messages have relevance for them, young people need to recognise themselves in the meanings they offer" (Allen, 2005, p. 229). Through rejecting young peoples' sexual autonomy, a prevention focus risks disengaging young people from the sex education content, as there is a disparity between the messages offered and the relevance of their lived experience. Through denying a discussion of the embodiment or experiences of sexuality, desire and pleasure, young people are positioned as lacking the maturity to receive this information. "A discourse of protection denies young people a positioning as autonomous sexual subjects" (Allen, 2005, p. 226). Allen suggests that such a rejection of sexual autonomy constitutes young people as vulnerable and in need of protection, as opposed to offering an empowering understanding of their sexual subjectivity. Providing biased information is inconsistent with empowering young people to make autonomous decisions in regards to their sexual health, and to view their sexuality positively.

Sexuality when linked with young people is considered risky as there "exists a normative and cultural ideal of [young people] being 'non-sexual'" (Allen, 2007, p. 576). Sex education within high schools negotiates the contradictory task of providing information for young people to engage in healthy sexual practices, while similarly attempting to position them as ideally non-sexual. Allen suggests strategies for positioning the non-sexual student are implemented through a sex education curriculum which lacks a discourse of pleasure, and revolves around an emphasis on the potential risks of sexual activity. A prevention-focused curriculum rejects the importance of discussions about pleasure and rather "posits young people as 'non-sexual' (or preferably non-sexual) by avoiding information that would deem them sexual subjects" (Allen, 2005, p. 228). Focusing on negative outcomes of sexual

activity is a way for schools to reconcile the contradiction of the ideal non-sexual student through providing information in a de-eroticised manner. The prevention focus omits positive aspects of sexuality as a way to deny young peoples' sexual subjectivity and position them as ideally non-sexual.

Similarly, heavily focusing on adolescent pregnancies within the prevention focus assumes heterosexual sex and marginalises the sexual experiences of LGBTQ+ students. "By addressing a heterosexual subject, these kinds of programmes perpetuate a heteronormativity that relegates same-sex attracted students to 'deviant' and 'other'" (Allen, 2007, p. 581). A prevention focus that assumes heterosexual sex perpetuates heteronormativity in high schools and denies specific information for LGBTQ+ youth. The analysis of the LLL program will consider the ways in which sexual health messages can be delivered to destabilise heterosexuality as the norm and to provide information which is inclusive and relevant for LGBTQ+ students. It is vital for young people to recognise themselves in the positions offered by program messages, as such, specific engagement with LGBTQ+ students' sexual health options must be included in order to avoid excluding them from the curriculum, and perpetuating heteronormativity within school environments.

Allen highlights the regulatory power of gender intelligibility functioning within prevention focused sex education in schools. The paternalistic and biased approach undermines young peoples' sexual agency and simultaneously limits the programs effectivity, as young people disengage with the content, not recognising their own sexual subjectivity within the messages. Similarly, assuming heterosexuality within the prevention focus reproduces heterosexuality as the dominant sexual norm which marginalises LGBTQ+ young people. This in turn further limits their engagement with the content and impacts upon the effectivity of the program. I consider the effectivity of the program to be the extent to which young people engage with the program's messages, which can be measured through rates of protection and contraception used (or intent of future use) by young people, and also questionnaires asking young people if they find the program messages useful in their lived experience. These are some of the methods used by Allen when she engages with the effectivity of sex education programs. For sex education programs to be most effective in this sense, it is vital that young people recognise the relevance of the messages in relation to their own lived experience.

1.6. Limitations of Reproductive Framings of Bodies

It is worth noting how bodies are positioned in reproductive terminology within sex education, and how this contributes to the heterosexual matrix operating within school institutions. Bodies become desexualised and de-eroticised through the placement within medicalized reproductive framings.

Allen (2004) considers how bodies are positioned in sex education in New Zealand: “images are often diagrammatic with emphasis placed on an internal view of organs as if the body had been dissected” (Allen, 2004, p. 155). This ‘dissection’ perspective works to separate the body parts from their pleasurable potential. There is little exploration of the responsiveness and sensuality of the organs as this internal focus on the body “serves to draw our attention away from its sensuality and place it firmly on its (reproductive) function” (Allen, 2004, p. 155). Rarely is the sexual potential of the organs considered. The effect of this biological reproductive framework is “to de-eroticize the body and disassociate it from embodied feelings of desire and pleasure” (Allen, 2004, p. 155). Ignoring the sexual potential of bodies is another way in which sex education constructs the ideal non-sexual student. By delivering sex education in de-eroticised ways, schooling institutions are able to reconcile the tension between delivering sexual health information while trying to maintain an ideal of a non-sexual student.

I pay particular attention to Kim Elliott’s (2003) text which considers the discursive construction of vaginas within sex education in New Zealand. Elliott suggests that:

A school’s ‘vaginal discourse’, the texts, images, and conversations that occur (or do not) in a school, influence young people’s perceptions. The ways that teachers instruct about the vagina, their delivery style and attitudes, define meanings of vagina for young people. (Elliott, p. 134)

Elliott reflects on the common practice of framing the vagina purely within reproductive terms which denies the exploration of the sites pleasurable potential. Limiting the vagina discourse to reproductive purposes implies “that it is a technical functional body part, to be understood purely in terms of ‘hard science’” (Elliott, p. 135). Examining vaginas exclusively within the reproductive process denies them as sexually pleasurable sites. This limiting positioning of vaginas within technical, biological terminology impacts the way young people conceive this part of the body, which affects how young people understand their bodies and sexual subjectivities. This reproductive framing of vaginas similarly narrows sex to

female/male penetration, which reinforces the heterosexual matrix and discounts all other expressions of sexuality.

A focus on reproductive sex can also impact upon what young people deem to be acceptable or respected forms of sex. If young people do not recognise themselves within these heterosexual procreative narratives, Elliott suggests “they will not as easily be able to explore and discover their own sexuality, as those who ‘fit’ into that model prescribed by school-endorsed text” (Elliott, p. 139). As schools endorse heterosexual reproductive sex as the norm, they regulate which expressions of gender and sexuality are deemed valid. If young people do not recognise themselves within the limiting narrative of sexual expression they are more likely to disengage with the material. This intersects with Allen’s (2005) suggestion that young people need to deem the curriculum content relevant to their personal experience in order for it to be effective.

Young people may feel excluded from the material if they do not ‘fit’ within the procreative, heterosexual narrative. This aligns with the heterosexual matrix functioning in high schools, which grants some forms of expression as intelligible and others as invalid. By positioning bodies and sexuality within heterosexual, procreative narratives, this is reproduced as the hegemonic norm and all expressions outside of this are considered invalid. Subsequently, this contributes to the marginalisation of LGBTQ+ young people within high school environments.

Elliott engages with the regulatory powers of high schools as implicated in “monitoring and shaping the bodies of young people” (Elliott, p. 134). Elliott reveals the body as “managed, disciplined and constructed by schools, as they participate in the regulation of bodies and expression” (Elliott, p. 134). The analysis of the LLL program will demonstrate ways to disrupt the regulatory power of schools in managing and constructing bodies and expressions within heteronormative standards. Elliott states it is vital for young people that “the messages they receive about their bodies, including the genitalia, reflect positive and inclusive discourses” (Elliott, p. 135). This research will inform my exploration of the ways in which a discourse of erotics within the LLL program can position bodies in positive and inclusive ways which reject heterosexual, procreative standards.

1.7. A Summary of Heteronormative Regulation in High Schools

Heterosexual norms are regulated in high schools through systems such as administration, traditions, gendered spaces and social regulation. Schools can be considered as

manifestations of a broader gender socialisation, wherein heterosexuality is reproduced as the unchallenged natural state and LGBTQ+ expressions are considered deviations from this norm. Within the school environment there are regulatory practices in place to ‘manage’ young peoples’ sexuality which is considered ‘risky’. Schooling institutions adopt a paternalistic approach to regulate young peoples’ sexuality by infantilizing young people and providing biased information that focuses on the negative effects of sexuality. This prevention focus in sex education is used to reconcile the tension between delivering sexual health information while avoiding the recognition of young peoples’ sexual subjectivity. Positioning young people as ideally non-sexual contradicts supporting their development of empowered and informed sexual agency.

Similarly, the prevention focus operates within a heteronormative framework which assumes heterosexual sex and as such marginalises LGBTQ+ young people. Framing bodies within biological reproductive terminology denies the pleasurable and sensual potential of bodies. This reproductive narrative contributes to the exclusion of LGBTQ+ young people within sex education curriculum and disrupts the effectivity of the program, as the young people do not recognise their sexual subjectivities in the narratives that are made visible. The prevention focus assumes heterosexuality which strengthens the heterosexual matrix that regulates validity of gender intelligibility, and marginalises experiences of LGBTQ+ young people.

Chapter 2: A Discourse of Erotics in Sex Education

2.1. An Introduction to a Discourse of Erotics in Sex Education

I will engage with the LLL program as a case study to consider the perpetuation of heteronormativity in high schools in the Netherlands, and explore the potential for a discourse of erotics to disrupt this. To frame my understanding of a discourse of erotics I will engage with Michelle Fine's influential essay 'Sexuality, schooling, and adolescent females: the missing discourse of desire' (1988). Within the field of sex education, Fine's essay is considered a canonical contribution which many contemporary ideas of pleasure and desire have been developed upon. Much of the work I engage with builds upon Fine's initial contribution; notably Louisa Allen expands upon Fine's work as she develops the ideas for a contemporary setting.

I will initially summarise Fine's theoretical positioning of a 'discourse of desire', which will demonstrate how this concept has developed over the last 30 years, and how it is still applicable to contemporary settings. Fine works explicitly within binary terms in her essay and solely engages with heterosexual sex. In the last 10 years, Allen has developed Fine's concept into a 'discourse of erotics', which expands the discussion to include gender non-conforming and queer young people. In this way Allen moves beyond binary categories of gender identity and includes LGBTQ+ young peoples' experiences of pleasure and desire.

As I analyse the LLL program I consider how to disrupt the reproduction of heteronormativity in high schools and as such I work with the more expansive term 'discourse of erotics' to include experiences of LGBTQ+ young people into the program. I aim for this inclusion to engage with pleasure and desire in ways which transgress heteronormative limits. A discourse of erotics can be utilised to encourage young people to express and explore pleasure and desire as unrestrained by rigid notions of gender and sexuality categories. In this sense, pleasure and desire are considered as disrupting the heterosexual matrix which functions to position biological sex as determining gender expression and informing sexuality. A queer engagement with identity categories will consider gender and sexuality to be partial and temporal. As such, desire does not necessitate a sexual identity, and identities remain free-floating and unique, unstrained to a universal, homogenous group.

I engage with the historical development of the inclusion of pleasure and desire in sex education to inform my approach about how a discourse of erotics could function within the LLL program. I use this combined theoretical background to situate my research explicitly within the Netherlands, aimed at students aged 13-15 years old. I engage with recent research in affluent, western Anglophone countries to consider various approaches to the inclusion of pleasure and desire within sex education. I believe this research is applicable to the Netherlands based upon two main similarities that (1) traditional western, affluent, Anglophone high schools are structured around the prioritization of the mind and (2) high school institutions regulate young peoples' expression of gender and sexuality. I use these structural similarities to consider how research situated in countries such as Canada, the United Kingdom, the United States of America and Australasia, can be related to the specific context of high schools in the Netherlands. I consider these similarities between high school institutions as enabling my engagement with cross cultural scholarship.

From this understanding of similarities between high school institutions, I consider the specific context of the Netherlands; in which cultural attitudes of open, positive and liberal engagements with sex, position this context as applicable for the further inclusion of pleasure and desire within sex education in high schools. The LLL program recognises young people as sexual agents and includes discussions of the positive aspects of sexuality. As such, this specific cultural context provides a strong foundation for a discourse of erotics to be included. A discourse of erotics will be argued to disrupt the matrix of heteronormativity in high schools which informs the expressions of gender and sexuality that young people deem possible and valid, thereby creating space to transgress limiting norms.

2.2. Michelle Fine's 'Discourse of Desire'

Fine's essay (1988) focuses on US public schools as she considers the context and framing of gender roles in terms of sexual subjectivity. Fine considers sex education in public schools in the US to operate in a number of ways which offer limiting options for expressing gender and sexuality. She suggests there exists: "(1) the authorized suppression of a discourse of female sexual desire; (2) the promotion of a discourse of female sexual victimization; and (3) the explicit privileging of married heterosexuality over other practices of sexuality" (Fine, p. 30).

Fine suggests young womens' sexuality is framed within the language of victimization, constituted through the encouragement to 'say no' to male sexual advances. In contrast, Fine argues that sex education in high schools in the US provides more engagement with male

sexuality, and positions this within active roles. Fine portrays dominant narratives within sex education as positioning young women to be devoid of sexual agency. She suggests sex education denies young women “the right to control their own sexuality by providing no access to a legitimate position of sexual subjectivity” (Fine, p. 36).

I engage with Fine’s work to consider how the denial of sexual subjectivity can be expanded beyond the experience of young women. Within the prevention focus in sex education, which is typical within western, affluent, Anglophone countries, young people are positioned as ideally non-sexual and as such, denied sexual agency. Fine considers how dominant narratives within sex education position young women as devoid of sexual subjectivity, positioning them in passive and receptive roles. I consider the similarities between contemporary narratives in the prevention focus, which deny young peoples’ sexual subjectivity and particularly exclude the experiences of LGBTQ+ young people. In this sense, I see the connection between denying young peoples’ sexual agency as a process of sexuality regulation. Within Fine’s example and similarly the contemporary prevention focus, high schools limit the visibility of sexuality expression by providing biased representations. This works to regulate the expressions of sexuality young people deem possible and valid. In Fine’s work, it was the rejection of female sexual agency, which positioned young women as passive and receptive. As I look at the contemporary prevention focus, it is the rejection of all young peoples’ sexual agency in an attempt to position them as ideally non-sexual, and within this positioning, reinforce standards of heteronormativity. Fine’s assertion that omitting young womens’ sexuality denies them as legitimate sexual agents echoes in Allen’s argument, which has been developed to stress the importance of recognising the sexual subjectivity of all young people, extending the discussion to include LGBTQ+ experiences.

Fine suggests a solution to the lack of sexual agency recognised in young women is the inclusion of a discourse of desire. She states:

A genuine discourse of desire would invite adolescents to explore what feels good and bad, desirable and undesirable, grounded in experiences, needs, and limits. Such a discourse would release females from a position of receptivity, enable an analysis of the dialectics of victimization and pleasure, and would pose female adolescents as subjects of sexuality, initiators as well as negotiators. (Fine, p. 33)

Fine stresses the importance of moving away from narratives which frame female sexuality in terms of passive receptivity or victimization. She highlights the potential of a discourse of

desire to empower young women to explore their sexual subjectivity. Fine argues that legitimizing sexual subjectivity is a necessary starting point for the empowerment of young women to explore their sexuality. This assertion can be expanded to consider the empowerment of all young people, regardless of how they express their gender. By encouraging young people to explore and communicate what feels good and bad, young people are empowered to be sexual agents who have their subjectivity recognised and supported through discussion in sex education. This could enable young people to positively explore pleasure and desire in an environment where unbiased information and resources are offered, and various sexual subjectivities outside of the heteronormative mould are acknowledged.

Fine considers how recognising young women's sexual agency can empower them with a sense of entitlement which may inform their sexual choices. Fine suggests that a sense of entitlement enables young women to negotiate their sexuality on their own terms and may contest feelings of coercion or pressure. Entitlement is often understood with negative connotations however, Fine uses the term to conceptualise a recognition of young women's right to sexual agency. In this way, entitlement becomes an expression of sexual rights. I similarly believe that recognising the sexual agency of all young people can work to foster a sense of entitlement which may equip them with the empowerment to negotiate and initiate sexual activity on their own terms. This concept can be applicable to young people regardless of their gender identity as it is an important step in the development of sexual subjectivities.

Fine considers what this development of entitlement could look like within a sex education curriculum:

By framing female subjectivity within the context of social entitlement, sex education would be organized around dialogue and critique, SBHCs would offer health services, options counseling, contraception, and abortion referrals, and the provision of real "life options" would include nontraditional vocational training programs and employment opportunities for adolescent females. (Fine, p. 47)

It is interesting to note here the traces of similarity between Fine's work on fostering a sense of sexual entitlement, and Allen's work on the prevention focus in sex education denying young peoples' sexual agency. Allen suggests that denying young people as sexual subjects positions them as 'at risk' and childlike, and sex education curriculum reinforces this by offering biased information which reproduces heterosexual norms. In the above quote, Fine

is similarly emphasizing the importance of recognising young womens' sexual agency in particular, and cultivating a sense of entitlement. Fine suggests that this framing of sex education would be organized around discussions, critiques, practical information about resources and alternative real 'life options' that recognise young women as sexual subjects, and respond to this agency with direct information. The commonality here is the practice of recognising young peoples' sexual agency through a development of sex education which presents honest, direct information and options. This empowerment of young peoples' sexual agency is applicable for all individuals beyond their gender expression.

Fine suggests that to empower young women as sexual subjects, educators must respond to "the meanings and experiences of gender and sexuality revealed by the adolescents themselves. When we refuse that responsibility, we prohibit an education which adolescents wholly need and deserve" (Fine, p. 36). Fine believes it is imperative to respond to the information that young people deem necessary for their own sexual subjectivities. It is possible to see here how this has informed Allen's work on making sex education relevant to young peoples' lived realities. As considered in the previous chapter, Allen suggests that sex education does a disservice to young people by not responding to their personal realities and neglecting to offer them the information they deem necessary (Allen, 2005). Through neglecting to recognise young people as sexual agents, and omitting information they consider relevant to their personal experience, young people disengage with the curriculum content, as they deem it incongruous with their personal experience of sexual subjectivity.

In the analysis of the LLL program I am informed by the work of Fine and Allen as I consider responding to the sexual agency of all young people, regardless of their gender or sexual identity. I will demonstrate how this can create an environment where all young people feel enabled to express and explore their identities. To achieve this, the material must engage with experiences of LGBTQ+ young people and offer specific information in terms of resources and support services available to them. As Fine works within binary terms and heterosexual desires in her 'discourse of desire', I consider Allen's 'discourse of erotics' to be more inclusive for LGBTQ+ young people. The analysis of the LLL program will demonstrate the ways in which a discourse of erotics can be included to disrupt the perpetuation of heteronormativity in high schools in the Netherlands.

2.3. Louisa Allen and Moira Carmody's Expansion of a 'Discourse of Erotics'

In “‘Pleasure has no passport’: revisiting the potential of pleasure in sexuality education”, Louisa Allen and Moira Carmody (2012) contribute a theoretical engagement to discussions of pleasure within sex education. They write from their specific cultural and disciplinary positions as two feminist critical sexuality researchers and educators, situated within Australasia. They engage with debates of a pleasure discourse that circulate in Anglophone, wealthy, capitalist countries. They seek to examine the potential possibilities and limits of working with a discourse of pleasure and desire, and highlight the need for pleasure to remain open to avoid reproducing compulsory heteronormativity.

Allen and Carmody propose:

the inclusion of a more expansive ‘discourse of erotics’, of which ‘desire’ and ‘pleasure’ both formed a part...this discourse aimed to be inclusive of groups that were not explicitly named in Fine’s work, such as gay, lesbian and bisexual students, those who are transgendered and young people with disabilities. (Allen & Carmody, p. 458)

Allen and Carmody build upon Fine’s initial framework to engage with the sexual subjectivities of all young people, beyond binary limits of gender or sexuality identity. They suggest that all young people have a right to experience sexual pleasure and desire, and feel empowered through the development of a sense of entitlement. It is this inclusive approach which informs my decision to engage with the discourse of erotics. Making LGBTQ+ experiences visible within high schools in the Netherlands is a strategy to disrupt the perpetuation of heteronormativity. Including diverse representations of identities expands upon the expression young people deem possible and valid. The analysis of the LLL program will demonstrate how LGBTQ+ experiences can be included in an attempt to challenge the heterosexual matrix that functions in high schools in the Netherlands and informs the standards of gender intelligibility.

Within a discourse of erotics, pleasure is positioned broadly in an attempt to avoid standardisation and regulation of what constitutes pleasure. It is this expansive and fluid use of the term which supports its transgressive potential. Pleasure is transgressive in the sense that avoiding standardisation means any individual can constitute pleasure any way they wish. By resisting reducing pleasure to a normative mould, pleasure remains temporal, partial, free and personal. This understanding of pleasure can contest narratives that seek to contain pleasure, such as heterosexual narratives that limit pleasure purely within vaginal

penetration. Within a discourse of erotics, pleasure is transgressive in the way that it is not linked to a particular area of the body, a particular act or a particular combination of people. In this way, every young person can engage with pleasure uniquely and can understand their experience of pleasure as valid, without attempting to reproduce a normative standard of what 'legitimate' pleasure is.

Through the analysis of the LLL program, I consider how a discourse of erotics can be developed in a way which avoids reproducing heteronormativity and responds to the varying sexual subjectivities of all young people. This will be demonstrated by engaging with pleasure and desire as fluid, temporal and unique. This framing will resist producing a standardised model of experience and similarly disrupt the heterosexual matrix which links biological sex to gender and desire. Thereby, same-sex desires will not be linked with constituting a queer sexual identity. Desires will be considered as free-floating and partial, which works to challenge the heterosexual matrix that assumes biological sex to determine gender and desire.

While engaging with discussions of pleasure and desire I am conscious of not assuming that all young people want or should want to experience these expressions. Assuming feelings of pleasure and desire to be the norm risks marginalising young people who don't relate to this and as such, would function to create a normative standard of pleasure and desire. To avoid this, I present desire and pleasure as possible expressions as opposed to the assumed 'normal' expressions.

Including discussions of pleasure and desire within a discourse of erotics in sex education recognises young people as sexual agents. Discussions of desire and pleasure "might also offer young people a more nuanced and complex understanding of themselves as gendered sexual subjects" (Allen & Carmody, p. 458). Allen and Carmody consider the way engaging with pleasure and desire can encourage young people to explore their sexual subjectivities in ways outside of dominant narratives. This may challenge ideas of active/passive sexual roles and make visible the previously neglected experiences of LGBTQ+ young people.

A discourse of erotics has the potential to consider pleasure and desire in complex and nuanced ways which move away from (re)producing gender and sexuality as static, universal categories. An exploration of desire and pleasure can depart from binary positionings altogether by recognising gender and sexuality as fluid, temporal and relational, and thus transgressing categorical binary logic. It is this transgressive potential of a discourse of

erotics which I seek to utilize to disrupt the heterosexual matrix as functioning within high schools in the Netherlands.

Elsewhere, Allen (2004) works with the idea of including a discourse of erotics within sex education programs in New Zealand. Allen reflects on how schooling institutions position young peoples' sexuality as something risky which needs management and regulation from the paternalistic position of the school. Within this framing, the prevention focus of sex education assumes sex is heterosexual and procreative. When sex education focuses on reproductive narratives, such as centring on the prevention of adolescent pregnancies, heterosexual intercourse is positioned as the only legitimate option.

Within the prevention focus, discussions of pleasure and desire are deemed excessive, as they move beyond managing the risk of young peoples' sexuality which is seen as the priority. Allen suggests that this treatment of young peoples' sexuality as 'risky business' produces a biased view in sex education which omits the potential positive aspects of sexuality, such as pleasure and desire. Including a discourse of erotics within sex education would create spaces for young peoples' sexual desires and pleasure to be "legitimated, positively integrated and deemed common place" (Allen, 2004, p. 152). Positively acknowledging young peoples' sexuality responds to young people as sexual agents, which has the potential to "bring sexuality education's messages in closer alignment with their interests and concerns" (Allen, 2004, p. 164). In this way, sex education can respond more directly to the lived experiences of young people, which has the potential for the messages to be more effective while also encouraging young people to positively explore and express their sexuality.

A discourse of erotics must also engage with young LGBTQ+ peoples' experiences of desire and pleasure in order to avoid contributing to "heteronormalizing techniques that render heterosexuality as 'normal' and 'homosexuality' as 'deviance'" (Allen, 2004, p. 153). As I explore ways to disrupt perpetuating heteronormativity in high schools, I consider how a discourse of erotics contains transgressive potential to move beyond normative gender and sexuality categories. This is realised through an exploration of pleasure and desire as fluid concepts, unattached to specific identity categories.

The analysis of the LLL program will explore the potential of including a discourse of erotics as a way to contest the perpetuation of heteronormativity in high schools in the Netherlands. The program is designed for 13-15 year olds and I recognise the tension of considering ways the program can be developed for the benefit of the students, without directly engaging with

the students the program is designed for. Within the scope of this study it is not feasible to engage directly with the students in order to tailor the development of a discourse of erotics in response to their outlined needs. In future studies perhaps this could be further explored. The LLL program has been devised and updated in response to lengthy needs assessment processes. As such, I will base my considerations of age appropriate content in relation to the choices made in the current program. I will focus on making LGBTQ+ experiences visible in multiple and nuanced ways throughout the program and engage with feelings of pleasure and desire as not necessitating an identity categories. I will consider how a discourse of erotics can move pleasure and desire out of heteronormative standards by discussing masturbation, same-sex desires, and no sexual desires, as all valid and legitimate experiences. I hope for the culmination of these considerations to make diverse expressions of gender and sexuality visible and challenge the heterosexual matrix which functions in high schools.

2.4. The Transgressive Potential of a Discourse of Erotics

As I demonstrate the ways a discourse of erotics could be developed into the LLL program, I engage with desire and pleasure as temporal and fluid expressions. I aim for this positioning to encourage young people to consider sexuality and gender as free-floating and unrelated to biological sexed identities. I hope to present young people with the possibility of exploring expressions of pleasure and desire without necessarily linking them with identity categories. By considering desire and pleasure as temporal and unique, the limitations of assuming desire determines sexual identity will be revealed. This works to disrupt the logic of the heterosexual matrix which links biological sex with gender and sexuality identity through fixed feelings of desire. Through revealing the limitations of identity categories I aim to encourage young people to feel comfortable exploring their sexual subjectivities outside of the normative mould. This engagement with desire and pleasure which contests categorical logic holds the transgressive potential of a discourse of erotics to disrupt heteronormativity within high schools.

In the text discussed above, Allen and Carmody suggest that discussions of pleasure and desire in sex education can have transformative effects for the identities that young people deem possible. They propose that discussions of pleasure and desire have the potential to ‘unhook’ young people from “confining identities which deem that they should have a particular sexual response or expression based on gendered and sexual identity” (Allen & Carmody, p. 463). This suggests that through engaging with pleasure and desire as temporal

and fluid, young people are enabled to reconsider the normative responses they 'should' have in relation to expressing gender and sexuality identities. A discourse of erotics opens up space to explore expressions beyond normative connections that position sex as determining gender and informing sexuality.

For example, a discourse of erotics in the LLL program could consider pleasurable sexual interaction between two females without necessarily labelling this a lesbian act. Rather, this could be understood as two people exploring pleasure and desire without being limited to a specific identity category. "When the forms of pleasure one enjoys are not perceived as evidence of sexual identity, then this opens new possibilities for being and understanding sexual subjects" (Allen, 2007, p. 583). Exploring these experiences of pleasure without framing them in gender and sexuality categories is a way to position desire and pleasure as fluid and temporal, and not delineating a gender or sexuality identity. A discourse of erotics can also be considered within a queer framework as rejecting the reproduction of identity categories and similarly critiquing the assumed natural status of heterosexual desires. In this way, a discourse of erotics moves beyond identity categories and engages explicitly with expressions outside of the heterosexual norm, as a way to highlight the limitations of such categories and also critique the assumed natural status of heterosexuality. The analysis of the LLL program will reveal the ability of a discourse of erotics to transgress gender and sexual categories.

In order to maintain the transformative potential within a discourse of erotics, it is vital to avoid producing a standard for engaging with pleasure and desire. Allen and Carmody highlight "that it is indeed possible, and crucial that we resist attempts to reduce discourses of erotics into 'a pleasure imperative' where students learn the recipe for how to gain it, and maybe, even, how to give it" (Allen & Carmody, p. 465). In framing a discourse of erotics within a pleasure imperative, the discourse becomes restricted to a normative standard, a transferable formula that can be applicable for all young people. Doing this would in fact rob the discourse of the transgressive potential to exceed normative standards of expressing and understanding gender, sexuality and desire. Thus it would feed into hegemonic systems rather than work to disrupt them.

Allen warns of the regulatory effects of all discourses and suggests that "a discourse of erotics would need to be integrated into programmes so as not to cast sexual desire and pleasure as normative and imply their absence signifies deficiency" (Allen, 2004, p. 158). A

discourse of erotics must avoid normalising and universalising concepts of pleasure and desire, as although they have potential to transgress normative limits, they similarly have the potential to exclude young people who do not relate to the content. As such, a discourse of erotics must be included as a possible experience rather than positioned as the only ‘normal’ and valid experience.

Through the analysis of the LLL program I seek to consider how a discourse of erotics can be included to transgress normative limits of gender and sexuality. This can be achieved by exploring desire and pleasure as expressions unrestrained by identity categories. Unhooking desire from sexual identity embraces the transgressive nature of the discourse of erotics. Demonstrating the temporal and transgressive nature of pleasure and desire will reveal the limitations of assuming sex to determine gender and sexuality. These expressions will be positioned as temporal, partial and fluid which works to disrupt the logic of the heterosexual matrix. While engaging with a discourse of erotics, it is imperative to avoid producing a normative constitution of desire and pleasure. It must be acknowledged that not all people do experience or want to experience pleasure and desire.

2.5. Moving Beyond Penetrative Heterosexual Sex

One of the ways that a discourse of erotics can open up space for transgressing normativity is engaging with discussions of sex which move beyond penetrative hetero sex. Exploring same-sex sex, masturbation and non-penetrative sex can be included through a discourse of erotics in order to create space for young people to conceive sexual possibilities beyond penetrative hetero sex.

In ‘‘It’s got to be about enjoying yourself’’: young people, sexual pleasure, and sex and relationships education’ Julia Hirst (2013) draws upon qualitative research gathered from 15-16 year old male and female students from a state secondary school in England. Her work considers these young peoples’ experiences of sex education at high school as she frames her inquiry to explore the absence of pleasure and desire in the school curriculum. I engage with Hirst’s work in England as I consider the discursive space of high schools to be comparable to that of high schools in the Netherlands. I consider the similarities to be a general absence of pleasure in most sex and relationships education (Ferguson, Knijn & Vanwesenbeeck, p. 104, citing Ingham 2005). Furthermore, there are similarities of how this absence works to regulate young peoples’ sexuality through offering limiting positions for young people to recognise their experience within. Hirst’s considerations of implementing discussions of

desire and pleasure within sex education in England inform my analysis of how a discourse of erotics could be implemented into the LLL program as a vehicle for disrupting the perpetuation of heteronormativity in high schools.

Hirst highlights the normative assumptions within sex education, suggesting traditional sex education which focuses on penis/vaginal penetration “does not reflect the range of experiences and can enhance normative perceptions of what constitutes ‘proper sex’” (Hirst, p. 431). By only acknowledging penis/vaginal penetrative sex, sex education curriculum positions this one act as the only form of valid, ‘proper’, or possible sex, which in turn, marginalises and devalues all other acts, or desires to engage in acts, which are outside of this representation. This representation is an example of the heterosexual matrix functioning within high schools, which informs the identities young people deem possible or valid. Working with Butler’s theory of gender intelligibility, it can be considered that only representing heterosexual penetrative sex informs the types of sex that young people recognise as valid/ possible. By solely engaging with heterosexual penetrative sex, schools perpetuate a limited range of sexual expressions for young people to recognise themselves within and relate to.

It is worth noting that this dominant narrative of heterosexual penetrative sex typically depicts males as the active initiators of sexual activity and females as the passive receivers. Consequently, privileging heterosexual penetrative sex as the dominant norm not only excludes sexual practices outside of this model, but within this model, it similarly restricts males to an essentialist idea of masculinity, which involves initiating sexual acts and being in active control. Subsequently, females are positioned as passive receivers of male sexuality, perpetuating the essentialist stereotype of femininity established upon passivity. If this normative model of penetrative heterosexual sex remains unchallenged it risks reinforcing essentialist inequalities that deny female sexual agency, maintain a toxic standard of masculinity based upon sexual control, and similarly, erase all non-normative sexual acts.

Erin Connell (2005) draws upon Fine’s consideration of pleasure and desire within sex education to examine the high school sex education curriculum in Ontario, Canada. Connell’s engagement with Fine’s work reveals similarities between high schools in affluent, western, Anglophone countries which make this cross cultural engagement applicable. It is these similarities of high schools prioritizing pursuits of the mind and regulating young peoples’

expression of gender and sexuality which I draw upon as I consider Connell's work within the contextual setting of the LLL program in the Netherlands.

Connell explores the notion of moving beyond heteronormative representations of sex in sex education.

We should encourage adolescents to explore non-goal-oriented sex (e.g. non-penetrative sex) and sexual self-exploration within their experiences, needs and limits [...] We need to talk about orgasms, pleasure, thoughts, feelings, sexual expectations and desires [...] We need to challenge compulsory heterosexuality in order to recognize the lived realities of all young people. (Connell, p. 264)

Connell highlights the importance of moving beyond penetrative hetero sex as an imperative step for encouraging young people to explore sexuality in relation to their emotions, thoughts, expectations and desires. I draw upon this approach to sex education which I consider to be holistic, as I demonstrate how a discourse of erotics could function within the LLL program. Connell illustrates the importance of sex education to empower young people to consider their sexuality outside of compulsory heterosexual limits. In doing so, sex education is likely to engage more with young people, as it responds to the actuality of their varied lived realities as opposed to reinforcing a dominant model that purports how young people 'should' experience and express sexuality.

Connell here reinforces Allen's (2004) assertion that for young people to deem sex education relevant for them, it must respond to their sexual subjectivity. Moving beyond limiting assumptions of heterosexuality offers another way to respond to the varied needs of young people, which in turn increases the chances of their engagement with the material, as they recognise their sexual subjectivity within the content.

2.6. A Summary of a Discourse of Erotics in Sex Education

As discussed in the previous chapter, within dominant school cultures young people are denied as sexual subjects, through the regulation of an 'ideal' non-sexual student. This is perpetuated through a sex education curriculum which focuses on the negative effects of sexual activity by offering biased information delivered in de-eroticised ways. This is materialised through a prevention focus in sex education.

I have considered how responding to young peoples' sexual agency involves them more directly with the content as they recognise the material responding to their personal

experience. Within this acknowledgement of sexual agency, young people “are recognised as ‘sexual’ and seen to be able to exercise sexual decision-making power, discursive space is opened for a sexually responsible subject” (Allen, 2005, p. 231). I consider a discourse of erotics as recognising young people as sexual agents and from this position, creating space to engage with discussions around a sexually responsible subject. These discussions cannot be possible if schools continue to attempt to deny young peoples’ sexual subjectivity, which may neglect young peoples’ engagement with discussions of consent, communication and ethics of safe and responsible sexual practice. By recognising young people as sexual agents it is imperative to include discussions of communicating desires and limits, also in relation to consent and abuse. Acknowledging young people as sexual agents can equip them with the skills to negotiate sexuality responsibility.

The analysis of the LLL program will consider developing a holistic approach to sex education through engaging with a discourse of erotics and encouraging the development of responsible sexual subjects. I will demonstrate how discussions of pleasure and desire can make space for young people to practice communicating personal limits and desires, and responding to other peoples’. Discussions of communicating and responding to sexual limits and desires must be framed within an understanding of recognising young people as sexual agents and as such, responsible for their sexual decision.

I consider a discourse of erotics to be inclusive of LGBTQ+ young people by moving beyond limiting standards in sex education curriculum which assume heterosexuality. A discourse of erotics engages with discussions of pleasure and desire which reveal these to be fluid and temporal and unhooked from identity categories. As such, a discourse of erotics has the potential to transgress identity categories by revealing their limitations. In this way the logic of the heterosexual matrix which equates biological sex with gender and sexuality is disrupted. A discourse of erotics involves recognising young people as sexual agents and responding to this sexual subjectivity with unbiased information. This includes moving away from the prevention focus, representing sexuality outside of heterosexual penetrative/procreative acts and resisting the creation of a pleasure imperative, which assumes all young people do want or should want to experience and express pleasure and desire. Responding to young people as sexual agents enables young people to explore their identity expression beyond normative limits. Similarly, space is created for discussions of sexual responsibility which informs the development of young peoples’ ability to communicate and respond to sexual limits and desires.

Chapter 3: An Analysis of the Long Live Love Program

3.1. An introduction to The Long Live Love Program

I will analyse the Long Live Love (LLL) program as a case study to explore how the inclusion of a discourse of erotics can disrupt the perpetuation of heteronormativity within high schools in the Netherlands. A discourse of erotics will engage with gender and sexuality categories as fluid and partial, which works to disrupt the logic of the heterosexual matrix that equates biological sex with gender expression and sexual desire. A queer engagement with categories within the discourse of erotics will similarly reveal the instability of identity categories and as such, create space for the normative mould to be transgressed.

The LLL program pack includes a magazine for students, DVD segments, two digital lessons, a teachers' guide and a website offering support for teachers. This analysis will engage with the teachers' guide which lays out the themes, objectives and activities for each of the six lessons. See appendix for an example of the lesson plan layout. The teachers' guide captures the essence and the objective of the LLL program which informs my decision to engage with this element of the program material. The LLL program includes six lessons, all 50 minutes in length so as to ensure they are able to be completed within one period at school. The teachers' guide states that "how long the lesson takes depends on the time available, the class, class reactions and whether the subject concerned is particularly relevant for this class" (p. 3). This highlights the responsive nature of the program. Within the outline of the lessons there remains room for the program to be adaptable to the particular groups of students. The teachers are encouraged to remain flexible in their delivery of the content based upon the needs of the students. This demonstrates how the program recognises the students as sexual subjects and responds to their particular needs in an attempt to be relevant to their lived experiences and as such be more engaging. The lessons must also be delivered in sequential order as the material has been developed so that the lessons gradually build upon the themes of relationships and sexuality. The lessons must be completed in their entirety to be the most effective.

The aim of the program is to "help students safely enjoy their emerging sexuality when they are ready. It enables you to educate them while developing their attitudes and skills with regard to relationships and sexuality" (p. 2). Within this aim, there is an awareness of not forcing a standardised timeline for sexual exploration or expression. Suggesting 'when they are ready' recognises the process as being unique for everyone and avoids producing a

normative experience. The inclusion of ‘safely enjoy’ engages with the prevention discourse in sex education, suggesting a safety focus on avoiding STI’s and adolescent pregnancies, but similarly it alludes to the inclusion of pleasure and desire. Highlighting the young peoples’ knowledge of ‘enjoyment’ positions this program as also responding to the positive aspects of sexuality such as desire and pleasure.

The themes in the LLL program are “puberty, falling in love, relationships, homosexuality, what you want, drawing the line and assertiveness, the internet, groomers, the first time, problems with sex, getting help, safe sex, condoms and contraception” (p. 3). Within the consideration of these themes, I will focus on how a discourse of erotics can engage with gender and sexuality in a way which transgresses normative categorical limits. Exploring desire and pleasure as fluid expressions will disrupt the heterosexual matrix that links biological sex to determine gender and inform sexual desire. A fluid engagement with these expressions is a way to destabilise the power of hegemonic categories, as all categories are revealed to be partial and temporal.

The LLL program accounts for the following criteria in the development of the program: “Young people with diverse cultural backgrounds. Differences in values and principles relating to sexuality. Diversity in the way young people begin relationships. Differences between boys and girls. Young people from different regions” (p. 3). Each of these criteria is centred on diversity or difference to some extent, which informs my choice of engaging with this particular program. The recognition of difference provides a strong foundation for the inclusion of a discourse of erotics, which seeks to challenge normative assumptions. This analysis will consider working with difference and diversity to reveal gender and sexuality as constructed concepts. This excerpt reveals the LLL program to function within gender binary terms, using ‘boys and girls’ to consider gender difference. This analysis will consider how the program can be developed to move away from reinforcing gender identities as fixed and oppositional and determined by biological sex. This will function within the broader engagement with all identity categories as constructed and partial which challenges essentialist binary logic.

The teachers’ guide includes a variety of tips for teachers working with the LLL program, for the purpose of this analysis I will focus specifically on the tip of how to integrate sexual diversity into the LLL lessons: “Remember that when you say he & she, it could also mean he & he and she & she” (p. 6). This tip is a strong method for including representations of

sexuality outside of the heterosexual norm. For expressions outside of heterosexuality to be adequately represented they need to be included in examples throughout the program, including scenarios represented in media clips and activity worksheets. As it stands, this tip works to make same-sex desires visible however, it can be further developed to consider how same-sex desires must explicitly be represented at all stages of the program, not only offered as another potential option alongside dominant narratives of heterosexuality. In offering same-sex desires as a possible substitute for heterosexual desires, heterosexuality is maintained as the assumed norm and continues to position all other desires as deviations. I am informed by queer theory in my approach which seeks to decentre heterosexuality and challenge this hegemonic position by making the heterosexual matrix visible and as such, open for critique and reinterpretation (Pinar, p.23). This analysis of the LLL program is informed by a queer understanding of categories which attempts to highlight all categories, including heterosexuality, as constructed and partial.

Offering tips for teachers is one thing however the attitudes and beliefs of the teachers may differ greatly which impacts upon the implementation of the program. As Schuette et al. (2014) explore in their study 'Long Live Love. The implementation of a school-based sex-education program in the Netherlands', the variability in the teachers' implementation of the program may include: perceived importance and feasibility of student learning outcomes, personal advantages the curriculum may have for the teacher, and the practicality of the program use. Similarly the teachers' personal attitudes towards the program and demographic variables can influence the implementation of the program (Schutte et al., p.585 and 587). In this sense, beyond the developments of the program there remains potential limitations in the teachers' bias impacting upon the implement the program.

3.2. A Thematic Analysis of the Long Live Love Program

I will frame my analysis of the LLL program within two main themes. I will highlight elements of the six lessons where a discourse of erotics can be developed into the program. Similarly I will illustrate where additions can be made within the program to disrupt heteronormative assumptions and be inclusive of experiences of LGBTQ+ young people. The aim of this analysis is to consider ways to disrupt the heterosexual matrix in sex education in the Netherlands, and reveal how this can enable young people to explore and express their gender and sexual identities beyond limiting norms.

3.2.i. A Discourse of Erotics within the Long Live Love Program

The first lesson in the LLL program ‘What’s happening to you?’ engages with themes of puberty, falling in love and sexual identity. A learning point of the lesson is the anatomy and function of the genitals. Considering Allen’s suggestion for adapting representations of genitals within a discourse of erotics, this learning point can be enhanced to recognise the pleasurable potential of the genitals beyond their reproductive function. As explored in 1.7. *Prevention focus framed within reproductive standards*, Allen (2004) argues that bodies in sex education are typically presented in desexualised and desensitized ways; “evidence of this is seen in the medicalized images of genitalia, purposefully labelled ‘Reproductive Organs’ with which students are presented” (Allen, p. 155). Positioning bodies in this way focuses on the function of internal organs as opposed to the pleasurable potential of the external parts of the body. Similarly, solely framing genitals within their reproductive function reinforces the assumption of heterosexual sex. This framing can be marginalising for LGBTQ+ young people who don’t relate to the reproductive function of the genitals which are being made visible.

Likewise this positions students as ideally non-sexual. Framing young peoples’ bodies within reproductive purposes offers limited information about their bodies which assumes heterosexual, procreative sex. This denies recognition of bodies’ pleasurable potential which rejects the sexual subjectivity of young people. Within a discourse of erotics, the pleasurable potential of genitals can be explored which promotes an embodied experience of sexual subjectivity and responds to young people as sexually autonomous agents. Moving beyond framing genitals within their reproductive function similarly disrupts perpetuating assumptions of heterosexual sex and as such, expands to be more inclusive of LGBTQ+ experiences.

The second lesson ‘What are you ready for?’ can be examined as an appropriate place to include the pleasurable potential of bodies outside of their reproductive function. A learning point in the lesson is exploring different types of intimate physical contact. Expanding upon types of physical contact that are made visible in sex education is a possible strategy for moving beyond heteronormative assumptions circulating in high schools. As considered in 2.5. *Moving beyond penetrative heterosexual sex*, a sex-positive approach to sex education requires “widening repertoires to include safer alternatives to vaginal penetration (e.g. stroking, solo and mutual masturbation)” (Hirst, p. 431). Not only would expanding the repertoire of physical contact work against a focus on heteronormative content, it also “challenges the primacy of vaginal penetration as the goal of ‘proper’ or ‘normal’ sex” (Hirst,

p. 43). This would contest normative standards of what young people believe constitutes valid sex. In a discourse of erotics young people are encouraged to feel empowered in their sexual exploration without any limitations of shame, stigma or norms. Engaging with representations of physical contact that include same-sex sex, masturbation and non-penetrative sex can create space for young people to express and explore their sexuality which transgresses the limiting heterosexual norm.

Lesson four in the program engages with the question ‘How do you make sex special?’ and discusses how to have safe and enjoyable sex. This inclusion of pleasure already responds to young peoples’ sexual agency and moves beyond the typical prevention focus in sex education, which excludes any discussion of the enjoyable potential of sexual activity. It is vital for discussions of sexual enjoyment to explicitly make visible experiences of LGBTQ+ young people, in the program materials and activities. Responding to young people as sexual agents is one way in which sex education can be more engaging for students as it resonates with their lived experience. As Allen (2005) suggests, “programmes which open discursive space for young peoples’ own sexual subjectivities, rather than positioning them in ways they would prefer students to be, are more likely to have their lessons heard” (Allen, p. 229). Enabling discursive space for young peoples’ sexual subjectivities recognises sexual diversity, and can respond to individual needs as opposed to assuming the needs of a homogenous group.

The LLL program responds to young people as sexual agents which in turn positions them as responsible for their sexual decisions. In lesson three the theme is ‘Where do you draw the line?’ The lesson explores skills for communicating limits and desires and responding to other peoples’. A discourse of erotics acknowledges young people as sexual agents which enables discussions of pleasure and desire. Within these discussions, it is possible to highlight the importance of communicating limits and desires and responding to other peoples’. These discussions are vital to develop young peoples’ understanding of consent and support their development into sexually responsible subjects.

This development of sexually responsible subjects can be reiterated in lesson six which considers ‘Safe sex how do you do it?’ This lesson explores possible risks of sexual activity while equipping young people with the information to prevent them. The lesson focuses on teaching young people how to use contraception and condoms and where to access them. The students engage with discussions of the advantages and disadvantages of the contraceptive

pill and learn about a variety of contraceptive methods. The students practice putting a condom on a model penis and learn tips for the condom's proper application. This embodied exercise is a way of responding to young people as sexual agents and within that, acknowledging their responsibility to engage in sex safely. When considering what makes effective sex education, Allen (2005) believes programs must "meet the needs and interests of young people as conceptualised by them" (Allen, p. 231). By responding to what the young people identify as relevant for them, the program is more likely to resonate with them and in that sense, be more effective. Equipping young people with the practical skill of using a condom correctly works within a discourse of erotics which recognises young people as sexual agents and provides information to empower their sexual development.

3.2.ii. *Beyond Heteronormative Assumptions in the Long Live Love Program*

A further analysis of the LLL program reveals how heteronormative assumptions function within the program and demonstrates how the inclusion of LGBTQ+ experiences can work to disrupt the hegemonic status of these representations. In lesson one of the LLL program, it was considered how a discourse of erotics could be included in the material to explore the pleasurable potential of genitals outside of reproductive functions. Within this same lesson, students discuss sexual identity and notably homosexuality. A discussion point for the class is "how do young people find out that they are homosexual or bisexual?" In my analysis I engage with a queer consideration of categories to reject the assumption that sexual identity is a stable or homogenous category. As Pascoe states, "queer theory draws on a postmodern approach to studying society that moves beyond traditional categories such as male/female, masculine/feminine, and straight/gay to focus instead on the instability of these categories" (Pascoe, p. 11). Examining the instability of such categories reveals the internal contradictions embedded within them. A queer engagement with identity categories emphasizes diversity and complexity and considers how these categories are created, sustained and resisted.

As such, this discussion point in the LLL program risks circulating assumptions that homosexuality and bisexuality are universal categories. This assumption neglects to consider the multitude of intersectional differences between people who identify within these sexual identities. A queer approach seeks to explore differences between people as opposed to differences between categories of people (Pinar, p. 23). In this sense, discussions of homosexuality and bisexuality need to be expanded to consider the fluidity and partiality of

such categories. In order to resist producing a normative standard of homosexuality or bisexuality, engagement with these sexual identities must recognise the multitude of internal differences between people who identify within these categories. Sexual identities must be considered as unique and fluid as opposed to homogenous and fixed. Similarly this discussion point in the program positions heterosexuality as the assumed natural state from which other expressions deviate from. By neglecting to include discussion of when young people ‘find out’ if they are heterosexual, heterosexuality remains the normative standard from which all other expressions must relate against.

The teachers’ guide is prefaced with a variety of tips for teachers working with the LLL program. One of the tips states:

Incorporate homosexuality naturally into the lessons. Don’t only give heterosexual examples. The students will then think: ‘this is normal’. So when discussing subjects like falling in love and safe sex, say what it could be like for students with homosexual feelings. (p. 6)

This tip has the intention of making homosexuality visible and normal when discussing love and desire. This inclusion aims to present homosexuality in a way which is similar and relational to heterosexuality. In this way, homosexuality is denied any of the radical queer potential of difference and rather is positioned in a way which assimilates into the heterosexual norm. By positioning homosexuality as ‘normal’ in relation to heterosexuality, the difference of queer experiences is erased. Heterosexual gender identities are constructed as normal and seemingly stable however “queer tries to interrupt these modes of making selves and making sense by refusing stable identities and by producing new identifications that lie outside binary models of gender and sexuality” (ed. Pinar, p. 128). Hence, framing queerness within heterosexual logic of ‘normality’ denies the queer potential of moving beyond binary assumptions of gender and sexuality. However, considering the age group of the program, this tip must be recognised with positive intentions.

The above teachers’ tip and also the discussion topic of young people ‘finding out’ they are bisexual or homosexual, positions sexual identities as fixed categories and implies a sense of universality and stability. A queer engagement with categories seeks to reveal sexual identity as fluid, temporal and partial and stresses each persons’ unique experience. Including this framework within the LLL program would offer students an understanding of sexual and

gendered identities that moves beyond binary logic. Butler's engagement with the heterosexual matrix reveals it to function within an understanding of fixed categories. In this sense, when identity categories are explored to be partial and fluid, the logic of the heterosexual matrix is disrupted, as biological sex no longer determines gender or sexual desire. Thereby, a queer engagement with categories within the LLL program can work to challenge the heterosexual matrix that functions in high schools in the Netherlands. Similarly, this understanding of categories can work to disrupt limiting binary assumptions of gender expression. A broader engagement with all identities as fluid, partial and constructed can encourage young people to also consider expressing their gender beyond normative standards.

3.3. Closing Reflections of the Long Live Love Program

Overall, the LLL program provides a strong foundation for the further inclusion of a discourse of erotics, in a move towards making experiences of LGBTQ+ young people visible within high school sex education. The program responds to young people as sexual agents and recognises their unique needs and experiences. This recognition avoids setting a standardised timeline for young peoples' sexual development and rather acknowledges that each young person will have a different experience. The program's inclusion of considering enjoyable elements of safe sex reveals the engagement with the positive potential of sexuality, which moves beyond the typical prevention focus in sex education.

Throughout the program, young people engage with homosexuality and bisexuality and are encouraged to consider these as 'normal', and relational to heterosexuality. A queer engagement with categories suggests avoiding the assumptions of stable, universal and homogenous identity categories. As such, a queer engagement with categories could be developed into the program to encourage students to consider gender and sexual identities beyond heteronormative logic. Revealing identity categories to be partial and fluid could enable young people to explore these expressions beyond normative binary limits. Thereby, the naturalised and hegemonic status of heterosexuality would be revealed and resisted.

Encouraging young people to consider pleasure and desire as temporal and fluid expressions can reveal the limitations of essentialist logic which suggests that biological sex determines gender and sexual identity. Engaging with pleasure and desire in a way which does not negate a sexual identity disrupts this frame of thought. Considering pleasure and desire beyond this logic enables young people to transgress normative limitations which grant some expressions

as valid and others as deviant, within the heterosexual matrix. As such, young people can explore and express their sexual and gender identities in ways which resist the heteronormative mould and disrupt the perpetuation of heteronormativity in high schools in the Netherlands.

Concluding Remarks

This study has demonstrated the immense impact schools have on informing the expressions of gender and sexuality that young people deem possible. A discourse of erotics within sex education has been revealed to have transgressive potential to disrupt the heterosexual matrix which equates biological sex with gender and sexuality. Within a discourse of erotics, pleasure and desire are unhooked from identity categories and as such, the limitations of these categories are exposed. This research has contributed to the exploration of the ways in which a discourse of erotics in sex education has the potential to transgress normative limits, which inform the expressions of gender and sexuality that young people consider possible.

A discourse of erotics involves recognising young people as sexual agents and responding to this sexual subjectivity with unbiased information. This includes moving away from the prevention focus, representing sexualities outside of heterosexual penetrative/procreative acts and resisting the creation of a pleasure imperative, which assumes all young people do want or should want to experience and express pleasure and desire. Similarly, space is created for discussions of sexual responsibility which informs the development of young peoples' ability to communicate and respond to sexual limits and desires. Within this school environment it is vital for experiences of LGBTQ+ young people to be made visible in an attempt to expand upon the expressions young people consider possible and valid. This expansion can be made possible through a discourse of erotics which encourages young people to explore expressing themselves beyond normative limits. Similarly this fosters a sense of understanding for other people who express themselves beyond normative limits, developing attitudes of acceptance and celebration towards diversity.

This increase in visibility of diversity can work to develop a consciousness in young people which celebrates difference. This in turn can influence how young people engage in broader society. In this way, schools can in fact be one of the epicentres for the start of a social movement. Instead of schools reflecting broader societal norms and conventions, schools can create an environment where young people are enabled to critically analyse and transgress these cultural standards. Schools can develop young peoples' skills to positively engage with expressions beyond normativity, which can inform the way young people interact with diversity in their broader, everyday lives. In this sense, schools can enable young people to engage with themes of identity and difference in positive and accepting ways, which can

affect the broader society they live in, and create an inclusive attitude beyond the school environment.

Within the global-technological world we live in, it is imperative to consider utilizing the wave of mass media consumption in order to enhance visibility for non-normative expressions of gender and sexuality, within school environments and beyond. Future work could consider the potential of developing sex education resources in the form of an app which is available via smart phones and similarly online. An app could provide updated information on themes of sex, gender, sexuality and relationships. It could include resources for young people, such as a question and answer space where a medical professional is available to answer anonymous questions. There could be a service with information on various contraceptive techniques with a 'pros and cons' list of each, delivered in youth friendly language. A list of medical services in the area could be offered through utilizing a phones' GPS capabilities. Beyond the health and medical side, there could be short videos exploring the embodiment of sexual acts such as animated and entraining representations exploring various pleasurable acts. There could be a 'menu card' listing a comprehensive range of sexual activities alongside boxes that say 'yes', 'no' and 'maybe'. This exercise could enable young people to consider their limits and desires in terms of sexual acts. There could also be a function to fill in the activity with a partner which could enable young people to have conversations about communicating limits and desires and engaging with consent. Such an exercise would aid in the development of sexually responsible agents and potentially enable a sense of entitlement whereby young people are clear of what they want and as such, face a lower risk of being coerced or pressured into sexual acts.

These ideas and activities are already circulating in the world of online sex education, what's needed is a platform that brings all of these resources together and similarly, collates them in the most accessible way, such as in the form of an app. An app would enable young people to engage with developing into responsible, informed, inclusive sexual agents beyond the school classroom and beyond the limited time frame designated to sex education curriculum. An app could ensure these messages are available whenever necessary for the young peoples' development. Sex education delivered in high schools risks happening at a time when the information is either too early or too late. Too early could mean the young people might not retain the information when it comes time to draw upon it, and too late has obvious ramifications in terms of lacking information on health and pleasure.

Similarly, an app could eliminate some of the variability of implementing sex education programs amongst teachers. An app could be updated and managed by a team of sex education professionals from a variety of disciplines, which ensures the information would be current and unbiased. The app would provide a stable and current platform for people to engage with sex education lessons on their own time and terms. Young people could engage with various content on the app in response to their specific needs they identify.

Ultimately, it is vital to disrupt the heterosexual matrix on a variety of platforms and social contexts. Doing so would enable young people to explore their identity beyond limiting norms which would challenge stigmas, hierarchies and marginalisation. Moving beyond heteronormative limits envisions a world where pleasure is asserted as a right, and difference is celebrated not just tolerated.

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Appendix 1. Sample of a Lesson Plan in the Teachers' Guide of the Long Live Love Program.

TEACHERS' GUIDE **6** FOR GENERAL SECONDARY EDUCATION

Long Live Love FOR TEACHERS

PART
2

↓

Lesson
1

Description of the six lessons

Lesson 1 What's happening to you?

Teaching materials

- Long Live Love magazine for students: Lesson 1
- Long Live Love DVD: Episode 1
- Lesson 1 work sheet 'Rules'
 - For the 'Rules' work sheet in English go to www.langlevedeliefde.nl
- Optional: Long Live Love question box (What is the question box? Read more on page 5)

Preparation

- Read the 'Rules' work sheet, watch episode 1 of the DVD and read lesson 1 in the magazine for students: 'What's happening to you?'
- Make enough copies of the 'Rules' work sheet for all the students in the class.
- Homosexuality is discussed in this lesson. Go to www.lesgevenindeliefde.nl for tipsSM from other teachers on how to talk about homosexuality with your class in a way which feels comfortable and safe.
- For the lessons to run smoothly, an emotionally safe environment is important. On www.lesgevenindeliefde.nl other teachersSM talk about how they create an emotionally safe environment in the classroom.
- Optional: Put the question box somewhere in the classroom where everyone can see it.

Lesson plan

1. Explain the Long Live Love series of lessons
2. Glance through the magazine for students
3. Read and discuss the 'Rules' work sheet
4. Introduce Lesson 1
5. Read and discuss pages 1, 2 and 3
6. Read and discuss page 4
7. Watch and discuss episode 1 on the DVD
8. Read and discuss page 5
9. Round off Lesson 1

Themes

- Puberty
 - Physical and emotional changes
 - Anatomy and function of the genitals
- Falling in love
- Discovering sexual identity (homosexuality)
- Influence of parents and friends on beginning a relationship

Learning targets

Knowledge

- Students can give several examples of social, emotional and physical changes during puberty.
- Students can explain the anatomy and functions of a man and woman's genitals.
- Students can explain what virginity means and what the hymen is.
- Students can give several examples of feelings and signs of falling in love and the differences with friendship.
- Students can explain what homosexuality and bisexuality are.
- Students can say where they can go with questions about sexuality.

Attitudes

- Students recognise that physical, social and emotional changes in puberty are normal.
- Students recognise that young people experience falling in love in different ways.
- Students show that they respect other young people regardless of their sexual identity.
- Students acknowledge the influence of their parents and friends when they begin a relationship.

Skills

- Students can find information on sexualitySM at www.sense.info.



The lesson in detail

1. Explain the Long Live Love series of lessons

Introduce the Long Live Love teaching pack to the students.

2. Glance through the magazine for students

- Hand out the magazines. Generally, the students are curious. They like having a chance to glance through the magazine before the lesson begins.
- Ask the students for their reactions to the magazine.

3. Read and discuss the 'Rules' work sheet

- Hand out the 'Rules' work sheet.
- Go through the nine rules together.
- Optional: Think up rule 10 together with the class.
- Agree on which words will be used during the lessons. Let the students write down those words on the work sheet.

4. Introduce Lesson 1

Read the Introduction 'You're changing' on page 1 together with the class.

5. Read and discuss pages 1, 2 and 3

- The students read pages 1, 2 and 3 in the magazine themselves.
- Ask them to complete the quiz on page 3.
- Discussion: Questions for the class:
 - Give several reasons why boys are circumcised.
 - Explain what the hymen actually is.
- Lesson idea:
 - Discuss the answers to the quiz on page 3. Do you want to go into the subjects 'hymen' and 'circumcision' in more depth? Use the information sheet 'Circumcision and hymen'. Go to www.lesgevenindelliefde.nl.

6. Read and discuss page 4

- The students read 'In love?!' themselves.
- Discussion: Question for the class:
 - Which nice and which annoying feelings go with falling in love?
- Lesson idea:
 - Put the students' answers in two columns on the board.
- The students read 'Are you attracted to girls or boys?' and 'Did you know...' themselves.

7. Watch and discuss episode 1 on the DVD

- The students watch episode 1 on the DVD.
- Discussion: Question for the class:
 - How do young people find out that they are homosexual or bisexual?
- Teaching tip:
 - When you discuss the theme homosexuality, there may be questions and reactions from the students. If you want to discuss this theme in more detail, you can use the information sheet 'Sexual diversity'.

8. Read and discuss page 5

- Students read 'What do parents and friends think of love and relationships?' themselves.
- Lesson idea:
 - Ask the students to read the text aloud. Boys could read the boys' texts and girls could read the girls' texts.
- Discussion: Questions for the class:
 - Oscar says that he'd known for a while that he was gay but didn't dare to talk about it (to friends) at first. Why would Oscar not dare tell his friends at first that he's gay?
 - How would you react if one of your classmates told you that he or she is gay?
- Teaching tip:
 - When you discuss the text about Oscar, students may say the following: Oscar is scared of his friends rejecting him or scared that they would treat him differently. The possibility of rejection with regard to homosexuality is part of young teenagers wanting to 'fit in'. But if young people come into contact with someone in their immediate surroundings who is gay, their negative attitude often changes. A reaction like this from Oscar's friends is to be expected, just as the acceptance which follows.



Do you want to know more about coping with homosexuality in the lesson?*

Go to www.lesgevenindelliefde.nl.

9. Round off Lesson 1

- Ask the students what they thought of the lesson.
- Say that next time they will be doing Lesson 2: 'What are you ready for?'

