Introduction: The Case for Rethinking School Violence

by

Kerry Robinson, Cristyn Davies & Sue Saltmarsh

Safe Spaces / 'Dangerous Places': Dualistic experiences of schooling

The global representation of schools as 'safe spaces' / 'dangerous places' underpins the contradictory experiences of schooling for many teachers and students, posing critical questions associated with equity and social justice for school administrators and broader communities. The dominant view of schools has been, and continues to be, that they are generally safe supportive places, and that schooling is a context in which most parents feel confident in entrusting educational institutions with the care of their children. Schools have responsibility for children for extensive periods of time in the earlier part of their lives, and also for many aspects of children's socialisation, including the development of academic and life skills that are considered a requirement for becoming a successful and productive adult citizen. Within this framework, educators take on an 'in loco parentis' duty of care, with the expectation of having children's best interests and well-being at the core of their teaching philosophies and practices. Many students successfully complete their schooling taking away positive and rewarding experiences of their education.

However, the discursive constitution of schooling as a 'safe space' for children and educators continues to be disrupted and challenged, with extensive reporting in recent decades of a vast range of behaviours, incidents and practices in schools that can be encapsulated within the broad term of 'school violence'. Examples include rampage shootings, knifings, sexual harassment and abuse, homophobic and racist attacks, and bullying, to name but a few. What this latter picture highlights is that schools can be equally 'dangerous places' for many students and teachers, undermining the quality and equality of their educational and teaching experiences. Media representations of school violence tend to pick up on the more sensational violent incidents such as shootings, student suicides resulting from bullying and harassment, or the sexual abuse of students by teachers. Reports such as these influence how schools are understood within the broader community as dangerous places. These are critical examples of school violence, but what media sensationalism tends to overshadow is the every day violence encountered in schools that becomes normalised within

schooling cultures. Daily interactions between individuals in school communities create and maintain schools as dangerous places (O'Donoghue & Potts, 2007), and everyday classroom and playground experiences in which abusive conduct becomes commonplace have the effect of normalising violence.

Systemic violence operating in schools contributes to the construction of educational contexts as dangerous places. Systemic violence can be defined as any institutionalised policy, practice or procedure that negatively impacts on, or discriminates against, disadvantaged individuals or groups (Ross Epp & Watkinson, 1997). The impact of systemic violence can be psychological, physical, cultural, spiritual, and economic in nature. However, as Ross Epp and Watkinson (1997) point out, systemic violence can impact on all students regardless of their backgrounds. The failure of schools to meet their responsibilities of a 'duty of care' constitutes systematic violence through omission (Harper, 2004). Often bullying behaviours that prevail in school grounds and classrooms, also prevail in school staff rooms (for an example, see Saltmarsh, this volume). Corporal punishment and severe authoritarianism can perpetuate cultures of violence and oppression in schools (Harper, 2004; Morrell, Bhana & Hamlall, this volume).

Another example of systemic violence is highlighted in an acceptance of violence in male team sports. Crotty (2007) argues that in Australian Public schools in the late 19th and early 20th Centuries, a form of masculinity, which valorised aggression and violence, emerged in school sporting arenas. This masculinity became representative of a healthy manly vigour considered critical to the perpetuation of the nation and the British empire, and Crotty argues that the growing acceptance of sporting violence has continued into contemporary times. Ironically, Crotty points out, it was this violence that was the target of research on violence prevention in Australian schools during the 1980's and 1990's. In addition, the acknowledgements of the failure of educational institutions, especially those affiliated with religious organizations, to recognise the physical and sexual abuse of students in their care by teachers in British, Irish, Australian and Canadian schools in the late 19th and early to mid 20th Centuries provides a further example of systemic violence in schools (Coleman, 2007; Titley, 2007, Harper, 2004).

Curtis's (2007) Canadian research on violence in Ontario elementary schools during the period 1846-1909 highlights this lack of acknowledgement of the systematic abuse of young people. Curtis argues that certain behaviours that were allowed to occur during this period would have been considered sexual assault in contemporary times. This avowal, Curtis argues, was due to the systematic removal of young people's legal and political credibility and power during the time, an increase in the systematic power of teachers, and the unquestioning predominance of masculine authority in schools. Students' attempts to have such behaviours acknowledged as sexual maltreatment on the part of teachers were discursively dismissed as a consequence of students' lack of credibility. The ways in which schools handle these matters today can vary depending on a range of factors—the institutional history and culture of a school, dynamics between students, peers, teachers and other school officials, policies and procedures, and the ways in which policies and procedures are understood, interpreted, and implemented by all members in the school community. The reputation of schools in the broader community can also influence the approach adopted by schools in addressing sexual and other forms of violence (Saltmarsh, 2007, 2008).

In many cases, the legacy of earlier traditions of violence and the abuse of power is still in evidence in today's schools. Masculinist school cultures that privilege physically aggressive sporting and other activities, or disciplinary traditions that shore up the entitlements and privileges of some at the expense of others have a long history in educational institutions (Symes, 1998; Saltmarsh, 2008). Similar observations have been made about the role of disciplinary regimes of elite schools in producing forms of 'ruling class masculinity' (Poynting & Donaldson, 2005, 2007), through which cultures of violence—particularly amongst socially privileged boys and men—are established and maintained across generations. School traditions that create gender and age hierarchies are similarly problematic, often tacitly inducting students into regimes of power and authority that are seen, in some schools, as a normal and necessary part of learning one's place in both school and society. Yet as research into sexually violent incidents in elite private boys' schooling has argued, "disciplinary traditions and institutional ethos that legitimate and valorise hierarchies of personal and institutional worth are important contributing factors in the production of violence" (Saltmarsh, 2008, p. 114). An important understanding underpinning the

work in this edited collection, then, is that context, history, tradition and everyday taken-for-granted practices all play a part in determining whether any particular educational setting can be thought of as a safe, dangerous, or potentially dangerous place for students.

School violence: a global problem

School violence is prevalent across both developing and developed countries, with localised and cultural factors influencing the perception and manifestations of this violence in different contexts (UN, 2006). Despite the extensive body of international research on school violence in developed countries, research on violence against children conducted by The United Nations (2006) pointed out the extent and nature of school violence in developing countries, indicating the significance of gender in much of this violence. This report argued that school violence is a major barrier to equality of opportunity and outcomes in education, impacting on efforts to improve student enrolments, retention, and achievements in developing countries. While gendered social relations and cultural practices contribute to the problem, existing legislative and policy frameworks must also be taken into account. For example, some countries, such as Pakistan do not have laws that criminalise sexual harassment, so perceptions and approaches to this problem in schools differ from those in countries where sexual harassment has legal ramifications.

Greater legal attention to the problem does not, however, provide guarantees. Research on sexual harassment in schools undertaken by The American Association of University Women (AAUW, 2001) indicates that sexual harassment is a persistent problem in US schools. According to the AAUW report, 81% of students between grades 8 and 11 experienced some form of sexual harassment from peers in their school lives (AAUW, 2001, cited in Petersen & Hyde, 2009, p. 1173). These findings are supported by a New York City study that found that 70% of gay and lesbian students faced verbal, physical, sexual harassment at school (Goffe, 2003).

Importantly, these statistics have a human face, and the detail of pain and humiliation endured by victims of sexualized violence and harassment is a frequent reminder of the significance of the problem in individual lives. For example, in 2002 the British Columbia Human Rights tribunal in Canada ruled that a school board discriminated

against a student by failing to protect him against homophobic violence in school. This experience echoes similar cases in Australia (see Harper, 2004; Lamont, 2007) in which some students subjected to repeated abuse, ranging from verbal attacks to being spat on, punched, having teeth knocked out or clothes set alight, have been awarded compensation for the suffering and ongoing psychological effects of abuse endured at school. Heterosexism and homophobia are pervasive systemic discourses in schools, perpetuated not only through students' everyday interactions, but also through schooling curricula, pedagogy, policies, and practices of both administrators and teachers. These discourses result in homophobic harassment and violence experienced by both students and teachers, who are perceived to transgress normalized performances of masculinity and femininity (Davies, 2008; Robinson, 2005).

School violence is also not restricted to secondary schooling or to tertiary educational environments, but global research has increasingly begun to demonstrate the prevalence of various forms of violence operating within early childhood, preschool, and primary schooling contexts (Le Bon & Boddy, 2010).

New technologies and school violence

In recent years new technologies have become a major avenue through which violence, primarily in the form of online harassment has been enacted, with serious and fatal consequences. Mobile phones, email and social networking systems, such as Facebook, My Space, websites, Blogs and on-line chat rooms, have become a significant part of young people's daily lives. Yet these forms of communication provide an additional context in which the harassment of individuals or groups can occur. However, online forms of harassment offer additional possibilities for publicising the victimisation of others, which can be streamed to an infinite audience, intensifying the humiliation (Barak, 2005). A recent Canadian study (Cassidy, Jackson, & Brown, 2009), which surveyed 365 students in grades 6, 7, 8 and 9 (ages 11-15 years) from three elementary and two secondary schools in a large metropolitan region of British Columbia, found that most students use the internet on a daily basis and that their most common vehicle for cyber-bullying was via chat rooms or over email.

Online or cyber-bullying, as it is sometimes called, often starts at school and is

continued on students' home computers. Within this context, harassers may remain anonymous, also intensifying the power relationships that underpin this behaviour, including the victim's fear of the unknown. Racist, sexist, homophobic statements can prevail and sexual photographs (real or altered) can be made public. Twenty-five percent of students in the Canadian study cited above indicated they would keep the bullying to themselves, with 9 percent acknowledging that they received messages that made them afraid, and 4 percent had suicidal thoughts (Cassidy, Jackson, & Brown, 2009, p.399). There are similar findings in the Australian context, with a major study of covert and cyber-bulling (Cross, et al, 2009) finding that while cyber-bullying primarily takes place amongst high school students, 7-10% of younger children are also affected. The recent case of Tyler Clementi, a Rutgers' freshman in the USA, demonstrates the potentially fatal consequences of this type of online harassment. Tyler committed suicide after being the victim of a homophobic incident in which he was unknowingly filmed having sex with another male student in his room, by his roommate. The video was then broadcast on the Internet (Foderaro, *SMH*, October 1, 2010).

Research into cyber-violence indicates that both genders partake in this practice, but there are gendered differences in the way that males and females engage with this harassment (Barak 2005). Sexual harassment, for example, is a major form of cyber-violence and tends to replicate the same power relations that occur in the real world around this behaviour, with boys being the main perpetrators (Shariff & Gouin, 2006). Canadian research (Cassidy, Jackson, & Brown, 2009), highlights that most cyber-bullying victims are maginalised youth that do not fit in with the dominant culture of the school; that is, those who are different – as a result of their dress codes, physical appearance, sexuality, ethnicity, poor academic or athletic ability for example. However, this research also indicates that approximately one-third of all the students surveyed indicated that they had been cyber-harassed, pointing out that the 'average student' can also be the targets of this behaviour. Of particular significance in this research is that cyber-harassment was prevalent within friendship groups, highlighting the need for young people to examine the ways in which they interact with each other and the consequences of this behaviour. Those on the receiving end may view what is considered a joke by perpetrators, very differently. However, this point is not just peculiar to cyber contexts, but is relevant to all contexts of school violence. Why

students engage in cyber-harassment can vary including the perception that it is fun, peer pressure, or revenge for being harassed initially, but as with all other forms of violence, it is about exerting power over others.

Schooling and theory of violence

Currently, much of this violence is discursively constituted as the result of the pathological disturbances of a few individuals, rather than stemming from complex socio-cultural, economic, and political discourses underpinning individual or group behaviours, and institutional practices and policies (Garbarino, 2001; Olweus, 1993). As a microcosm of broader societies, schooling constitutes and perpetuates many of the inequalities that underpin much social violence. How the various behaviours and practices that encompass school violence are culturally perceived and understood will impact on the strategies employed to prevent or counteract this violence. Sexual harassment and other forms of sexual violence against girls and women are widespread issues in schools across both developing and developed countries. However, as Leach (2006) points out, violence in schools in developing countries in particular, with only a few exceptions, is generally not framed in gendered and sexual terms. Understandings of violence in Asia and Latin America for example, is rarely perceived to be rooted in unequal gender terms, and sexual harassment is seen as confined to universities (p.25). In Latin America and the Caribbean, school violence has tended to be viewed in terms of gang violence, often linked to drug and gun trafficking. Where violence in and around schools is fuelled by civil or armed conflict, its gendered dimension is often missed (e.g. Nepal & West Africa).

Larkin (2009) argues that the USA Columbine rampage shootings redefined these extremist acts of school violence not just as revenge but also as a protest against harassment, bullying, intimidation, social isolation, and public rituals of humiliation. As pointed out previously in this introduction, schooling curricula, policies and practices play a critical role in constituting and perpetuating systemic violence in schools. Systemic violence, not just student interactions, contributes to the various forms of school violence that prevail globally. Larkin (2009), argues that one of the major causes of systemic violence is the discursive constitution of the 'norm' as white, heterosexual, middle-class, English speaking and male. This echoes the earlier works of Elizabeth Ellsworth (1994), who points out that the pervasive stereotypical

discourses, exclusive curricula and classroom practices that reinforce sexist, racist, classist, and heterosexist attitudes, to name but a few, perpetuated through this 'norm', impacts on all students.

Michel Foucault pointed out that mass formal schooling, like prisons, hospitals, and factories, through its organisational practices and policies, and curriculum, became an institution of social control, using continual surveillance to discipline and punish in order to instil social cohesion and to create order and docility (Foucault, 1977). Bureaucratic routines and authoritarianism perpetuated through timetables, rules, regulations, discipline practices, and hierarchies of power, operated to control and constitute the docile subject. National curricula and standardised testing that exist in many countries today contributes to this process identified by Foucault. His concept of the panopticon highlights how schools were constructed and organised in a manner that offered optimal opportunity for teachers and administrators to observe students' behaviour. Students became aware of being observed and curtailed their behaviours accordingly; these self-disciplinary practices made students easier to manage and control.

Current approaches to dealing with school violence

A common question that faces school administrators is how to successfully build safe school communities, where all members feel safe from bullying, violence and alienation. Attempts to deal with school violence have depended on the forms of violence experienced, but policies and practices have varied across schools and across different states and countries. In terms of extreme forms of violence involving shootings or other weapons, schools have tended to adopt extreme punitive quick fix measures that treat the problem at the individual behavioural level, at the expense of looking at the broader socio-cultural and political factors that underpin much of this behaviour (Casella, 2001, 2006; Knox, this volume). Heightened parent and community concerns for their children's safety around such violence, particularly in the USA, quickly leads to severe surveillance measures including metal detectors, increased security, zero tolerance, and requesting students and teachers to report suspicious student behaviours (Morrison, 2007). However, as Morrison (2007) points out there is no evidence that these measures reduce violence in schools. Rather, they tend to create a false sense of security and exacerbate the problem. Larkin argues:

Although there have been grassroots attempts to reduce violence in schools, since Columbine, the federal government has made assault weapons easier to obtain and states have adopted more punitive juvenile justice sentencing guidelines. To a persecuted and angry student who wishes to attack his school and community, such social policies are an invitation and a dare. To such a student, payback consists of killing convenient targets, making a statement, and dying in a blaze of glory (Larkin, 2009, p. 1323).

A zero tolerance approach to violence has been incorporated in some schools, especially in the USA, UK, and Canada, which aim to give the public message that the school is 'tough on crime', to counteract parent and community concerns, as well as fulfil accountability standards (Casella, 2001; Morrison, 2007). This strategy has been criticised as a bandaid approach that covers up the deeper social issues that underpin violence. School authorities do not question the underlying causes of the violence or the role of systemic violence in the schools, which perpetuate violence (Ross Epp & Watkinson, 1997). Zero tolerance generally results in immediate expulsion for serious offences, including carrying weapons, serious bullying, sexual misconduct, and drug dealing. In Canada the policy of zero tolerance is a provincial decision; in Ontario and Nova Scotia it is required, but is recommended in New Brunswick and Newfoundland. Some have argued that there is confusion over what zero tolerance means and that it has not been effective in schools (Casella, 2001, 2006). In fact, Morrison (2007) argues that zero tolerance policies have resulted in more minor incidents of misconduct receiving progressively harsher penalties; that expulsions have increased for disruption, attendance, and non-compliance; that suspensions and exclusions are used inconsistently; that there is a minority over-representation in suspensions and exclusions; and that there is a high rate of repeat offending. Morrison argues, "The evidence suggests that not only does zero tolerance make zero sense. But zero tolerance promotes intolerance, through discriminatory practices that licence discrimination: (Morrison, 2007 p. 58.)

In Australia, strategies to deal with homophobic violence in schools have tended to operate at the individual school level and at the discretion of school leaders and managers. Generally, this form of violence is dealt with on an individual case-by-case

basis, considered to be similar to other forms of student misbehaviour in schools and primarily dealt with through disciplinary punishments. The homophobic discourses behind such behaviours are often not addressed. There have been attempts to curb this violence through educational resources and community campaigns, including the *Skool's Out* (2002) initiative. This campaign was aimed at encouraging effective responses to homophobic harassment and violence in and around schools, both public and private, in New South Wales, Australia. The focus was on safety and security in the school environment for all students, teachers, parents, and community members (Kaye, 2004). A broader educational initiative implemented by the New South Wales Department of Education and Training aimed to address school violence more generally through an initiative called the Safe School projects. The success of both of these programs have been limited, primarily due to the fact that they do not adequately deal with the broader socio-cultural and political discourses that underpin this violence that are entrenched at every level in society, in every day interactions, and perpetuated through systemic violence in schools (Davies, 2008; McInnes 2008; McInnes & Davies, 2008; Rasmussen, 2006).

In South Africa educators have tried to develop resources to curb the serious level of gender-based violence that occurs in and out of school environments in this country. Sexual harassment, jack-rolling, child sexual abuse, homophobic violence and bullying are all issues that teachers and students have to contend with on a daily level. There has been significant recognition on the part of educators in this country of the socio-cultural factors contributing to perpetuation of these forms of violence. One such resource is *Opening Our Eyes: Addressing Gender-based violence in South African Schools* (2001), which include several teacher training modules addressing gender violence, homophobia and bullying, sexual harassment and policy development in schools, and child sexual abuse and its implications for teachers.

The contribution of this book to shifting current debates about school violence

School violence, as has been outlined in this introduction, is a complex and troubling issue that affects students, teachers and communities worldwide. This book brings together a diverse group of international scholars researching school violence, and aims to disrupt and reconceptualise many of the taken for granted assumptions that

currently underlie understandings of this phenomenon. It also aims to deal with many of the contradictions that exist around violent behaviours that hinder effective interventions. In contrast to extant collections concerning violence in schools, which are predominantly informed by psychosocial models concerned with individual pathologies, family dysfunction and preventative management strategies, this book proposes ways of *rethinking* school violence as a social and cultural issue, rather than a psychological phenomenon. The broad coverage of the book offers a response to an issue of pressing global concern—that of violence within educational institutions, and its implications for violence that takes place within the broader contexts of interpersonal, social, and political spheres.

Structure of the book

This book is divided into three parts. The chapters in Part 1 consider school violence as contextually produced; chapters in Part 2 raise major issues pertaining to the ways that gendered power relations are implicated in the production of school violence; and chapters in Part 3 focus on issues of language, representation and practice associated with violence in schools. In the first chapter in Part 1, the author points out that school-related violence has been thought of primarily as a problem involving students who are in some way troubled and/or troublesome. As a consequence, preventing and managing violence that takes place in schools and classrooms is generally focused on modifying the attitudes and regulating the behaviours of individual students. Sue Saltmarsh shifts the focus away from students who are involved in violent incidents, and instead turns the analytic gaze onto schooling itself, and the part that it plays (even if inadvertently) in contributing to violent cultures and normative practices. Drawing on examples from school bullying and behaviour management policies, and utilising data from school ethnographies, Saltmarsh shows how an array of interconnecting threads woven through institutional cultures are implicated in the production of inherently violent social relations. She contends that discursive silences, often from those best place to intervene or initiate change, raise questions about the limits of educational and professional knowledge. She argues that in order to bring about meaningful changes to student attitudes and behaviours, the first—and most important—step involves addressing those elements of school rules, ethos and management that are complicit in the production of violent schooling cultures.

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The second chapter by Ronnie Casella, examines the development of school security in the United States and South Africa. Experts often espouse one of two positions: those who view security equipment as a successful tool for maintaining safety and those who view it more critically as an instrument of state surveillance and social control. By drawing on field work in the United States and South Africa, Casella develops a new way of viewing the uses of security equipment in schools, arguing that school security has more to do with privatization and consumerism than with safety or social control. School security represents the effects of neoliberalism on schools. In essence, another public concern—the safety of schools—becomes a commodity, which is provided by security businesses. Businesses convince consumers that security must be bought and provided to schools by professionals who have the advanced technologies and expert knowledge to keep a school safe. Individuals in South Africa and the United States "buy into" this trend; they use their consumer power to buy security equipment, and in doing so they reinforce social distances between those who own security and those who cannot afford the equipment. In countries like the United States and South Africa, Casella argues that security reinforces old social division based on race and social class.

Chapter three, by Amy Chapman and Rachel Buchanan, considers the question of cyberbullying in relation to social and cultural practices that are an everyday feature of young people's technology use. Like other authors in the book, Chapman and Buchanan are wary of the ways that normative educational discourse positions young people as either victims or bullies. They point out that much research on cyberbullying tends to overlook broader contextual factors, and the significance of understanding how context and cultural practice offer.

Chapter four, the first in Part 2, focuses on sexual harassment in schools in an Australian context. Kerry Robinson focuses on the socio-cultural practice of 'sexual harassment' and how it is performed and negotiated in schools by young people. The complexities that surround this behaviour are explored in relation to the contexts within which it is situated. Contextual factors critically inform the ways in which sexual harassment practices are read and negotiated by individuals, often resulting in major contradictions surrounding this behaviour. Within this context, Robinson

stresses the need to reconsider sexual harassment in terms of its 'everydayness', which operates to generally silence and render this behaviour invisible, normalising it in every day gendered relations. Critical to this normalising process of sexual harassment is its intersection with the performance of gendered identities. For example, sexual harrasment becomes, in particular, a powerful enactment of hegemonic masculinity; and concerns around popularity, for both girls and boys, makes the negotiation of this behaviour unpredictable and contradictory. Robinson also briefly examines the intersections between sexual harassment and homophobic and heterosexist harassment. However, Davies and McInnes examine homophobic violence in depth later in this book (see chapter 7). Thus, the contradictions that surround this behaviour that have often been used to blame the victim for their collusion or lack of appropriate responses are explored. For example, why do girls see some boys' behaviours as sexual harassment and not similar behaviours from particular other boys? Robinson's focus on sexual harassment is framed within a broader discussion of perceptions of sexual harassment; who actually experiences and practices this behaviour; and the way that it is represented in the media and popular culture.

Martin Mills in chapter five examines boys and violence in schools. Whenever a particularly violent crime is committed, newspaper reports often make mention of the family background, ethnicity and class of the perpetrator(s). However, Mills argues, it is seldom that any attention is given to considerations of gender. That the perpetrator is a man is seldom remarked upon, the unwritten assumption being that instigators of violence are naturally male (evidence of this assumption is starkly apparent in media reports when the perpetrator is female). This assumption is to some extent justified; the majority of violent acts are carried out by men and boys. However, this is a not a 'natural' state of affairs but one which is grounded in essentialist constructions of gender and which serves the wider interest of the 'patriarchal gender order'. Since the 1970s feminists have been working to expose the political effects of men's 'ownership' of violence and to demonstrate that the world would be a safer place for women and girls and men and boys if those discourses, which naturalised men's violence were disrupted. This has meant naming the gendered construction of violence. As is evident from news reports relating to most instances of violence, there

is still quite some way to go in this regard. However, in many countries at the moment schools offer potential as sites for where such namings and disruptions can take place. Mills's chapter argues that rather than rejecting feminist concerns about schooling as irrelevant and harmful to boys' education, educational authorities need to use the spaces created by the boys' debate to embrace insights into boys' education offered by feminism. These insights will contribute positively to boys' educational outcomes and serve to make the boys' gender evident, especially in relation to violent behaviour.

Chapter six addresses students' gendered perspectives of violence in South African Schools. The authors, Robert Morrell, Deevia Bhana, Vijay Hamlall, Claire Gaillard-Thurston, argue that the endemic nature of school violence in the South African education system is a major barrier to gender equity. The authors point out that opinion is divided on what causes the violence although there is widespread acknowledgement that something urgently needs to be done to make schools safe. Many learners encounter extreme violence during their school careers. Sometimes this violence comes from forces outside of school, sometimes from teachers and sometimes from other learners. The violence is necessarily gendered. The authors examine the ways in which secondary school learners, boys and girls, experience violence. They present narratives of learners from two schools. In talking about their experiences of violence, the learners draw on a variety of discourses to legitimate their own involvement in violence and to explain how the violence occurs. The learner narratives of violence reflect childhood and community experiences of violence, which in turn reflect the profound social inequalities that are a legacy of colonial and apartheid South Africa. The authors stress the agency of learners and analyse how boys and girls either contribute to, or undermine a climate of violence in schools.

In Chapter 7, the first in Part 3, Davies and McInnes explore the ways in which homophobic violence is understood and recognised, particularly within schooling cultures. The authors examine the discourses through which same sex attraction is constructed, and the impact of these discourses in addressing the ongoing problem of

homophobic violence in schools. This kind of violence frequently goes unrecognised by educators, or is shut down with little room for the perpetrators of such harassment and violence to reflect on their own subject position within relations of power. Davies and McInnes employ the pedagogy, *circuits of recognition,* as a framework to foreground the way in which social subjects are constituted interdependently. A moment of homophobic abuse serves as a moment of recognition. The perpetrator of homophobic violence is involved in 'othering' the abused through the use of hate speech, in a concerted effort to make the recipients of this abuse recognisable as a marginalised queer person/sexuality. The perpetrator of homophobic violence attempts to shore up his/her own identity as heteronormative. In such instances of linguistic violence, the perpetrator of the violence is attempting to determine the terms of recognition, generally by citing dominant discourses of heterosexuality, and the individuals being hailed by this linguistic violence are temporarily interpellated through discourses that can and frequently do cause injury. In such instances, a perpetrator is shoring up his/her heteronormative place in the grid of intelligible social positionings while casting the abused as more vulnerable and less valued. Davies and McInnes examine two cases of homophobic violence in the media before discussing some useful *circuit breakers*—that is, methods and practices that intervene in homophobic violence within schooling contexts.

Moira Carmody, in chapter eight, provides an overview of her successful sexual ethics and violence prevention program that she has developed for her work with young people. Educating young people about sexual assault and other forms of intimate partner violence is a challenging area for school educators. This is despite the fact that young people self-report high levels of violence in early dating relationships. Historically this area has tended to be ignored in most personal development curricula, and when it has been acknowledged, external anti-violence experts have been brought in. More recently in NSW state schools, additional curricula have been developed which attempt to educate young people about sexual consent and 'healthy relationships'. Carmody explores these developments and argues that they often unwittingly foster a discourse of danger and fear associated with adolescent sexuality. They also place significant responsibility on young women to manage the potential risks from young men and reinforce traditional discourses of heteronormativity thus

excluding same sex attracted young people. An alternative approach based on sexual ethics will be discussed based on empirical research with rural and city young women and men of diverse sexualities about what they want from their sexuality education programmes. A sexual ethics approach challenges the risk discourses associated with both sexuality and violence prevention education. Instead it offers a framework for young people to explore knowledge and skills of ethical decision- making that balances both pleasure and danger in intimate relationships.

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