PROMOTING EDUCATIONAL EQUITY THROUGH TEACHER EMPOWERMENT

WEB-ASSISTED TRANSFORMATIVE ACTION RESEARCH AS A COUNTER-HETERNORMATIVE PRAXIS

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PROMOTING EDUCATIONAL EQUITY THROUGH TEACHER EMPOWERMENT
Web-assisted Transformative Action Research as a Counter-Heteronormative Praxis

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OULUN YLIOPISTO, OULU 2009
abstract

The aim of the research was to explore the possibilities and limitations to foster teacher empowerment and promote Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, Transgender and Queer (GLBTQ) educational equity in schools. The context of the research was the GLBTQ Educational Equity (GLEE) Project funded by European Union (EU) during 1999–2002. Using an action research approach a Leadership Training Course (LTC) for teachers was developed with an international training team. The aim of the course was to empower teachers to develop action plans for their schools to promote GLBTQ equity. After the course teachers were supported in their actions by an internet-based support network called GLEENET. There was a LTC in 2000 and 2002 in Oulu, Finland.

The starting point for developing an empowering pedagogy for the LTC was critical pedagogical theories. The results from the LTC along with the post-course actions were used to further develop the pedagogical theory, followed by another course and further theoretical development.

The focus of the dissertation is on: (1) evaluating the empowerment of course participants, (2) developing principles of web-assisted transformative pedagogy, and (3) evaluating the methodological approach as a counter-heteronormative praxis. In addition, new tools for conceptualising empowerment are developed.

There was evidence that the participants were empowered by the LTC, and that GLEENET after the course further empowered them. Following the LTC all the teachers engaged in some form of activism such as workshops for colleagues, curriculum development and student activities. Also, some of the participants carried out transnational projects funded by the EU. The first was the Inequality in School Project 2001–2002 and the second was the Towards an Inclusive School Project 2003–2006.

Despite the empowerment of teachers and their actions to transform their schools, the research concluded that there were limitations. In particular, resistance and barriers were faced including opposition from headteachers and colleagues, as well as having a lack of time. There is a need for wider EU anti-discrimination legislation, action on the part of educational authorities, and pre and in-service teacher training to break down cultural and structural barriers to promoting GLBTQ educational equity.

Keywords: action research, empowerment, equity, heteronormativity, heterosexism, homophobia, schools, teacher education, transformative pedagogy
Bedford, Timothy, Opettajien voimaannuttaminen koulumaailman yhdenvertaisuuden edistämiseksi. Web-avusteinen transformatiivinen toimintatutkimus heteronormatiivisuuden vastaisena praksikseen
Kasvatustieteiden tiedekunta, Kasvatustieteiden ja opettajankoulutuksen yksikkö, Oulun yliopisto, PL 2000, 90014 Oulun yliopisto
Oulu

Tiivistelmä

Kriittisen pedagogiikan teorian olivat lähtökohtana LTC-kurssin voimauttavalle pedagogikalle. Ensimmäisen LTC-kurssin tuloksia sekä osallistujien kurssin jälkeisiä toimia käytettiin pedagogisen teorian jatkokehittämiseen, minkä jälkeen seurasi toinen LTC-kurssi sekä teorian edelleen kehittämistä.

Tämä väitöskirja keskittyy: (1) arvioimaan kurssin osallistujien voimaantumista, (2) kehittämään web-avusteisen transformatiivisen pedagogian perusperiaatteita, sekä (3) arvioimaan metodologisen lähestymistavan soveltuvuutta heteronormatiivisuuden vastaiseni praksikseksi. Lisäksi kehitetään uusia työkaluja voimaantumisen käsitteellistämiseen.


Asiassa: heteronormatiivisuus, heteroseksisimmi, homofobia, koulut, opettajakoulutus, toimintatutkimus, transformatiivinen pedagogia, voimaantuminen, yhdenvertaisuus
Acknowledgements

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Thanks to my mother Hilda for putting up with me all these years and giving me the curiosity to explore the world and its diversity.

Thanks to my husband Timo Petman for our happy home life which has been the foundation for persevering with this research. Although I believe he is my number one fan, Timo is also my most critical friend. He has provided me with much advice and timely diversions needed for reaching the finishing line.
**Glossary & Abbreviations**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Abbreviation</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>EI</td>
<td><em>Inequality in School</em> – EU-funded transnational project</td>
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<tr>
<td>EU</td>
<td>European Union</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GLBTQ</td>
<td>Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, Transgender and Queer</td>
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<td>GLEE</td>
<td>GLBTQ Educational Equity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GLEEk</td>
<td>A participant in the <em>Leadership Training Course</em> and GLEENET</td>
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<tr>
<td>GLEENET</td>
<td>Internet-based learning environment and support network. Provides the web-assisted dimension of the web-assisted transformative pedagogy and web-assisted transformative action research methodological approach</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GSA</td>
<td>Gay-Straight Alliance. A school-based extra-curricular club</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ILGA</td>
<td>International Lesbian and Gay Association</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LGBT</td>
<td>Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LTC</td>
<td><em>Leadership Training Course</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NGO</td>
<td>Non-Governmental Organisation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SDP</td>
<td>School Development Project – part of the EU’s Comenius education programme</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TIS</td>
<td><em>Towards an Inclusive School</em> – EU-funded transnational project</td>
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<tr>
<td>WATAR</td>
<td>Web-assisted transformative action research</td>
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<tr>
<td>WATP</td>
<td>Web-assisted transformative pedagogy</td>
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1 Introduction

1.1 The background of the researcher and research project

This dissertation is rooted in work that I have done to foster teacher empowerment to counter discrimination and promote educational equity. One year after beginning this research the European Union (EU) Treaty of Amsterdam of 1999 came into force, and it marked a turning point in efforts to counter discrimination in Europe.¹ There has since followed the Racial Equality Directive (2000/43/EC) prohibiting any discrimination based on racial or ethnic origin, and the Employment Equality Directive (2000/78/EC) prohibiting discrimination in employment and training on grounds of a person’s religion or belief, disability, age or sexual orientation.

International concern for action to address discrimination and inequity goes back a long way. Principles of non-discrimination are asserted in the 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights, United Nations human rights covenants of 1966,² as well as several international conventions.³ In 1960 UNESCO adopted the Convention against Discrimination in Education which states in the preamble that UNESCO “has the duty not only to proscribe any form of discrimination in education but also to promote equality of opportunity and treatment for all in education.”

Despite such longstanding international treaties, declarations, and covenants, discrimination based on racial or ethnic origin, sex, sexual orientation, disability, age, and other distinctions are daily realities in all areas of society including education. However, whilst educational institutions may reflect and reproduce societal discrimination, they are also spaces that have the potential to actively challenge inequity, both within their own walls and the broader society.

¹ Article 13 EC of the Treaty of Amsterdam states that “the Council, acting unanimously on a proposal from the Commission and after consulting the European parliament, may take appropriate action to combat discrimination based on sex, racial, or ethnic origin, religion or belief, disability, age or sexual orientation” (cited in ILGA-Europe 1999).
Creating and evaluating the possibilities for anti-discriminatory resistance in schools and promoting social justice is a central aim of this research. I have been especially interested in constructing educational interventions and pedagogy to foster the empowerment of teachers as transformative agents to promote educational equity. As such, critical pedagogy with its emphasis on conscientisation and transformative action to counter oppression is the main field of study in this research.

Prior to this research I directed several teacher in-service training projects with international schools in Asia, to develop awareness of discrimination and oppression, and work towards equitable changes in school policies and practices. The projects consisted of a Leadership Training Course that prepared teachers to facilitate monthly seminars with their colleagues to make their schools more culturally inclusive and gender fair. Whilst these projects considered multiple forms of discrimination, they often produced hierarchies of oppression. Their focus was mainly on ethnicity, race and gender, whilst discrimination based on sexual orientation and other grounds received less attention. This research builds on that experience, and to partly redress the imbalance in the previous work it concentrates (though not exclusively) on discrimination faced by Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, Transgender and Queer (GLBTQ) persons in schools. In particular, the research focuses on constructing an educational intervention and pedagogy to empower teachers to challenge heteronormativity in schools, that is, how educational structures and practices normalise and privilege heterosexuality, and marginalise non-heterosexuality.

The context of the research is the GLBTQ Educational Equity (GLEE) Project that received 3 years of funding (1999 to 2002) from the EU Socrates programme. Together with an international training team (that I recruited), the GLEE Project developed a Leadership Training Course for European school teachers. The main objective of the course was to empower teacher participants to develop and carry out actions within their own school communities and form transnational projects to promote GLBTQ educational equity. These actions included, for example, workshops for colleagues, school counselling initiatives, integrating GLBTQ issues into the curriculum, and production of materials on GLBTQ educational issues. Following the course, the participants became part of an internet-based support network called GLEENET. This network provided a resource centre as well as a space for communication between participating teachers to support their own local actions and transnational projects.
During the GLEE Project my role as the researcher was to collect and analyse data to assist the development of the Leadership Training Course, and construct pedagogical theory and practice to foster teacher empowerment and promote GLBTQ educational equity. Critical pedagogy provided the theoretical foundations and starting point. Using a methodological approach based on critical action research (discussed in chapter 3), the research began with the planning of a Leadership Training Course with the training team. Empirical data was collected prior to and during the course, as well as afterwards when the teachers returned to their schools to carry out their action plans. The data was used to analyse the course and the ways in which teachers were empowered to carry out actions in their schools, and also the barriers that they faced. Reflection on the results led to the modification of the pedagogical principles followed by the planning of a further course. The methodological approach was therefore praxis with spiralling cycles of action and reflection to construct counter-heteronormative pedagogical theory and practice.

A Pilot Leadership Training Course took place in 2000 and was followed by another Leadership Training Course in 2002 (both in Oulu, Finland). After the second course the EU funding for the GLEE Project ended, along with the collaborative work with the training team. At this stage I began to focus on dissertation writing whilst continuing to collect data (mostly through GLEENET), on the activism of the teacher participants in their schools. The data included reports on the individual actions of teachers, as well as a transnational project called Towards an Inclusive School (TIS). The TIS Project was created by 5 course participants and received EU funding from 2003-2006.

At the dissertation writing stage the aim of the research was to use the data collected during the GLEE Project, including data on the post-course actions of teachers to: (1) evaluate teacher empowerment and activism, (2) construct principles and practice for an empowering pedagogy, and (3) evaluate the efficacy of action research as a counter-heteronormative praxis. Overall the aim of the research was therefore to evaluate the possibilities and limitations within the GLEE Project to foster teacher empowerment and promote GLBTQ educational equity.
1.2 The structure of the dissertation

The dissertation is organised into seven chapters. After the introduction, chapter 2 gives a background to sexual diversity and educational equity in schools. It includes approaches to defining sexual orientation and identity, and conceptual lenses for GLBTQ discrimination and equity. There is also a review of the manifestations and effects of GLBTQ discrimination and inequity, as well as intervention approaches and related research. The chapter ends with a discussion of the GLEE Project research – its justification and rationale.

Chapter 3 describes the theoretical and methodological framework for the research including the main assumptions, concepts and theories. Chapter 4 discusses the research developments up until the end of the Leadership Training Course. It includes an account of the project and research activities, and the role of GLEENET in the research process.

Chapter 5 firstly considers the ways in which the training team were empowered to develop and teach the Leadership Training Course. Secondly, there is an evaluation of the empowerment and activism of course participants. It is concerned with the ways in which the course participants were empowered to promote GLBTQ equity in their schools, what the teachers were able to do given their societal and school contexts, and the barriers they faced and whether they were able to overcome them.

Chapter 6 focuses on the construction of an empowering pedagogy based on the principles and characteristics of the Leadership Training Course and GLEENET, the post-course experiences of teachers discussed in chapter 5, and existing critical pedagogy theories.

Chapter 7 draws together the findings in the previous chapters to address the question:

What were the possibilities and limitations within the GLEE Project to foster teacher empowerment and promote GLBTQ educational equity?

This is followed by an evaluation of the research, recommendations, and contributions to knowledge.
2 Sexual diversity and educational equity in schools

This chapter provides a background to Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, Transgender and Queer (GLBTQ) issues in education. It begins with a consideration of approaches to defining sexual orientation and identity. Then follows a conceptual framework for GLBTQ educational equity, and an overview of the manifestations and effects of GLBTQ discrimination in schools. Different approaches to educational interventions to challenge GLBTQ inequity in schools are considered including related research. Lastly, the justification and rationale for the GLEE intervention and research are discussed.

2.1 Approaches to defining sexual orientation and identity

Sexual orientation describes the direction of one’s sexual interest including attractions, fantasies and experiences. Sexual orientation is just one component of sexual identity which according to Shively and DeCecco (1993, pp. 80-88) also includes one’s sex at birth, one’s gender identity which may be different to one’s biological sex, one’s social sex role, and sexual desire. This research takes a social constructionist view of sexual identity (Foucault 1978), meaning that the way it is understood has been, and continues to be shaped by social forces, and therefore varies both historically and across cultures. Indeed, the development of categories of sexual orientation is relatively new, and according to Lipkin (1999), the term homosexuality was first coined in 1869 and popularised by Kraft-Ebbing in Psychopathia Sexualis in 1887. The term homosexuality therefore has its roots in medical discourse with connotations of normal and deviant sexuality.

Sexuality is usually seen in terms of a heterosexual/homosexual dichotomy. However, research by Kinsey et al (1948) and Klein (1993) suggest that human sexuality falls along a spectrum from exclusively heterosexual to exclusively homosexual, and a significant proportion of persons fall somewhere in between. The gay/straight dichotomy is also a limiting conceptualisation of sexuality as it ignores inter-sexed people (those born with the biological characteristics of both sexes) and the multiple permutations of gender identity, gender role, and sex role. It is also an ethnocentric view as it does not apply to cultures where conceptions
of gender are broader, for example, a third sex *berdache*⁴ in some Native American cultures. However, the dominant categories of sexual orientation and gender identity within Western research on sexual diversity have expanded to include GLBTQ.

A recent development to approaches to defining sexual orientation and identity comes from queer theory, which argues that categories and categorisation can be oppressive, and furthermore that the social assignment of significance to difference can be used as a political device for establishing and maintaining dominance of one group over another. Queer theory has exposed the problem in normal and how social structures and practices normalise and privilege heterosexuality – referred to as heteronormativity (Warner 1993, 1999). Identifying as queer is seen as resisting assimilation and affirming diversity by asserting the right to be different. Queer theory’s social constructionist view of sexuality sees the possibility for replacing separate and rigid sexualities with more fluid and blurred notions. Challenging the heterosexual/homosexual binarism is central to queer theory and seeks what Queen and Schimel (1997) describe as “the queer erotic reality beyond the boundaries of gender, separatism, and essentialist notions of sexual orientation.” According to Tatchell (1999), this could lead to a situation where:

People no longer define themselves as hetero or homo, and the gender of a person’s sexual partner will cease to determine the social validity, or illegitimacy, of their carnal and affectional feelings (p. 44).

In such a situation, the term homosexual would merely refer to same-sex sexual acts, that is, a description of a behaviour, and not a particular person’s identity. The end of the homosexual thus conceived is, however, a long way off in the future, especially as homophobes are unlikely to be influenced by queer theory and continue to think in hetero-positive and homo-negative ways. Also, queer may become (or even has become) just another category in opposition to heterosexual. There are those who would argue for arriving at a hetero and homo-positive position, without the labels straight and gay disappearing.

Defining persons solely in terms of gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender, queer, is also problematic as it constructs a mythical uni-dimensional stable identity

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⁴ *Berdache* are morphological males, who are not seen as men, yet also not seen as women, and have ceremonial roles in Native American society. They occupy an alternative gender role that is a mixture of diverse elements. They serve a mediating function between men and women, precisely because their character is seen as distinct from either sex. (Williams 1986, p. 2.)
around sexuality without attention to all other types of diversity such as race or
class. GLBTQ persons are not a homogenous group and experience
discrimination and oppression in different ways. Furthermore, some individuals
experience multiple forms of discrimination. This creates a challenge for GLBTQ
research and political movements. It begs the question of which gays or lesbians
is one talking about?

Further challenges arise when considering the extent of sexual diversity
amongst school students. This is not only a question of the categories one chooses,
but also whether one views the diversity in terms of the self identity of students,
their sexual experiences, or their sexual attractions and fantasies. Studies show
that using self identity as the criterion will reveal a smaller number of GLBTQ
students than attraction or fantasies (e.g., Mortimer 1987; U.S. Department of
Health and Human Services 1991). This is not surprising when due to
homophobia many students are closeted, that is, choose to hide their sexuality.
There is also the issue of those who are unsure about their sexuality, or do not
want to identify.

2.2 Conceptual lenses for GLBTQ discrimination and equity in
schools

In this research discrimination is defined as the structures and processes by which
a distinction is made between people in such a way that it gives rise to inequity.
Inequity includes disadvantage, inequality and injustice. The outcome of
discrimination is therefore oppression that creates dominant and marginalised
groups. Thompson (1998) defines oppression as:

Inhuman or degrading treatment of individuals or groups; hardship and
injustice brought about by the dominance of one group over another; the
negative and demeaning exercise of power. Oppression often involves
disregarding the rights of an individual or group and is thus a denial of
citizenship. (p. 10.)

Discrimination is therefore linked to an asymmetric distribution of power and
resources, and is manifested on both an individual level and also a structural level,
that is, embedded in institutional and societal structures and processes.

I use the term equity/inequity in preference to equality/inequality as equality
can imply uniformity without attention to diversity. Being equal is not necessarily
equitable given the diversity of values, needs, and aspirations of individuals.
Equality may imply being equal to the mainstream and assimilated, when one is more interested in being part of the queerstream. Equality is often discussed in terms of equality of opportunity. In my view, this approach tends to focus on the level of the individual without a broader systemic consideration of the structures which create and perpetuate inequality. A consideration of ‘fairness’ of outcome is also important as it directs attention to inequitable structures and processes.

Discourse about GLBTQ discrimination in schools has shifted over the last 40 years with an increasing focus on the structural level. With this development there has been a change in the conceptual lenses through which to view GLBTQ equity. Though many schools are characterised by a culture of silence on GLBTQ issues, the silence has been broken due to concerns for GLBTQ youth as a population facing psychological and health risks, as well as schools being a risk environment for GLBTQ youth. (Griffin & Ouellett 2003.)

Homophobia (coined by Weinberg 1972) became the conceptual lens through which to view the risk to GLBTQ youth posed by bullying and other forms of violence in schools. Sears and Williams (1997, p. 16) define externalised homophobia as “prejudice, discrimination, harassment, or acts of violence against sexual minorities, evidenced in deep-seated fear or hatred of those who love and sexually desire those of the same sex.” The mental health risks to GLBTQ youth were seen through the lens of internalised homophobia which according to Lipkin (1999) is self-loathing that “can cause depression and low self-esteem” (pp. 57-58).

Homophobia is usually regarded as irrational (Pharr 1988), but I would argue that it can also be viewed as rational in the sense that it is a logical outcome in societies where anti-homosexuality is pervasive. For example, Ottoisson (2007, p. 4) reported that “85 member states of the United Nations still criminalize consensual same-sex acts among adults, thus institutionally promoting a culture of hatred.” The term homophobia has also been criticised by researchers who claim it is not a classic phobia, although it has been demonstrated that some individuals do have a fear response to homosexuality, and try to avoid contact with homosexuals (Davies 2003, pp. 42-43). However, in everyday usage the clinical connotations related to phobia have diminished and homophobia has become more synonymous with a sense of power that fuels anti-GLBTQ prejudice and hatred. Plummer (1998, cited in Yep 2002) has also criticised the term homophobia as it neglects women (and I would add, bisexual and transgender persons). Also, as homophobia focuses on the individual, it tends to
ignore the underlying societal conditions that lead to GLBTQ oppression. This is why the conceptual lens switches to heterosexism.

Heterosexism denies, denigrates, and stigmatises any non-heterosexual form of behaviour, identity, relationship or community (Herek 1995, p. 321). It can therefore be viewed as an ideology that assumes that heterosexuality is the only acceptable form of sexuality, or that everybody should be heterosexual, or is heterosexual by default. Heterosexism is discrimination that is manifested in the exclusion, by omission or design, of non-heterosexual persons in policies, procedures, or activities of societal institutions such as schools (Sears 1997, p. 16). According to Epstein and Johnson (1994), this school culture of silence around non-heterosexuality discriminates by failing to recognise differences. It posits a totally and unambiguously heterosexual world in much the same way as certain forms of racism posit the universality of whiteness. In this way the dominant form is made to appear “normal” and “natural” and the subordinate form perverse, remarkable and dangerous. (p. 198.)

It can therefore be said, that a heterosexist culture contributes towards the social construction of homophobia, as well as creating indifference or lack of sensitivity towards GLBTQ discrimination.

Butler (1990) uses the concept of a heterosexual matrix to illustrate heterosexism. This matrix has only two accepted gendered positions: (1) male body, male role with desire towards female body, and (2) female body, female role with desire towards male body. This binary gender system places pressure on individuals to conform to hegemonic standards of gender identity and sexuality, and can be considered as a system of compulsory heterosexuality (Rich 1986) or heterosexual privilege (Berlant & Warner 1998; Warner 1993).

Heterosexism involves indirect and often unconscious discrimination, such as: (1) the invisibility of GLBTQ persons in the school policies and curriculum, (2) a climate of fear making GLBTQ students and teachers feel uncomfortable about being open about their sexuality, and (3) lack of awareness of GLBTQ equity issues. This is in contrast to homophobia that is a more conscious, direct form of discrimination including name-calling and harassment of GLBTQ students. Heterosexism is, therefore, often discrimination by neglect or omission. In contrast homophobia is often discrimination by intent and design. (Blumenfeld & Raymond 1989, p. 245.)
Since the beginning of this research, the focus of attention on GLBTQ equity issues has shifted to the ways in which social structures and processes prescribe heterosexuality as normative and marginalise other sexualities. Along with the growing influence of queer theory, the term heteronormativity, introduced by Warner (1993), has been increasingly used as “a framework to see the myriad of ways that heterosexuality is normalised” (Walton 2006, p. 15). Berlant and Warner (1998) refer to heteronormativity as “the institutions, structures of understanding, and practical orientations that make heterosexuality seem not only coherent – that is, organised as a sexuality – but also privileged” (p. 548). They point out that heteronormativity is a different lens to heterosexism and homophobia:

Heteronormativity is more than an ideology, or prejudice, or phobia against gays and lesbians; it is produced in almost every aspect of the forms and arrangements of social life: nationality, the state, and law; commerce; medicine; and education; as well as in the conventions and affects of narrativity, romance, and other protected spaces of culture (pp. 554-555).

Heteronormativity conveys an insidious and invasive nature that pervades every aspect of life (Adams 2005, p. 16). As Yep (2005) points out, heteronormativity is in our individual psyches, collective consciousness, social institutions, cultural practices and, knowledge systems, and:

In spite of its prevalence, heteronormativity remains largely invisible and elusive to most people by presenting heterosexuality as a natural state and a social “given” with a sense of rightness, moral rectitude, and a projected cultural ideal (p. 395).

Heteronormativity and the privileging of heterosexuality is therefore not only present in formal school policies and practices, but as Walton (2006) argues:

Unwritten social rules of heterosexuality permeate school cultures and regulate the lives of all students. Those who fail to live up to the social expectations of heterosexuality are targets for rejection and ridicule. Boys, in particular, are continually pressured to prove their heterosexuality and manhood to avoid being labelled as “faggots” or “sissies.” (p. 16.)

This demonstrates how heteronormativity normalises gender and sexuality that are enforced through hegemonic heterosexual masculinity, misogyny, and homophobia. Heteronormativity can therefore be viewed as the root of
discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity. When heterosexism is viewed as practices on an individual level and heteronormativity on a structural level they can be considered as forming "opposite sides of a cycle of oppression. Heteronormative cultural values inspire and enable heterosexist practices. Heterosexist practices, in turn, reinforce heteronormative values." (Petrovic 2005, p. 399). To me, this would seem to suggest that everyone should be homophobic or heterosexist, which is not the case. I would argue that it is not only inequitable structures that perpetuate homophobia and heterosexism, but also a lack of collective critical and ethical consciousness along with agency to challenge discrimination (I return to this in chapter 3).

As can be seen from the above, GLBTQ discrimination operates on interrelated individual, institutional, cultural, social, and structural levels, and can be overt or covert, direct or indirect, conscious or unconscious. The shift in the conceptual lens from homophobia to heterosexism to heteronormativity reflects different approaches to GLBTQ education issues from safety to equality to critical (discussed in section 2.4), as well as the development of both individual and collective consciousness regarding GLBTQ educational equity. The different conceptual lenses were reflected in the discourses of the diverse participants in the GLEE Project.

### 2.3 Manifestations and effects of GLBTQ discrimination in schools

Yep (2005) identifies four domains of oppression and violence that are the result of heteronormativity: (1) soul murder and internalised homophobia, (2) hate crimes and externalised homophobia, (3) discursive violence against non-heteronormative individuals, and (4) institutional violence against non-heteronormative individuals (pp. 396-397). I have defined internalised and externalised homophobia in the previous section. Discursive violence against non-heterosexuals is referred to by Yep (2005) as:

> Words, images, gestures, tones, presentations, and omissions used to treat differentially, degrade, disparage, and represent LGBTQ people and their experiences (p. 396).

Thompson (1998) describes discursive violence as discrimination on the cultural level that is evident in everyday discourse, and includes negative stereotyping. Institutional violence can be seen in the ways that heteronormativity “subordinates, disempowers, denies and rejects individuals who do not conform
to the heterosexual mandate” (Yep 2005, p. 397). For example, same-sex couples may be denied going to the school prom, it may be considered inappropriate to bring up GLBTQ issues in the classroom, and same-sex couples who show open affection may be considered as flaunting their sexuality. Much institutional violence remains hidden as many GLBTQ persons fear ridicule, sanction or violence from being open about their sexuality. In this situation, many students would not even dare ask to go to the prom with someone of the same sex.

2.3.1 Research on the manifestations of externalised homophobia

Research on sexual orientation and gender identity discrimination in schools shows that heteronormativity can result in both overt harassment and violence towards GLBTQ persons, that is externalised homophobia. In a study of lesbian and gay school students in the U.K., Rivers (1995) found amongst 80 questionnaire respondents high incidences of name calling (80%); open ridicule (69%); hitting or kicking (59%); teasing (49%); and sexual assault (8%). In more recent UK research by Rivers and Cowie (2006), gay, lesbian and bisexual students had experienced: name-calling (82%); ridicule (71%); teasing (58%), hitting or kicking (60%); stolen belongings (49%); rumour spreading (59%); frightening stares (52%); isolation by peers (27%); sexual assault by peers or teachers (11%).

Another U.K. study published by the London Teenage Group (Trenchard & Warren 1984) found that among 416 lesbian and gay youth, one in two had experienced problems at school due to their sexual orientation, one in five had been beaten because they were lesbian or gay, and six in ten had been verbally abused because they were lesbian or gay. This study was replicated in 2001 by Ellis and High (2004) and there was a significant increase in the number of respondents reporting problems at school. This included reports of verbal abuse,隔离, teasing, physical assault, being ostracised, and being subject to pressure to conform.

At the same time as my research began, a survey about harassment of GLBTQ students was conducted in 32 states in the U.S.A. (GLSEN5 1999). It found that more than 90% of students had heard anti-gay language in their

5 GLSEN is the Gay, Lesbian and Straight Education Network based in New York, U.S.A., challenging anti-gay discrimination in schools (www.glsen.org). Their education director participated in this research project.
schools either “frequently” or “sometimes.” In addition, more than 60% said they had been the victim of verbal harassment in school, half of these on a daily basis. Another more recent national school climate survey of 6,209 middle and high school students found that nearly 90% of LGBT students experienced harassment at school in the past year. Furthermore, 60% felt unsafe at school because of their sexual orientation, and 75% heard derogatory remarks such as “faggot” or “dyke” frequently or often in school. (GLSEN 2007.) Bochenek and Brown (2001) in their Human Rights Watch research on violence and discrimination against GLBTQ students in U.S. Schools noted “the abject failure of the United States government to protect lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender youth who attend public schools from harassment and violence.” Furthermore, in their research on 18 gay and lesbian youth in South Africa, Butler, Alpaslan, Strümpher, and Astbury (2003) reported that they had all experienced discrimination, isolation, and non-tolerance in their high schools.

The Dutch lesbian and gay COC (Centre for Culture and Leisure) organisation conducted a survey of 500 students and teachers on homosexuality in schools. The results published by ILGA-Europe (2003) showed that GLBTQ students often feel threatened by other students, and that they complained of bullying, nasty jokes, and physical and mental abuse due to their sexual orientation. The survey also revealed that in a large number of schools homosexuality was a taboo subject, and students are afraid to challenge homophobia for fear of being labelled gay. The survey showed that while anti-gay slurs and harassment may be rife in school playgrounds, GLBTQ students are invisible in school curricula and policies. It said that pupils feel abandoned, homosexual teachers feel isolated, and that “the sad conclusion is: if we don’t talk about it, it doesn’t exist.”

2.3.2 Research on teacher attitudes towards homosexuality and homophobia

The COC and GLSEN surveys also reveal teacher attitudes towards homophobia. In many schools, teaching staff often fail to respond to anti-GLBTQ language even when they hear it. The COC survey showed a lack of support from school boards to address homophobia. The GLSEN survey found that more than one-third of respondents indicated that they never heard teachers or other school staff challenge anti-GLBTQ language, and furthermore, had heard faculty and staff actually use derogatory language about sexual minorities. A survey by Sears
(1992) about the attitudes towards homosexuality of 258 prospective teachers and 483 school counsellors living in the South of the U.S.A. found that: (1) teachers generally avoid the subject of homosexuality and only 29% would discuss homosexuality in the classroom, (2) 80% of teachers had negative attitudes towards homosexuals, (3) 52% of teachers would feel uncomfortable working with an openly lesbian or gay colleague, (4) 85% of teachers oppose the integration of GLBTQ themes into existing curricula, (5) two out of three guidance counsellors harbour negative feelings towards gays and lesbians, and (6) only one in five guidance counsellors had participated in programmes to expand their knowledge about homosexuality. A more recent study in the U.S.A. by Morgan (2003) on the attitudes of teachers enrolled at seven Mid-Atlantic institutions towards GLBTQ students indicated that out of 408 respondents, over 40% held moderate to extremely negative attitudes towards non-heterosexual persons.

2.3.3 Surveys of the effects of homophobia on both GLBTQ and other students

On the personal level heteronormativity can also lead to soul murder and internalised homophobia which Yep (2005 p. 396) defines as “the psychic and psychological injuries that individuals inflict upon themselves.” Growing up in cultures where the view of homosexuality is negative can lead to self-hatred. Research (e.g., Rofes 1989; Reis & Page 1999; Douglas, Warwick, Kemp and Whitty 1997) has found that GLBTQ youth often experience confusion, guilt, fear, alienation, and low self-esteem leading to substance abuse, depression, and a higher incidence of suicide. A UK study by Rivers and Cowie (2006, p.11) focused on the experiences of 190 lesbian, gay, and bisexual people who were victimized by their peers at school. They found that over 50 percent had contemplated self-harm or suicide at the time they were being harassed, and that 40 percent had engaged in such behaviour at least once. The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (1989) found that sexual minority youth are over six times more likely than other students to have attempted suicide. Furthermore, research by ILGA-Europe and IGLYO\(^6\) (Takacs 2006) on social exclusion of GLBTQ people in Europe gave evidence of above average suicidality among GLBTQ youth. ILGA-Europe (2007) concluded that

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\(^6\) International Gay and Lesbian Youth Organisation: www.ilgypo.com

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this was a result of the marginalisation, stigmatisation, and discrimination that GLBTQ youth face.

Komiya (2003) compiled a collection of Japanese gay youths’ essays, and Fann (2003) wrote about growing up gay in China. Commenting on these two articles Keith Goddard, the coordinator of the Gays and Lesbians of Zimbabwe organisation, said that:

Most of what the young writers from Japan and China write about resonates with my experiences of young people in Zimbabwe and other parts of Africa. It seems that no matter where you are in the world there are universal experiences associated with growing up gay and lesbian in conservative heterosexist communities: self-denial, self-hatred, loneliness, thoughts of suicide, family pressure to marry and conform to the norm, peer-group pressure and rejection of friends. (Goddard 2003, pp. 51-52.)

Verbal and physical harassment of sexual minority youth has not only emotional and physical consequences but academic ones as well. Beth Reis (1999) of the Safe Schools Coalition conducted interviews in Washington State U.S.A. with 58 students who reported being harassed at school because of their actual or perceived sexual orientation. She found that more than one third of the students believed harassment had hurt their grades. Furthermore, 70% of the students avoided certain parts of the school building or grounds, 64% had difficulty paying attention in class, 59% talked less in class, and 36% cut one or more classes due to harassment.

Besides the overt effects of homophobia, heterosexual privilege and the invisibility of non-heterosexuals can have destructive effects on both the individual and societal level. Rich (1986) describes invisibility as a “dangerous and painful condition” and goes on to say that:

When those who have the power to name and socially construct reality and choose not to see you or hear you, whether you are dark skinned, old, disabled, female, or speak with a different accent or dialect than theirs, when someone with the authority of a teacher, say, describes the world and you are not in it, there is a moment of psychic disequilibrium, as if you looked in a mirror and saw nothing. Yet you know you exist and others like you, that it is a game with mirrors. It takes some strength of soul and not just individual strength, but collective understanding to resist this void, this non-being, into which you are thrust, and to stand up, demanding to be seen and heard, and to
make yourself visible, to claim that your experience is just as real and normative as any other. (p. 199.)

It is important to note that many GLBTQ youth do have the strength of soul that Rich (1986) refers to, and that not all GLBTQ youth are afflicted by debilitating internalised homophobia. This view is supported by Savin-Williams (2001a, 2001b) who claims that high suicide rates have been exaggerated, and that most GLBTQ youth are happy, healthy and successful. Nonetheless the gay suicide research mentioned above (overstated or otherwise) is important to mention as it had an impact on the creation of school interventions, such as Project 10 in California (referred to in section 2.4). Russell (2005) has also challenged the research focus on GLBTQ risk, and the lack of attention given to the resilience of sexual minority youth. Overall though the research provides evidence for the presence of internalised homophobia, but there can be disagreement over the extent.

Research has not only focused on the impact of homophobia and heterosexism on non-heterosexuals, but also how it can be detrimental to all students. Warren Blumenfeld (1992) says that homophobia and heterosexism: (1) channels all students into rigid gender roles inhibiting creativity and self-expression, (2) stigmatises the formation of close same-sex friendships, (3) makes all persons perceived as GLBTQ a target of abuse, and (4) creates peer pressure to engage in sexual relationships to prove one’s heterosexuality. Bochenek and Brown (2001) in their conclusion to their report on violence against GLBTQ students in U.S. schools also add that:

Discrimination based on sexual orientation also reinforces the discrimination based on gender that many girls face in schools and places lesbians in a particularly vulnerable position. The discriminatory view that boys are inherently superior to girls pervades many schools, sending boys a message that they should assert their masculinity and prove their heterosexuality by being abusive and disrespectful to girls as well as to gay students.

This point serves to reinforce how the school experiences of gay male students and lesbians can be different. Furthermore, it shows how homophobia can be used as a weapon of sexism (Pharr 1988). On the basis of the above, it can seen how discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity are widespread phenomena and can negatively affect all school students. Homophobia and heterosexism are present in school
policies and curriculum, and student and teacher attitudes. As a result respect and
dignity for all students is not guaranteed. Instead of schools being sites that strive
to build socially just and democratic societies, free of prejudice and
discrimination, they can be places that perpetuate oppression. Heteronormativity
serves to create a culture of silence around non-heterosexuality, and GLBTQ
issues are often taboo subjects in schools. When homosexuality is mentioned it is
often negative and derogatory. Despite this there is a notable absence of
educational interventions in schools to improve the situation, and most notably a
lack of teacher training to address the situation.

2.4 GLBTQ educational intervention paradigms

In the absence of educational interventions to address GLBTQ inequity by
national, regional and local education authorities, schools and teacher education
institutions may still have a degree of autonomy to implement curriculum and
policy changes. An historical overview of approaches to addressing GLBTQ
issues in schools has been provided by Griffin and Ouellett (2003). They
categorise three generations of approaches relevant to the U.S. context: silence
(years 1920-1979); safety (years 1980-2002); social justice (year 2003 onwards).
The social justice category is broad and can be divided into an equality approach
with a focus on equal rights, and a critical approach with a focus on
empowerment and societal transformation – this gives four major intervention
paradigms on GLBTQ educational issues: silence; safety; equality and critical.\(^7\)

*Silence paradigm*

The silence paradigm discriminates against GLBTQ people in education by
denying (at least publicly) their existence and rendering them invisible. In such
schools homosexuality is a taboo, creating not only a culture of silence but also a
culture of fear for those who are non-heterosexual. The taboo may be reinforced
through education policies and practices sanctioned by government. This is
problematic not only in the many countries that still criminalise consensual same-
sex acts among adults. For example, in Spain same-sex couples can marry, and

\(^7\) Szalacha (2004, p. 69) similarly argues that education that is inclusive of GLBTQ issues has
developed in three major paradigms: safety; equity; and critical theory.
yet Generelo (2007) says that despite legal equality homosexuality is not talked about in schools:

Pupils who watch television, listen to the radio, hang out in community spaces and surf the internet will encounter openly gay or lesbian people, families headed by homosexual parents, or relatives and friends who are known to be homosexual or transsexual. But once they enter the classroom this subject disappears and there is an assumption that all pupils are straight. (p. 64.)

In courses I have taught in Finland to pre-service teachers, nearly all students commented that homosexuality was not discussed during their school years. Commenting also on heteronormativity in Finnish schools, Sunnari\(^8\), Kangasvuo and Heikkinen (2002) report that:

Currently, gender and sexuality remain as silenced domains in higher education and hence also silenced in other educational organisations, including schools maintaining hidden heterogender curricula (p. 21).

**Safety paradigm**

The safety paradigm is primarily concerned with breaking the silence on GLBTQ educational issues and addressing harassment and violence towards sexual minorities. Two examples are Project 10\(^9\), which established GLBTQ support groups in a Los Angeles school (Cohen 2005), and the Massachusetts Department of Education Safe Schools Program (Lipkin 1999). The objectives of the former were concerned with creating a safe space for GLBTQ students. The latter included developing policies to protect gay and lesbian students from harassment, violence and discrimination, and held over 700 presentations and teacher training sessions. It also offered in-school student support groups and counselling for gay and lesbian students. From 1993 to 1998 the Massachusetts program provided technical assistance to over 350 schools, spurred 140 Gay-Straight Alliances\(^10\) (GSAs), and developed a resource manual for counsellors. Szalacha (2001, cited

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\(^8\) Vappu Sunnari was the initiator of an EU-funded educational intervention ‘Increasing Awareness in Educational Organisations of Sexualised and Gendered Violence’ (Aware-Project, based at Oulu University, Finland). The project represented an attempt to break the silence on GLBTQ educational issues.

\(^9\) Project 10: http://www.project10.org/

\(^10\) Gay-Straight Alliances are extra curricular clubs found predominantly in schools in the U.S.A.
in Cahill & Cianciotto 2004, p. 13) carried out some research in connection with this intervention which included evaluating the impact of GSAs. She found that in schools with GSAs, 35% of GLBTQ students felt they could be open about their sexuality compared to only 12% of students in schools without GSAs. Furthermore, she also discovered in schools where staff had undergone training on GLBTQ issues students felt more supported.

In spite of many advantages, one of the weaknesses of the safety paradigm is that it can become a deficit-model portraying gay and lesbian students as hopeless, depressed and suicidal victims. This can lead to gay or lesbian students becoming the exclusive focus of the intervention, without consideration being given to the broader school community and the culture that produces homophobic violence.

Equality paradigm

If the interventions within the safety paradigm are for GLBTQ persons, then interventions within the equality paradigm are about GLBTQ persons. It addresses not only safety but promotes inclusion of sexual minorities in the curriculum. One common example of a school intervention within the equality paradigm is Gay and Lesbian History Month. This contributions approach (Banks 1997) focuses on heroes and the great and exceptional GLBTQ people, who act as role models. The main limitation of the contributions approach is that it is merely reformist and does not involve a change in the basic structure of curriculum – after the GLBTQ History Month one reverts back to real history where GLBTQ persons are rendered invisible. GLBTQ content may also be introduced into the curriculum alongside content about other groups with an additive approach (Banks 1997). This approach also does not involve a change in the basic structure of curriculum, and sexual minorities may still be viewed from a heterosexist perspective. In this case, the approach whilst trying to promote equality may make the audience see the new GLBTQ additions as perverse, and therefore it may not transform attitudes regarding homophobia and heterosexism. This kind of intervention with its focus on equality can also be assimilationist, rather than one that affirms sexual diversity and equity.

Another equality paradigm intervention involves inviting a GLBTQ speaker into school to give a presentation or lead a workshop with students. Timmermans (2003) researched such a speaker programme in Germany. His findings confirm some of the reservations I have about what I call the “rent a gay for a day” model. The emphasis in this approach can be on portraying GLBTQ persons as just as
normal as straight persons, and not question the processes of normalisation and marginalisation. The discourse can also reinforce essentialist ideas of sexuality. The presentations are usually carried out by volunteers from local GLBTQ organisations with limited training in teaching skills. The target is students rather than teachers, and the teacher may not even be present during the class. As a result there is little impact on teachers, and in fact teachers may feel relieved for not having to deal with the topic themselves. After the presentation, school policies and curriculum can readily return to their heterosexist focus. On the other hand, in communities where GLBTQ persons are invisible, such a presentation could have a positive effect on GLBTQ students who feel isolated and think they are the only non-heterosexual in the village.

**Critical paradigm**

Interventions in the critical paradigm are influenced by critical, postmodern, poststructuralist and queer theories (Britzman 1995; Bryson & Castell 1993; Ford 2004; Gosse 2004; Luhmann 1998). Such interventions seek radical change, including the transgression of straight/gay binary thinking, which Sedgwick (1990, p. 1) sees “as an issue of continuing, determinative importance in the lives of people across the spectrum of sexualities.” The interventions aim to uncover, question and challenge the normalisation of heterosexuality “encoded in language, in institutional practices and the encounters of everyday life” (Epstein & Johnson 1994, p. 198). The critical paradigm seeks to construct critical pedagogy and an education for empowerment, equity, social justice and human rights. It focuses on developing not only awareness of homophobia and heterosexism, but also on transformative action to overcome oppression in school and the broader society. The social construction of oppression is analysed along with approaches to challenge the ways in which school curricula, policies, and practices normalise heterosexuality and marginalise non-heterosexuality. Mayo (2004) argues there is evidence that Gay-Straight Alliances (GSAs) can be spaces for challenging such heteronormativity and the development of queer perspectives. In the U.S.A., she found that students in some GSAs were “deeply aware of the associational element of identity and very aware of how to navigate the often crushing normalizing power experienced in schools” (Mayo 2004, p. 23).

One of the problems of these critical interventions is the difficulty educators and educational theorists face in applying critical and queer theory and pedagogy to everyday classroom practice. Ellsworth claims that critical pedagogy “has
developed along a highly abstract and utopian line which does not necessarily sustain the daily workings of the education its supporters advocate” (1989, p. 297). Queer theory has also been criticised for being too academic, obscure and inaccessible, and educators have claimed that critical pedagogical theories are impractical (Kanpol 1998). If this is the case then there are some doubts about the efficacy of critical and queer theories for practice. Another problem is that increased awareness may not translate into action due to an unwillingness or inability on the part of teachers and students to engage in social activism, which may lead to a sense of despair and helplessness to bring about change. It is not surprising then, that according to Szalacha’s (2004) survey very few GLBTQ interventions belong to the critical paradigm.

In Table 1, I have summarised the intervention paradigms on GLBTQ educational issues with the corresponding pedagogical approaches. The typology has been adapted from Kumashiro (2002).

Table 1. Typology of approaches to GLBTQ issues in education.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Intervention Paradigm</th>
<th>Pedagogical Approach</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Silence</td>
<td>Teaching and learning about the mainstream.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Safety</td>
<td>Teaching and learning for the Other (for GLBTQ persons).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Equality</td>
<td>Teaching and learning about the Other (about GLBTQ persons) and oppression (homophobia and heterosexism).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Critical</td>
<td>Teaching and learning about Othering (heteronormativity) and for personal and social transformation.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

I would argue that the paradigms can be interactive, and go to a deeper level to the root causes of GLBTQ inequity as one proceeds from silence to safety to equality and critical. According to Griffin and Ouellett (2003), many schools have not even yet broken the silence on GLBTQ issues and many are still not safe places.

11 Kumashiro (2002) suggests four ways to conceptualise work against oppression: Education for the Other; Education about the Other, Education that is critical of privileging and Othering: Education that changes students and society.
2.5 GLBTQ educational intervention research

At the beginning of this research, not only were there a limited number of GLBTQ educational interventions in primary and secondary schools, but also published research on them was even more scarce (Sears 1997). One example of research by Van de Ven (1997) examined the purpose, content, and teaching strategies of a module addressing homophobia using the functional perspective developed by Herek (1987). According to this approach, homophobic attitudes serve different functions related to the psychological benefit of holding such beliefs. Firstly there is the \textit{experiential schematic} function based on past negative contact with homosexuals. Secondly, homophobia may have a \textit{social expressive} function, so that individuals can gain approval for being anti-gay from their peers. Thirdly, homophobia may have a \textit{value expressive} function that serves to affirm identity, e.g. by using the language of anti-gay religious groups. Fourthly, homophobia may serve a \textit{defensive} function, to avoid anxieties about one’s own sexuality. This functional approach can then be used to create attitude changes in students, if the function(s) can be identified. According to Van de Ven (1997): “For change to occur, current attitudes have to be rendered dysfunctional while target attitudes are provided with reinforcement” (p.219).

The module was taught in the New South Wales education system in Australia, and the aims were to provide (1) a means by which a school can address homophobia, (2) a forum in which students can identify questions that they have about homosexuality, (3) information on discrimination and the law, and (4) a means by which a school can minimize discrimination against gay and lesbian people. The pedagogical approach included (1) setting ground rules, (2) free expression, (3) sensitivity to feelings, (4) trust building, (5) diverse activities, and (6) situatedness. The module was taught in 6 ninth grade classes in Sydney, with a pre-test, post-test (immediately after instruction), and follow-up after 3 months. Various instruments were used to measure cognitive and affective changes in the 130 students.

The results showed that (1) male students were more homophobic than female students; (2) the module reduced levels of homophobic anger; (3) on cognition, there was a significant and lasting reduction in homophobia amongst females, whereas after 3 months male students returned to their pre-module level; (4) the module had no effect on feelings of discomfort associated with homosexuality; and (5) the analysis of all the students’ short stories revealed that the module resulted in a significant and lasting reduction in homophobic attitudes.
As for pre and in-service teacher education, few interventions existed at the beginning of this research, let alone research on them. This is despite the pervasiveness of homophobia and heterosexism in schools, and their negative impact. Indeed, Szalacha (2004, p. 69) says that her review of research and programme evaluations on educating teachers about GLBTQ issues revealed “only a limited number of studies” of this necessary topic. One such piece of research was done by Marinoble (1997) on homophobia reduction through staff development of elementary school teachers. Marinoble constructed a module entitled “Gay/Lesbian/Bisexual Issues in the Elementary School”, with 3 one hour phases as follows: (1) Conceptual framework, (2) Group discussion, (3) Action strategies. The first phase focused on identifying gay, lesbian and bisexual students as a person at risk, as well as the discussion of homosexual identity formation. In the second phase the teachers discussed how they handle gay/lesbian/bisexual topics when they come up in the classroom, and whether they have used or would use instructional materials on gay/lesbian/bisexual issues. The final phase involved the facilitator sharing materials and discussing strategies for incorporating gay/lesbian/bisexual issues into the school setting.

Evaluation data was collected from 112 teachers at the end of the module and 48 follow-up interviews were conducted 3-6 months later by telephone. The results showed that the module had improved 90% of the teachers’ comfort level in discussing gay/lesbian/bisexual issues, and that about 5 in 6 teachers anticipated that the material would be helpful. The follow-up interviews revealed that the teacher comfort level was maintained after the training. “Implementation strategies, however, were occurring more slowly and with somewhat less frequency than the written evaluations had anticipated” (p. 258). Teachers expressed anxiety discussing homosexuality, and had concerns about parental reactions and student maturity level. Marinoble stressed the importance of administrative support for GLBTQ initiatives in education.

The Laramie Project is a play about the widely publicised gay bashing murder of Mathew Shepard, a 21 year old student from Wyoming. Elsbree and Wong (2007) studied how the play and related activities have been used as a “homophobic disruption” in pre-service teacher education. The study included pre and post-surveys with 89 pre-service teachers in four education classes in California. The surveys were designed to show the impact watching the Laramie Project had on teachers’ preparation to create anti-homophobic schools.

The results showed that: (1) pre-service teachers believed their awareness of GLBTQ issues had increased; (2) participants as a group did not change in their
comfort levels to address GLBTQ issues; (3) only on a few statements regarding knowledge and awareness about GLBTQ issues was there a statistically significant change in participants’ responses; (4) the majority of participants (65%) said that the play or related activities had at least a moderate impact in GLBTQ topics; (5) as a whole there were not significant differences regarding pedagogical actions in pre and post-surveys. Differences between elementary and secondary pre-service teachers were also noted, with the former group demonstrating better knowledge of GLBTQ issues, and greater degree of comfort to address GLBTQ issues.

Another intervention example is the work of the Aware\textsuperscript{12} project (2001-2004) from my research base at Oulu University in Finland. The aim of the project was to increase pre and in-service teachers’ awareness of gendered and sexualised violence, and develop courses on non-violence in schools. The same research group has since 2007 had work in progress that includes action research and a gender-sensitive longitudinal study on school violence and development of safe school culture.\textsuperscript{13} The GLEE Project which is the context of my dissertation is also longitudinal as it follows up teachers’ activism in schools following the Leadership Training Course. To my knowledge, there has been to date no published research that considers the long term impact of teacher education on GLBTQ educational issues on teachers’ practice in schools. Furthermore, writing at the time this research began, Taylor (1998) noted in his critical review of the theory and practice of transformative learning:

There has been (until very recently) only minimal investigation into the practice of fostering transformative learning. More specifically, the review found the practice of fostering transformative learning ideally conceptualised, theoretically based, and offering little support from empirical research or practical experience. (p. 1.)

The GLEE intervention is therefore an important contribution to research to construct pedagogy to foster empowerment and transformative learning which is discussed further below.

\textsuperscript{12} http://www.edu.oulu.fi/aware/english/index.htm
\textsuperscript{13} http://www.oulu.fi/naistutkimus/projektit/from_violence_to_caring/index.html
2.6 GLEE Project intervention and research

The intervention within the GLEE Project resembles critical paradigm interventions, with a focus on developing a *Leadership Training Course* to foster teacher empowerment to promote GLBTQ educational equity. The rationale for the in-service teacher *Leadership Training Course* was to maximise the impact of the project through a multiplier effect. After the course, each teacher could return to their own school communities and engage colleagues in establishing appropriate interventions to counter discrimination and create safe and affirming schools for all. The rationale for the post-course on-line community (GLEENET) stems from the need for mutual support to sustain actions in schools, as teachers working to challenge homophobia and heterosexism often do so in isolation. The goal of the intervention was therefore to transform inequitable heteronormative school structures and processes into equitable ones, as shown in Figure 1.

Fig. 1. Fostering teacher empowerment to promote GLBTQ educational equity through the GLEE *Leadership Training Course* and GLEENET.

Challenging heteronormativity and bringing about transformation impacts on all areas of school life including school mission; curriculum contents and instructional materials; teaching and evaluation practices; school culture and environment; as well as student development.

Within the context of the GLEE Project, using an action research approach I have explored the possibilities and limitations to construct critical pedagogy to foster teacher empowerment and challenge heteronormative practices in schools. The GLEE Project is critical research which according to Kincheloe and McLaren
“can be best understood in the context of the empowerment of individuals.” They add that critical research must be connected to an attempt to confront the injustice of a particular society or sphere within the society. Research thus becomes a transformative endeavour unembarrassed by the label “political”… Whereas traditional researchers cling to the guard rail of neutrality, critical researchers frequently announce their partisanship in the struggle for a better world. (p. 140.)

The research therefore aims to create not only technical and practical knowledge but also transformative (Banks 1996) or emancipatory knowledge (Habermas 1971), that is, knowledge which leads to empowerment and institutional and societal transformation. In so doing, it aims to contribute towards redressing the lack of research on teacher education interventions to challenge homophobia and heterosexism in schools.

2.7 Justification and rationale for the GLEE Project research

The pervasiveness of GLBTQ inequity is one of the main justifications for this research, and the lack of teacher education interventions on GLBTQ issues the rationale for the focus on teacher empowerment. As I have already discussed, research has highlighted how homophobia and heterosexism can negatively affect the personal lives and school performance of all students. I would argue that especially for GLBTQ students this situation is inequitable and represents the denial of fundamental human rights. The preamble to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights states the “recognition of the inherent dignity and of equal and inalienable rights of all members of the human family is the foundation of freedom, justice and peace in the world.” Furthermore, it contains the following Articles that support the principles of non-discrimination and equity:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Article</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Article 1</td>
<td>All human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Article 2</td>
<td>Everyone is entitled to all the rights and freedoms … without distinction of any kind.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Article 3</td>
<td>Everyone has the right to life, liberty and security.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Article 5</td>
<td>No one shall be subjected to cruel, inhumane or degrading treatment.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Article 7</td>
<td>All are equal before the law and are entitled without discrimination to equal protection of the law</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Article 26  Everyone has the right to education. Education shall be directed to
the full development of the human personality and to the
strengthening of respect for human rights and fundamental freedom.
It shall promote understanding, tolerance and friendship.

Using these six Articles as a benchmark means, for example, that cruel and
degrading treatment of GLBTQ students, such as bullying, amounts to the denial
of the right to attend school without fear of violence. Furthermore, schools that do
not intervene to address homophobia and heterosexism would not be working to
strengthen respect for the human rights of all students. Expressing concerns that
basic human rights may be forgotten in schools, a UN document 14 (2001)
commenting on Article 29 of the Convention on the Rights of the Child states:

Children do not lose their human rights by virtue of passing through the
school gates. Thus, for example, education must be provided in a way that
respects the inherent dignity of the child and enables the child to express his
or her views freely. . . . Education must also be provided in a way that . . .
promotes non-violence in school.

Although sexual orientation is not explicitly mentioned as a ground for
discrimination in the 1966 International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights,15
a legal challenge in 1994 ruled that references to “sex” in Articles 2 (non-
discrimination) and 26 (equality before the law) are to be taken as including
sexual orientation.16 This created an important precedent within the UN system of
human rights to address discrimination against GLBTQ persons. In addition, the
Yogyakarta Principles17 formulated in 2006 by a group of international human
rights experts, further demonstrate how the human rights principles apply to
sexual orientation and gender identity.

Based on the UN documents and the discussion on homophobia and
heterosexism in schools, I would argue students have the right to attend schools
that: (1) have policies enforced by administration and teaching staff that
guarantee the respect and dignity of all students, (2) are free of verbal and
physical harassment, (3) have support programs that are delivered by competent

CRC/GC/2001/1. (General Comments) 17/04/2001. See
http://www.childoneurope.org/activities/pdf/su08a-Committe-General-Comments-Education.pdf
17 http://www.yogyakartaprinicples.org
professionals that are sensitive to the diversity of the school population, (4) provide accurate information about sexual identity free of negative judgement and delivered by informed teachers, and (5) strive to build socially just and democratic societies free of prejudice and discrimination.

The denial of human rights gives justification to this research to construct pedagogy to foster teacher empowerment and: (1) address bullying and harassment in schools, (2) recognise the sexual diversity of students, their parents (who may be non-heterosexual) and teachers, (3) enable individuals and institutions to function within a diverse pluralistic society, and (4) challenge inequitable structures and processes, and promote educational equity and social justice. The rationale for the focus on sexual orientation is due to lack of attention given to addressing GLBTQ inequity in schools. However, in the words of Martin Luther King there is a need to keep in mind that there can be “no end to oppression without an end to all forms of oppression.” The GLEE Project approach therefore also demands that the intersection of other forms of oppression are not ignored. Indeed, attention to intersectionality and multiple discrimination have been growing issues within the European Union. Verloo (2006) warns against tendencies within EU equality policies for a “one size fits all” approach to addressing multiple discrimination. She argues that such an approach “is based on an incorrect assumption of sameness or equivalence of the social categories connected to inequalities and the mechanisms and processes that constitute them” (p. 211).

The invisibility of GLBTQ persons in diversity discourses could be seen as equity, human rights and dignity for all – but not for non-heterosexuals. Pharr (1988) stresses how ignoring homophobia amounts to complicity with oppression:

We must take a very hard look at our complicity with oppressions, all of them. We must see that to give no voice, to take no action to end them is to support their existence. Our options are two: to be racist, or anti-Semitic, or homophobic (or whatever the oppression may be), or to work actively against these attitudes. There is no middle ground. With an oppression such as homophobia where there is so much permission to sustain overt hatred and injustice, one must have the courage to take the risks that may end in loss of privilege. We must keep clearly in mind that privilege earned from oppression is conditional and is gained at the cost of freedom. (p. 52.)

This is also a challenge to national governments and international organisations that face being either seen as complicit in perpetuating homophobia and
heterosexism or as institutions which strive to build a society free of prejudice, hatred, discrimination, and injustice.

Whilst the justification for the research can be viewed within a human rights framework, the research also takes a critical approach. Some queer theorists such as Stein and Plummer (1996, p. 134) argue that civil rights strategies that aim for equality, for example, campaigning for gay marriage, do not challenge heteronormativity or break down the rigid categories of sexual orientation that are fundamental to ending GLBTQ oppression. Therefore the human rights approach can be viewed as gay rights but on straight terms. However, it can also be part of a broader critical approach, and indeed Plummer (2005) acknowledges that he can live with both critical humanism and queer theory, and that “contradiction, ambivalence, and tension reside in all critical inquiries” (p. 371).

In my view the transcending of the heterosexual/homosexual dichotomy is, however, a long developmental process during which hierarchical sexual categories will continue to exist. I would argue that homophobia has to be first eradicated by a greater societal acceptance of homosexuals which may initially involve the narrowing and minimisation of straight/gay differences and emphasising rights, equality and sameness. This is what I would call a reformist GLBTQ equal rights phase (operating in an equality paradigm). Such an approach may have more relevance to educators concerned with immediate issues of safe schools or GLBTQ curriculum inclusion than more abstract queer theoretical notions. So while I support the politics of Stein and Plummer, I do not reject the human rights approach which can be a step in the right direction in addressing homophobia. In my experience the human rights approach has been a good starting point, especially with teachers who have not been exposed to GLBTQ issues. Having said that, it is important to go beyond mere reforms to a transformational phase (operating in a critical paradigm) to achieve the goal of equity and social justice. This demands an educational approach that focuses on developing critical consciousness of heteronormativity and the negative impact of homophobia and heterosexism on the lives of both non-heterosexual and heterosexual persons.

The recent changes in EU equality and discrimination legislation give further justification for this research, for example, the EU’s anti-discrimination Equality
Employment Directive and Racial Equality Directive. Although the employment directive applies to teachers as employees, it does not include school students. However, in July 2008 the European Commission adopted a proposal for a new equal treatment directive which would broaden the areas of discrimination to include education as well as social protection, health care, housing, and access to goods and services. In 2003, the United Kingdom government repealed a law known as Section 28 that was widely viewed as prohibiting the teaching of homosexuality in schools. August 2003 marked the elimination of the last law in any country of Europe outlawing relationships between people of the same sex (ILGA-Europe 2003). In 2001 the EU launched the European Community Programme to Combat Discrimination, demonstrating the importance of legislation backed by action. The Employment, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities unit responsible for the programme states:

> Legislative measures alone will not be enough to combat discrimination effectively within society. Experience shows that legislation must be backed up by concrete actions. This is why, following the European directives on racial equality and equal treatment in employment, the EU Council launched an action programme designed to help make European anti-discrimination policy a reality.

The action programme supports EU wide projects, one of which I participated in called Altering Attitudes (see Appendix 1). The project developed training to counter discrimination using a horizontal approach that considers different grounds of discrimination and intersectionality. The experience provided ideas for...

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20 Section 28 of the Local Government Act (1988) stated: “A local authority shall not (a) intentionally promote homosexuality or publish material with the intention of promoting homosexuality; (b) promote the teaching in any maintained school of the acceptability of homosexuality as a pretended family relationship” (http://www.statutelaw.gov.uk/content.aspx?activeTextDocId=2194615). The law was repealed in 2003.

21 See DG Employment, Social Affairs & Equal Opportunities Website: http://ec.europa.eu/employment_social/fundamental_rights/policy/prog_en.htm
evaluating a project like GLEE, focused on sexual orientation discrimination, versus projects focusing on various grounds of discrimination. Single issue versus horizontal approaches to discrimination is an important consideration for the EU’s equality approach.

A 2008 comparative study of homophobia and discrimination on the grounds of sexual orientation by the EU’s Fundamental Rights Agency concluded that “equal protection by EU anti-discrimination law remains an ideal not a fact for Lesbians, Gays, Bisexuals and Transsexuals (LGBT) living in many parts of the European Union (EU).” 22 So despite legal equality, discrimination against GLBTQ people continues, even in countries with the most progressive laws. In a European gay scoreboard survey 23 the Netherlands received the highest score, closely followed by Denmark, Sweden and France. In these four countries there was depenalisation of homosexuality, equal age of consent, antidiscrimination laws, freedom of association, registered partnership or marriage, and asylum laws. However, as previously mentioned, the Dutch lesbian and gay organisation COC survey on homosexuality in school showed that GLBTQ students often feel threatened by other students and complained of bullying.

Progressive laws can also lead to the illusion of equality, creating complacency, so that in countries where the progressive laws do exist there can be less activism to improve the situation compared to countries where discriminatory laws exist.

ILGA-Europe (2003) reported on the EU-funded Triangle Project which had conducted a survey of 377 teachers, youth workers, and counsellors in 2002 in Austria, Germany, Italy and the Netherlands. They found that:

Teachers and youth workers expressed a real need for practical methods and tools to address homophobia. 65% of the respondents wanted to know how to approach homosexuality in the classroom or in youth groups, while 53% needed advice on how to deal with homophobic attitudes in the classroom, and 46% replied they did not know how to empower gay and lesbian pupils. (p. 15.)

Sahlström (2006) investigated how prepared teachers were to deal with GLBTQ issues. The results of a survey sent by email to 4000 teachers showed that:

8% of the respondents felt that their education had provided them the skills necessary to deal with issues relating to sexual orientation and homophobia;

92% of the respondents knew that there is a law against discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation;

5% of the respondents had experienced discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation, or had a colleague who had so been treated; 8% reported knowing a student who had been so treated;

50% had “often” or “sometimes” witnessed offensive speech or behaviour relating to sexual orientation; 50% in relation to sex; 49% in relation to ethnic orientation; 31% in relation to religion; and 24% in relation to disability;

64% were interested in receiving teaching materials that could help to bring up issues in relation to sexual orientation and homophobia in the classroom. (cited in Makkonen 2007, p. 75.)

Such surveys show how ill-prepared teachers are to deal with issues of homophobia and heterosexism and give further justification to this research by demonstrating the need for teacher education interventions. Also, outside Europe Morgan (2003) found that amongst the teachers in his U.S. study, those that had received prior academic instruction regarding GLBTQ issues had greater knowledge and a more positive attitude towards GLBTQ students.

Prejudice against GLBTQ persons along with the belief in the superiority of heterosexuality are learned attitudes and cultural constructions. As such education has an important role to play in overcoming homophobia and heterosexism. Edward de Bono (1991) said:

The weapons of the positive revolution are not bullets and bombs but simple human perceptions. Bullets and bombs may offer physical power but eventually will only work if they change perceptions and values. Why not go the direct route and work with perceptions and values? (p. xiv.)

I argue that critical human agency can break the cycle of socialisation that can perpetuate oppression, as shown in Figure 2.

This cycle begins when one is born and can be reasonably assumed to have no prejudice. This is then followed by a process of systematic training by family, friends, teachers, and culture – an experience exposing one to the rules, roles, beliefs, values, and norms of society. These are reinforced by societal institutions in discourses, and with an asymmetric distribution of power can perpetuate
oppression. Going de Bono’s “direct route” means in this research interrupting this cycle of socialisation through fostering teacher empowerment and critical agency to uncover and challenge a system of compulsory heterosexuality and heterosexual privilege. This involves engaging teachers in (1) reflecting on how they were schooled to deal with diversity, (2) gaining an understanding of the social construction of oppression, (3) raising awareness of how the actions and inactions of individuals may either reinforce discrimination and inequity or work towards promoting justice and social equity, and (4) becoming familiar with ways to transform curricula to counter prejudice and affirm sexual diversity. Although some counter-homophobia materials and GLBTQ inclusive curricula have been developed, they are not extensively and effectively used as teachers often don’t know they exist, and lack the confidence and support to deal with sexuality issues.

This underlines the importance of engaging teachers in this research.

Fig. 2. Cycle of socialisation – adapted from Adams, Bell and Griffin (1997).
Overall the justification for this research is the need to highlight the problem of homophobia, heterosexism and heteronormativity, and to construct pedagogy to empower teachers to work towards creating safer and equitable schools for all students. The GLEE Project provided an opportunity to research possibilities to bring about such transformation. Teachers need support to intervene and make their actions sustainable. In the short run, this involves taking actions to make sexual minorities visible in the curricula, policies, and practices of schools. It includes uncovering a system of compulsory heterosexuality that reinforces the notion that either everyone is or should be heterosexual. It is about valuing difference as a source of learning and not a source of division and inequity. It is about redressing injustices and the affirmation of the diversity of sexual identities. It is also about the struggle for human rights against discrimination. In the long run, it is about the disappearance of heterosexual/homosexual binary thinking and a future where identity based on sexual preference seems like a queer thing of the past.
3 Theoretical framework and methodological approach for constructing web-assisted transformative pedagogy

In this chapter I firstly discuss the ontological, epistemological and methodological assumptions of the research, that are located within the critical theory paradigm of inquiry. Secondly, I describe the theoretical framework for constructing the pedagogy for the intervention to foster teacher empowerment to promote GLBTQ educational equity, which has been influenced by these assumptions. Thirdly, I describe and justify the methodological approach for the construction of the pedagogy which is based on action research.

3.1 Critical theory research paradigm

Guba and Lincoln (2000, p. 165) identify five paradigms of inquiry: positivism; postpositivism; critical theory; constructivism; and participatory. These paradigms are worldviews that are made up of multiple belief categories. The principle categories are the ontological (the nature of reality and what is knowable), epistemological (the knower/known relationship) and methodological (knowledge seeking process) assumptions. The main paradigm of the GLEE Project is critical theory, a term first introduced in 1937 by Horkheimer (1976) of the Frankfurt school.

There is some degree of overlap between the paradigms, and this research also resembles some of the characteristics of the constructivism and participatory paradigms. For example, the critical theory and constructivism paradigms both view knowledge as transactional and subjective. However, whereas constructivists try to simply understand human behaviour and action, critical theorists believe in going further to challenge oppression and the status quo, and change things. (Plack 2005, p. 233.)

Critical theory views social reality as subjectively constructed and shaped historically by social, political, economic and cultural values. Homophobia and heterosexism are therefore seen as social constructions that can also be deconstructed through desocialisation. McLaren (1994) points out several other assumptions of critical theory that are relevant to this research. Firstly, the assumption that relations of power are important in theoretical and philosophical discourses, and therefore it follows that all forms of discrimination are implicated.
in power. Secondly, the assumption that subordinates may accept their social status as natural, necessary or inevitable. This assumption draws attention to the power of social structures and processes that can result in oppressed groups accepting their fate, and believe they have no agency to change things. Thirdly, facts can never be isolated from values and ideological inscription. In this sense, all research is political and the idea of ‘neutrality’ a positivist myth. Research in the critical paradigm therefore explicitly acknowledges its ethical and ideological nature. Indeed, the critical educational ethics of equity, human rights, non-discrimination, and social justice are central to the GLEE Project research. Fourthly, mainstream research and teaching can be implicated in the reproduction of systems of oppression. On the other hand, critical theory acknowledges the possibility for research as praxis, that is, action and reflection to transform the world (Lather 1986b).

These critical theory assumptions highlight how ideas, beliefs, and knowledge are sustained through social processes, and challenge the passive acceptance that the way things are is simply a part of some natural and inevitable order. By uncovering the forms and structures that underlie experiences, and by questioning what is taken for granted the world can be seen in new ways. Power and privilege determine dominant discourses, and whose knowledge and whose voices are authoritative and legitimated. I view this as a Theory of Whose Knowledge that is attentive to who has been in a position historically to name and socially construct reality, and whose interests are being served? By questioning hegemonic assumptions and values that produce social inequities and paying attention to subjugated knowledge, critical theory is concerned with raising consciousness to transform society (Kincheloe & McLaren 1994). Critical theory has therefore influenced the development of critical pedagogy, which is the theoretical foundation for constructing the pedagogy in this research.

The methodological approach for this research is also rooted in the critical theory paradigm. It is based on critical action research, which has an emphasis on collaborative inquiry, and the primacy of the experiential, propositional and practical knowing. This process enables an on-going knowledge construction process that privileges emic (insider) over etic (outsider) knowledge. Knowledge claims are considered tentative and are continually questioned, and judgements are made about their certainty and reliability. By subjecting knowledge claims to the wider research community and being open to re-examination, this reflective process can ensure there is not a tilt towards absolutism or relativism (Palmer 1998).
Guba and Lincoln (2000, p. 167) argue that truth and agreements regarding what is valid and useful knowledge arise from the relationship and consensus between members of some stakeholding community. As praxis the methodological approach to this research seeks “little truths which are situationally appropriate” (Anderson 1993, p. 1). Such little truths could be the knowledge gained about actions that work to challenge homophobia in a particular school. In this sense, the research is concerned with local and specific constructed realities, rather than mythical universal and timeless truths about social reality. Furthermore, the assumption that knowledge is socially constructed implies that truth can only be subjectively known, and the knower is an intimate part of the known. Social reality is therefore standpoint and context dependent, which places demands on the researcher to consider their own subjectivity and reflect on how their life experiences, values, ethics, beliefs and knowledge influence the research process. As a reflective practice, action research is suited to this context.

Pragmatism has influenced how I see the function of theory in this research. In theorising I keep in mind Sayer when he says “there’s nothing so practical as a good theory” (1992, p. 50). Like hooks (1994) I am interested in theory as a liberatory practice and an intervention to challenge the status quo. I therefore consider the critical pedagogical theory that I am constructing as a set of principles and ideas that may be used to inform and guide teaching practice to foster empowerment and promote social transformation. It is not a theory only to describe the world but a tool to change it. Finlayson (2005), reflecting on the critical theory of Horkheimer, says that:

The task of theory was practical, not just theoretical: that is, it should aim not just to bring about correct understanding, but to create social and political conditions more conducive to human flourishing than the present ones . . . The goal of the theory was not just to determine what was wrong with contemporary society at present, but, by identifying progressive aspects and tendencies within it, to help transform society. (p. 4.)

However, theory must be justified and logical for it to be scholarly. Like critical theory, the methodology of the action research approach in the GLEE Project is dialectical, a unity of theory and practice whereby theory informs practice, and practice in turn informs theory. The research process is based on the view that research-based evidence can be derived from authentic data that reflects the experiences and practice of research participants, and can serve as the basis for
Theorising and generating new knowledge which can then be put to practical use. The assumptions of critical theory led me to take the view at the beginning of the GLEE Project, that through action research there is the potential to construct critical pedagogy to foster teacher empowerment to transform schools. Carrying out the research would test whether the potential can actually be realised.

3.2 Theoretical framework for constructing web-assisted transformative pedagogy (WATP)

The theoretical framework for constructing the empowering pedagogy is shown in Figure 3 and consists of three parts: educational ethics, critical pedagogy theories, and sexual diversity in education. I begin by discussing the conceptualisation of teacher empowerment to promote GLBTQ educational equity, within the framework of sexual diversity in schools discussed in chapter 2.

![Fig. 3. Theoretical Framework for Web-assisted Transformative Pedagogy (WATP) – Fostering Teacher Empowerment to Promote GLBTQ Educational Equity (GLEE).](image-url)
3.2.1 Teacher empowerment, power and school transformation

Like Giroux (1988), I would argue that schools are contradictory sites which “reproduce the larger society while containing spaces to resist its dominating logic” (p. xxxiii). Creating spaces for actions to challenge homophobia and heterosexism through the empowerment of teachers is the intended aim of the pedagogy for the Leadership Training Course and GLEENET. Such deliberate actions (whether pedagogical or otherwise) to resist oppression is activism, which I consider to be an ethical reflective practice directed at transformation to improve well-being. In order to improve individual and societal well being, empowerment should be connected to a framework of values (e.g., human rights, social justice, equity), and the question of “empowered to do what?” addressed. For example, is one empowered to educate or demonstrate peacefully against discrimination, or to indiscriminately blow up individuals in pursuit of some cause?

Evaluating whether teachers participating in the Leadership Training Course and GLEENET were empowered or not, and by and for what, is an important part of the pedagogy construction process. The evaluation is a challenging task as power and empowerment are complex terms used in many different ways, for example, Ibrahim and Alkire (2007, pp. 7-8) give 33 of the many definitions of empowerment in current use. In everyday discourse power can refer to something that people have or possess. Townsend et al (1999, p. 23) defines power in a more traditional sense as “a force exercised by individuals or groups”. However, other definitions do not see it as something that is inherent in individuals or in isolation, but rather as being present in all social relations and constituted in discourses (e.g., Foucault 1978). Power can be both enabling and constraining, and resistance can be seen as the exercise of power to counter discrimination and challenge oppression. Therefore, in the context of working towards school transformation the exercise of power is the more relevant concept.

The term empowerment may imply a group of experts being able to empower another passive group. I would argue that is problematic, as such a situation is implicated in oppressive power relations. Siitonen (1999, p. 5) states “empowerment is a personal and social process, in which the inner power is non-transferable to another.” He goes on to say “it is, however, possible to strengthen empowerment through subtle and supportive measures that open up possibilities through, for example, openness, freedom of action, encouragement and through strengthening a sense of security, trust and equality.” Townsend et al (1999, p. 24) goes further and argues that true empowerment is self-empowerment as one
cannot give power to someone else. She agrees however, that it is possible to enable other people to do something, and initiate the empowerment process in a structured way using particular techniques and methods. I argue that a large part of empowerment is self-empowerment (an internal process), but external factors such as educational provision and resources can contribute towards empowerment, and this is in line with the view of Townsend et al. The GLEE intervention can be seen as a catalyst that creates the conditions for strengthening the self-empowerment of individuals as well as the co-empowerment of groups. However, remaining empowered is often a problem, and that is why support systems and allies are needed as well. Empowerment is therefore not just a question of “power from within” but also “power with” others (Townsend et al 1999). As such, like the GLEE intervention, it is a mutually supporting and co-operative effort to acquire strength to take action. This is similar to Cummins’ (1999) notion of the collaborative creation of power which he says can be generated in interpersonal and intergroup relations . . . and participants in the relationship are empowered through their collaboration such that each is more affirmed in her or his identity and has a greater sense of efficacy to effect change in her or his life or social situation.

Empowerment is not a permanent state of being that can be readily transferred to different situations as it is context specific and has to be seen in relation to desired goals. However, this does not mean that one starts from being disempowered when engaging in any new action. For example, skills gained to analyse oppression and develop strategies to overcome it can be used over again, though they may have to be adapted to the context. It is also necessary to think of being empowered in concrete terms, that is, having more power that can be exercised to achieve particular goals. I agree with Rappaport (1984, pp. 1-7) that it is difficult to define empowerment, as it depends on the context and the individuals involved. Furthermore, Zimmerman (1984, pp. 169-177) has noted that a definition of empowerment may become prescriptive and therefore self-contradictory. My own definitions evolved to best suit the research context and to not be prescriptive. The capability approach of Amartya Sen is particularly relevant whereby empowerment is related to an increase in human agency. He defines agency freedom as “what the person is free to do and achieve in pursuit of whatever goals or values he or she regards as important” (Sen 1985, p. 203). Agency freedom is therefore necessary for activism and social transformation, but it may not be sufficient. Sen points out that agency freedom is “inescapably
qualified and constrained by the social, political, and economic opportunities that are available to us” (1999, pp. xi-xii).

In the context of this research, Sen’s ideas mean that empowerment is about gaining sufficient individual or collective power to act on an issue of concern. This includes not only having opportunity to act (which can be culturally constrained), but also the skills, resources, capacity, confidence, drive, and other necessary support to take actions to promote GLBTQ equity. Based on this, I have developed definitions of power and empowerment. These definitions, below, are usable as evaluative tools for the experiences of teachers during and after the Leadership Training Course, when they returned to their schools to engage in activism.

- Power: the drive, ability and possibility of an individual or group to act on a problem of concern.
- Empowerment: a process that increases the drive, ability and possibility of an individual or group to act on a problem of concern.

The existence of all three components of power and empowerment, defined below, are important for transformation to occur. For example, without drive or possibility there will be no action, and without ability action will be ineffective.

1. Drive: motivation, inclination, determination or enthusiasm to act.
2. Ability: mental or physical capacity or skills to act.
3. Possibility: opportunities or chances to act.

Using an analogy from economics, power can be viewed as a stock, that is, a given amount of drive, ability and possibility at a particular point in time. On the other hand, empowerment can be viewed as a flow, meaning an increase or decrease in power over a given period of time. In this way, empowerment is an increase in power and disempowerment a decrease in power, as shown in the bathtub analogy in Figure 4. The level of bath water represents the stock of power, water flowing in is empowerment and water flowing out through the plughole is disempowerment.
Fig. 4. The relationship between power and empowerment.

The distinction between stock and flow is important, because when considering transformation, it is not simply empowerment that is important, but rather power, or being sufficiently empowered (the level of bath water). The instrumental value of transformative empowerment is agency that can give rise to transformative action. However, individual agency can be constrained by social structure which perpetuates the status quo and oppression. The relation between structure and agency is a dialectical process whereby societal institutions influence individuals while being influenced by them in return. Bhaskar (1989) refers to this process in terms of societal reproduction (of the status quo) and transformation. Thompson (1998) illustrates in Figure 5 the relationship between structure and agency based on three levels of discrimination – personal, cultural and structural.
Fig. 5. The interactions of the personal, cultural and structural levels of discrimination (Thompson 1998, p. 66).

Figure 5 shows how the interaction between socio-political structures and agency can lead to either condoning and reinforcing existing inequalities or challenging and diminishing them. Where inequitable social structures are strong, no matter how much an individual or group is empowered, without sufficient power it will not lead to transformation. According to Stanley (1992), reproduction theories have tended to present schools as agencies of the dominant culture that reinforce existing power relations and forms of domination. In contrast he argues resistance theorists

are more optimistic regarding the potential for education to offer a significant challenge to the sociocultural forces of domination. From the perspective of resistance theory, schools can be understood as contested terrain, that is, sites of numerous structural and ideological contradictions. (p. 100.)

My definitions of empowerment reflect my specific research interest in the capability of teachers to exercise power (both individually and collectively) to resist inequity and transform schools. After all, it is only through teachers’ resistance and the effective exercise of power (and not just possessing power) that social transformation can take place. Breton (1994) says:
Even though one has experienced empowering cognitive and behavioural changes, it is difficult to argue that one is empowered as long as those personal and interpersonal changes have no impact on socially unjust situations which affect one’s life (p. 31).

To reflect the instrumental value of empowerment and the GLEE Project aim to transform schools I have developed three conceptual forms of empowerment. Firstly, *latent empowerment*, which is a feeling of an increase in strength or power within to act on a problem of concern. Latent empowerment recognises that the training may lead to positive cognitive and psychological changes, but not yet manifest in activism. In this sense, latent empowerment can be considered as feeling one has the potential to act. Secondly, empowerment which leads to activism but where the desired transformation has not yet occurred, I call *active empowerment*. Thirdly, empowerment that leads to activism and the desired transformation, I call *transformative empowerment*, which implies having sufficient power to achieve one’s goals. Sen (1999) has a similar term to transformative empowerment that he calls *agency achievement*, “success in the pursuit of the totality of her considered goals and objectives” (p. 56). The distinction between these three types of empowerment is important, as it is possible that the *Leadership Training Course* may lead to just latent empowerment that does not translate into activism. For example, due to resistance back at school a teacher – no matter how empowered he or she feels – may lack the power to act. In addition, activism may or may not lead to the desired transformation. The types of empowerment are summarised in Table 2.

**Table 2. Three types of empowerment.**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Empowerment type</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Latent empowerment</td>
<td>A feeling of having more drive, ability, and possibility to act individually</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>and/or collectively on a problem of concern that has not yet led to action (activism)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Active empowerment</td>
<td>Having more drive, ability, and possibility to act individually and/or</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>collectively on a problem of concern that has led to action (activism)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transformative empowerment</td>
<td>Having more drive, ability, and possibility to act individually and/or</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>collectively on a problem of concern that has led to action (activism)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>and the desired transformation</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Stromquist (1995, pp. 14-15) usefully divides empowerment into four further dimensions: psychological, cognitive, political and economic. I have used these dimensions as a basis to further consider the empowerment of teachers. *Psychological empowerment* is the belief that specific actions can bring about change and that one is motivated and capable of organising and carrying out those actions. It is close to the self-efficacy concept of Bandura (1994), that is, the belief in one’s capabilities to organise and carry out specific actions. *Cognitive empowerment* is having the know-how to bring about change. This includes having an understanding of the root causes of problems and praxis for achieving the desired goals. Freire’s (1970) concept of conscientisation, a process that leads through reflection and action to critical consciousness that enables groups to act on the world to change it, is connected to cognitive empowerment.

*Political empowerment* is related to power to influence and persuade others. It refers to the ability to mobilise and work with others for institutional and societal transformation. *Economic empowerment* is the ability to mobilise resources including time and finances for promoting institutional and societal transformation. I would add two other dimensions: legal and socio-cultural empowerment. Stromquist considers *legal empowerment* as part of cognitive empowerment in terms of knowledge of legal rights. As previously mentioned in chapter 2, 85 member states of the United Nations still criminalise consensual same-sex acts among adults (Ottosson 2007). In such a situation, legal empowerment through changes in legislation is paramount to begin addressing GLBTQ discrimination. On the other hand, recent legal changes regarding anti-discrimination in the EU empower those working towards GLBTQ educational equity. *Socio-cultural empowerment* refers to the general social climate and cultural attitudes towards sexual diversity. Where there are strong homophobic attitudes expressed by the media, government, military, schools, antigay groups, and religious institutions, individuals and groups may find themselves insufficiently empowered to change the culture and social institutions.

Psychological empowerment is most closely related to the drive component of empowerment, cognitive empowerment to the ability component, and opportunity to political, economic, legal and socio-cultural empowerment. However all these six dimensions of empowerment are inter-related. For example, cognitive empowerment which leads to positive mastery experiences can increase psychological empowerment. Belenky, Clinchy, Goldberger, and Tarkle (1986) directly connect psychological and cognitive empowerment of women in terms of the development of self, voice and mind. Their research came up with five types
of ways that women know and understand the world depending on their level of self-confidence, esteem and emotional development. These ways of knowing are silence, received, subjective, procedural, and constructed. Silence is characterised by disempowered women with low self-esteem who do not see themselves as capable of learning and understanding the world. Received knowers internalise and reproduce the dominant values of society, whereas subjective knowers consider knowledge as just personal. Procedural and constructed knowers are empowered women who see themselves not as passive recipients of knowledge but rather as active critical thinkers. They are cognitively and psychologically empowered, and unlike silence and received knowers, capable of critiquing oppressive ideologies and discourses and engaging in actions to transform the world. The transformative empowerment of teachers (as a collaborative process involving both power within and with others) to exercise power and engage in activism to transform their schools is the intended outcome of the pedagogical approach for the Leadership Training Course and GLEENET. Such empowered teachers I call transformative teachers.

3.2.2 The qualities of a transformative teacher

From the perspective of critical theory, teachers have the potential to be agents for challenging discrimination and oppression. Giroux (1988) mentions the role that teachers might play as transformative intellectuals who develop counter-hegemonic pedagogies that not only empower students by giving them the knowledge and social skills they will need to be able to function in the larger society as critical agents, but also educate them for transformative action. That means educating them to take risks, to struggle for institutional change, and to fight both against oppression and for democracy outside of schools in other oppositional public spheres and the wider social arena. (p. xxxiii.)

Here, I consider the qualities of such change agents that are fostered through transformative teacher education, which is the aim of the GLEE Project intervention. Giroux’s teacher as transformative intellectual, Kincheloe’s (1993) post-formal teacher, Shor’s (1992) desocialised thinking and Freire’s (1973) critical consciousness are also related terms for conceptualising the qualities of a transformative teacher.
Kinipeloe describes the characteristics of what he calls a post-formal teacher. Firstly, such teachers are “inquiry oriented,” and they cultivate research skills to explore problems that have been posed about life in and outside the classroom. Post-formal teachers are “socially contextualized and aware of power,” and have an awareness of the shaping of educational discourses, and the socio-historic construction of knowledge. In particular, they are capable of monitoring the ways in which power relations privilege or marginalise ways of knowing and being, and understand how schools produce and reproduce normativities. Post-formal teachers are “dedicated to the cultivation of situated participations,” by drawing upon the words, concerns, and experience of the students. This also involves an empathetic and engaged teaching approach that elicits participation from students. (Kinicheloe 1993, pp. 201-203.)

“Extended by a concern with critical self- and social-reflection,” post-formal teachers encourage dialogical situations that promote self-reflection “shaped by a commitment to democratic self-directed education” that is “steeped in a sensitivity by pluralism.” Post-formal teachers are “concerned with the affective dimension of human beings, are grounded on a commitment to world making and dedicated to an art of improvisation.” And significantly for this research, post-formal teachers are “committed to action,” and foster activism in their students. (Kinicheloe 1993, pp. 201-203)

Shor summarises four qualities of desocialised thinking associated with a transformative teacher, which can act as resistance to oppressive dominant discourses and ideologies. Firstly, power awareness, which refers to knowledge that society is made through the actions of contending forces and can be transformed. Secondly, critical literacy, which is concerned with going beneath surface meanings to understand root causes of oppression and the ideologies that sustain it, for example, heteronormativity, as well as the consequences of actions, social processes, and discourses. Thirdly, permanent desocialisation is about questioning power and inequality in the status quo, and examining socialised values in consciousness and society which hold back democratic change. It includes acknowledging and rejecting regressive values, actions, and institutional practices reflecting, for example, racism, sexism and homophobia. Fourthly, self-education/organisation is about developing critical thought and reflection as a basis for cooperative action, such as developing educational projects coordinated with political groups, voluntary associations, or social movements. (Shor 1992, pp. 129-130.)
Like Freire’s (1973) previously mentioned conception of critical consciousness, desocialised thinking emphasises an understanding of the socio-historical construction of oppression, and the processes whereby human actions (agency) reproduce social structures and relations, while also being affected by the very same relations. It implies that individuals are not just passive objects, but through empowerment can engage in actions of resistance that have an influence on societal structures. The power of desocialised thinking is in contrast to deterministic theories which see social phenomena, such as homophobia and heterosexism, as given or natural, and deny the possibility of intervention and human agency to address oppression. Desocialised thinking is the basis for seeing the world differently and producing agency for cooperative action to reject and transform inequitable processes and structures. As Shor (1992, p. 129) says, “human action makes society, and society is unfinished and can be transformed.”

The transformative teacher possesses desocialised and post-formal thinking and transformative knowledge to uncover and challenge power and privilege in mainstream knowledge.

Transformative academic scholars assume that knowledge is not neutral but is influenced by human interests, that all knowledge reflects the power and social relationships within society, and that an important purpose of knowledge construction is to help people improve society (Banks 1996, p. 16).

Post-formal thinking and transformative knowledge can be considered as the starting point for teacher agency for school interventions to effectively challenge the status quo, and produce active citizens working as empowered agents for personal and societal transformation. Such teachers possess an ability to understand the structures and processes that perpetuate oppression and also the know-how, drive, and possibility to take effective action. As such, post-formal thinking and transformative knowledge constitute transformative empowerment, which is the aim of the pedagogy I am constructing. I now discuss the foundations for such an empowering pedagogy located within critical pedagogy – the central field of inquiry for this research.
3.2.3 Critical pedagogy as a framework for empowerment and social transformation

I refer to pedagogy as not just a set of teaching methods to produce and transmit knowledge, but also an educational philosophy related to power and the formation of values and construction of subjectivities. Giroux (1991) points out that pedagogy produces and legitimates forms of moral and political regulation which construct and offer human beings particular views of themselves and the world. Such views are never innocent and are always implicated in the discourse and relations of ethics and power. (pp. 55-56.)

Pedagogy is therefore not only about learning but also about how teachers “construct the ideological and political positions from which they speak” (Ibid., p. 56). Furthermore, Giroux asserts that “postmodernism radicalizes the emancipatory possibilities of teaching and learning” by refusing forms of knowledge and pedagogy wrapped in the legitimizing discourse of the sacred and the priestly; its rejecting universal reason as a foundation for human affairs; claiming that all narratives are partial; and performing a critical reading on all scientific, cultural, and social texts as historical and political constructions. (1991, pp. 245-246.)

Giroux (2006, p. 50) calls for a “border pedagogy of postmodern resistance . . . that attempts to link an emancipatory notion of modernism with a postmodernism of resistance.” By this he means locating a critical pedagogy within a broader cultural and political context that “is attentive to developing a democratic public philosophy that respects the notion of difference as part of a common struggle to extend the quality of public life” (p. 50). Not only does Giroux emphasise the role of teachers as cultural workers and transformative intellectuals (1988), he asserts that ethics is central to education, grounded in a struggle against inequality and injustice and for expanding human rights. As such, educational ethics is the starting point for constructing pedagogy to foster teachers as empowered transformative intellectuals engaged in promoting GLBTQ educational equity.

As stated before, the ethical foundation for constructing the pedagogy is based on human rights, equity, social justice, non-discrimination and non-violence, and stems from the rejection of the regressive values of homophobia and heterosexism. Critical teaching and learning theories are the basis of the
pedagogical principles which share the same ethical orientation. They also share
the same aim of empowerment to challenge oppression and promote equitable
structures and practices. A variety of names have been given to such critical
pedagogies including liberatory/liberation pedagogy (Freire & Shor 1987),
engaged pedagogy (hooks 1994), anti-oppressive pedagogy (Kumashiro 2002),
border pedagogy (Giroux 1991), feminist pedagogy (Weiler 1991), revolutionary
pedagogy (McLaren 2000), empowering education (Shor 1992), and queer
pedagogy (Pinar 1998). These pedagogies all focus on conscientisation to counter
oppressive ideologies and transform society. They share some common
assumptions, aims, and practices, but also have their own nuances and emphases.

Critical educational theorists all share the view that education is not a neutral
process but rather one that is always political (e.g., Freire 1970; Freire & Macedo
1987; Giroux 1997; Shor 1992). Teachers are considered as agents with the
potential to challenge the unequal distribution of power and privilege. Those that
do not challenge are seen as having a (conscious or unconscious) political
position that supports the status quo. As Freire says, “washing one’s hands of the
conflict between the powerful and the powerless means to side with the powerful,
not to be neutral” (1985, p. 102). Furthermore the decisions that educators make
are seen as negotiations over whose values, interests, and beliefs are validated
(Shannon 1992). The role of critical educators is to actively uncover the ways
such negotiations may promote mainstream beliefs and values, while
marginalising others.

As most of these theories do not directly address homophobia, heterosexism
and heteronormativity, I have contextualised them to the specific consideration of
sexual diversity in education (the central part of the theoretical framework in
Figure 3.) This process of transposition has been necessary due to the lack of
attention given (at least when this research started) by some critical theorists to
GLBTQ inequity and sexual diversity. However, in recent years queer pedagogy
has provided more ideas for working at the intersection of critical pedagogy and
sexuality. As this research has progressed, I have drawn on new ideas that have
emerged from queer pedagogy; these are discussed in later chapters.

Critical pedagogies have been developed and applied in many different
contexts, ranging from critical literacy programmes for the poor in the Third
World to mainstream teacher education programmes in the First World. Therefore
not all of the ideas are necessarily relevant or applicable to this research. For
example, whilst some of the theories that specifically target adult learners are
relevant, others are more applicable to pre-tertiary education. The different target
groups in these theories have led to a further need for transposition.

As already stated, Taylor (1998, p. 1) pointed out that there have been
minimal investigations on transformative pedagogy, empowerment and school
change that are based on empirical research or practical experience. However, I
will mention two relevant practically based studies, one qualitative and the other
quantitative.

Saavedra (1996) facilitated a teachers’ study group for two years to
investigate how the six participants could “reconstruct classroom and school
contexts by developing a more critical understanding of teaching and learning,
and by recreating our roles as educators to deal with the influences that social and
institutional policies have on our students” (p. 271). The critical pedagogical
approach used collaboration, collective reflection, problem posing, and an
examination of power relations. For Saavedra, teacher empowerment “lies in the
possibility of examining the contexts in which their voices have been silenced and
establishing their inclusion in the discussions of education and school reform” (p.
272). The outcome of the study demonstrated the empowerment and
conscientisation of the participants, and created a set of eight transformative
conditions: (1) dialogic context, (2) identity and voice, (3) ownership and agency,
(4) dissonance and conflict, (5) mediational events and demonstrations, (6)
reflection, action and generation, (7) self-assessment and evaluation, and (8)
reflective practice. The importance of teachers for the educational change process
was stressed:

If we wish to see educational change, we have to realize that those who are
responsible for constructing the day-to-day interactions and mechanisms in
our schools, namely teachers, must be entrusted to create that change. This
can occur only if they are given ownership of their learning contexts in order
to explore the development of knowledge and actions needed to transform
schools. (Saavedra 1996, p. 276.)

In a more recent study in USA, Nagda, Gurin and Lopez (2003) evaluated the
impact of a course on intergroup relations and social conflict. The teaching
approach was based on critical pedagogy and designed to: (1) introduce students
to the roots of social inequalities and difference, (2) provide opportunities to
core with others from different social backgrounds, and (3) foster engagement
in participatory democracy (p. 172). A total of 203 mostly first year college
students participated in the study, and each completed both pre and post-tests.
Measures were used to assess outcomes related to cognitive complexity (socio-historical causal analysis and structural thinking about racial inequality), and democracy outcomes (e.g. perspective-taking).

The post-test also included students’ own assessment of their learning outcomes, such as social structural understanding and learning about conflict. There were also questions about pedagogical methods, and engagement with the course materials. The results showed that “engaged learning mediated the impact of content and/or active pedagogy on four out of seven dimensions” (pp. 185-186). Furthermore, “active learning was especially influential among the Commitment to Action dimensions” (p. 186). Active forms of learning were therefore influential in “fostering understanding of action in solving intergroup conflicts” (p. 187). Nagda et al (2003) refer to an earlier study they were involved in (Lopez, Gurin & Nagda 1998) which showed

both content and active learning methods in an introductory multicultural class are positively related to an increase in students’ structural attributions for racial inequalities, heterosexism, and ethnocentrism. Furthermore, in that study active learning predicted students’ application of this understanding and endorsing actions to address incidents of ethnocentrism and heterosexism. (p. 186.)

The above studies therefore demonstrated the importance of transformative pedagogy to promote empowerment, school change and social justice. From this I go on to discuss the initial critical pedagogical principles used at the beginning of the GLEE project.

3.2.4 Initial critical pedagogical principles

At the time of beginning this research, the biggest influences on my ideas for constructing an empowering pedagogy came from the critical pedagogies of Paulo Freire (1970, 1973, 1994, 1998a, 1998b), as well as Henry Giroux (1991, 1992, 1997), and Ira Shor (1992) – the latter two have also been influenced by Freire’s work.

Freire views education as a liberatory practice that is not only committed to individual empowerment and transformation, but also to the collective radical transformation of society. His educational approach focuses on issues and problems that are relevant to communities (what he calls generative themes), believing there is a strong connection between emotion and drive to take action.
Therefore, learning activities should be situated in the life experiences of students and teachers.

*Problem posing* is the term Freire uses for his pedagogy in which the teacher (or animator) provides a framework for critical thinking, creativity, active participation, and experiential approaches to find solutions to problems. It involves a learning community engaged in cooperative inquiry to develop understanding of issues and act on a problem of concern. Dialogue is central to a learning community and as Freire says, “without dialogue there is no communication, and without communication, there can be no true education” (1970, p. 73). A dialogical learning community is in contrast to the domesticating banking approach in which students passively absorb the sacred body of knowledge deposited in their heads by the teacher. The learning community is based on mutual support to empower learners to act in ways that promote justice and equity. It is also a community that leads students to find their own voices and develop self-understanding.

Also central to Freire’s pedagogy is *conscientisation*, which he refers to as “learning to perceive social, political and economic contradictions, and to take action against the oppressive elements of reality” (1970, p. 17). At the heart of the conscientisation process is the development of an understanding of the root causes of a problem rather than just an awareness of its existence. Conscientisation is also different to awareness raising in that the latter does not necessarily translate into action to change the world. Unlike conscientisation that is rooted in the problem posing approach, awareness raising can also be rooted in the banking approach when there is transmission from an expert to a passive audience.

Freire (1973) describes different stages of conscientisation which leads to the development of *critical transitive consciousness*, which is characterised by depth in the interpretation of problems; by the substitution of causal principles for magical explanations; by the testing of one’s own findings and by openness to revision; by rejecting passive positions; by soundness of argumentation; by the practice of dialogue rather than polemics; by receptivity to the new for reasons beyond mere novelty and by the good sense not to reject the old because it is old – by accepting what is valid in old and new . . . It corresponds to highly permeable, interrogative, restless and dialogical forms of life. (pp. 18-19.)
Conscientisation proceeds through a praxis of “reflection and action directed at the structures to be transformed” (Freire 1970, p. 107). In this praxis individuals develop a critical understanding of their reality (critical consciousness) that is understood to have the power to transform the world. Freire’s praxis thus creates an inner power that enables individuals and groups to become activists to change the world. The praxis impacts on both ability and drive to act and transform. The development of critical consciousness thus goes hand in hand with empowerment and transformation. Kuhn (2004) describes Freire’s praxis as one that aims to produce radical criticism not only of the structures themselves, but of the theoretical justification for them. Integral to this is a new awareness of grievances, and a new willingness to move into the element of praxis, which is seen as an authentic union of reflection and action. . . . Thus it is a mode of education which enlarges the awareness of the presence and work of oppressive institutions, and produces an acute sense of being outrageously marginalized. (p. 8.)

Kuhn (2004) goes on to outline the basic steps by which learning and facts are to be brought together in terms of Freire’s praxis:

Awareness of one’s concrete (and exploited) situation, understanding of the historical elements by which this situation has come to exist, awareness of the possibility that this situation may be changed, and by which means, and willingness to act to produce such change. Thus, conscientization is a process which utilizes the dialectic between reflection and action, leading to a radical rejection of one reality, and action proclaiming a new reality to take its place. (p. 9.)

These basic steps form the basis for transformative learning where conscientisation leads to activism to change society:

It so happens that to every understanding, sooner or later an action corresponds. Once man perceives a challenge, understands it, and recognizes the possibilities of response, he acts. The nature of that action corresponds to the nature of his understanding. Critical understanding leads to critical action. (Freire 1973, p. 44)

Giroux (1991, pp. 47-54) outlines principles for his border pedagogy for teachers as cultural workers and transformative intellectuals. He also argues that pedagogical practices should not only heighten the possibilities for critical
consciousness but also transformative action. Given teachers are engaged in the production of ideologies and social practices he argues that education needs to (1) develop the critical capacity to challenge and transform existing social and political forms, (2) engage in a dialogue of reconciling difference and equality with the imperatives of freedom and justice, (3) develop an understanding of how identities and subjectivities are constructed in multiple ways, and (4) demonstrate how differences within and between social groups are constructed and sustained within and outside webs of domination, subordination, hierarchy and exploitation.

Giroux (1991) is concerned with the role of education to develop an understanding of how different types of knowledge are privileged or marginalised, the importance of dialogue, and therefore the rejection of the banking approach. He argues that education should recognise the socially constructed nature of knowledge claims and also pursue new forms of knowledge and culture. Giroux also calls for creating a language of critique and possibility that engages students in imagining a more just world and to struggle for it. Freedom in his view needs to be considered in terms of individual rights and responsibility, as individual and collective behaviour may produce violence and oppression. Finally, Giroux advocates a politics of voice that combines a postmodern notion of difference with a feminist emphasis on the primacy of the political. This means that students need to engage in issues regarding the construction of self and develop a critically conscious voice that is subject to theoretical and critical analysis that is connected to broader notions of solidarity, struggle and politics.

There is a lot of overlap between the pedagogies of Freire and Giroux. However in Giroux’s work there is a broader focus on identity that goes beyond class to include race and gender, and he addresses intersectionality and how oppressions are interrelated; something that Freire rarely did (McLaren 2000). Giroux also draws on some ideas from postmodernist thought, but he firmly sets himself apart from nihilistic versions of postmodernism (e.g., Baudrillard, Lyotard) that “have a mood of pessimism in relation to possibilities of emancipation and social progress” (Thompson 1998, p. 62). Giroux’s cultural work takes a critical stance towards both modernism and postmodernism, but is firmly rooted in an ethics of social justice. Like Freire, Giroux argues that education needs to be connected to critical democracy and foster critical ethical consciousness and transformative action for an equitable and socially just world. This is achieved through participatory learning communities engaged in a dialogical praxis of action and reflection directed at overcoming oppression.
Ira Shor demonstrates both the theory and practice of critical pedagogy for empowerment, democracy and social justice. In addition to his desocialising principle previously discussed, he proposes an agenda of ten other values (or principles) for his empowering pedagogy: participatory, affective, problem-posing, situated, multicultural, dialogic, democratic, researching, interdisciplinary, and activist (Shor 1992, p. 17).

Shor’s principles, and the ethical principle stressed by Giroux, sum up the ideas from critical pedagogy that provided me with initial concepts and theoretical starting points for developing the pedagogy within the GLEE Project. As the aim of the pedagogy that I am constructing is to foster the transformative empowerment of teachers that leads to activism and school transformation, I call it transformative pedagogy. After the Leadership Training Course the participants form an on-line learning community called GLEENET. This community is designed to continue the dialogue from the course and provide support and resources for the actions of teachers in their schools and transnational projects. Taking into consideration the role of GLEENET after the course, I call the educational approach web-assisted transformative pedagogy.

3.3 Methodological approach for constructing web-assisted transformative pedagogy (WATP)

This section discusses the initial methodological approach for developing the web-assisted transformative pedagogy to empower teachers to promote GLBTQ equity in schools. Two ideas of Freire are particularly relevant to the methodological approach. Firstly, in developing his Pedagogy of the Oppressed Freire says that in the struggle for liberation “this pedagogy will be made and remade” (1970, p. 30). And furthermore, that in promoting social change “we make the road by walking” (Freire & Horton 1990, p. 6). These comments imply that pedagogy emerges from emancipatory praxis that is organic and responsive to experiences encountered in the construction process. This is reflected in the GLEE Project research, and in chapter 4 I discuss the research developments that show how the methodological approach evolved from the initial ideas discussed below.
3.3.1 Action research as a methodological approach and praxis

As mentioned before, the context of this research was the GLEE Project. The intended aim of the project was to (1) develop with a training team a Leadership Training Course to empower teachers to take actions in their schools to promote GLBTQ equity, and (2) to develop a web-based community called GLEENET to support the activism of teachers after the course. The overall intended aim of the research was to evaluate within the GLEE Project the possibilities and limitations for constructing pedagogy to foster teacher empowerment and promote GLBTQ equity in their schools. With this aim, the research activities included the collection and analysis of data on the Leadership Training Courses and the post-course experiences and activities of teachers, including barriers and successes to school activism and transformation. The results, along with extant critical pedagogical theories, were fed back and discussed by the training team and used to further develop the Leadership Training Course pedagogy and GLEENET, and their theoretical foundations. The development of an appropriate methodological approach for the research was based on action research.

There are many types of action research that can be grouped according to their different aims, interests and perspectives. For example, Carr and Kemmis (1986, 2005) distinguish between technical, practical, and emancipatory action research. Given that this research is concerned with overcoming discrimination and oppression in schools, I became interested in action research approaches that have emancipatory aims, and share a common goal of empowerment of individuals to engage in actions for personal, institutional, and societal change. These action research approaches (each with their own particular nuances) are known by various names and include: critical (Carr & Kemmis 1986, 2005), participatory (Kemmis & McTaggart 1990, 2000), radical (Chisholm 1990), emancipatory (McKernan 1996; Zuber-Skerritt 1996), and collaborative (Oja & Smulyan 1989; Sagor 1993).

Critical action research is often said to be based on the Frankfurt school of critical theory and is optimistic about human agency, that is, the ability of individuals to exercise choice to make a difference. As Webb (1990) says:

While acknowledging the importance of structures in controlling and limiting human action, critical theory expresses confidence in the collective actions of people to change their social conditions by removing obstacles to their freedom (pp. 51-52).
Critical action research is therefore about activism for social justice. Kemmis (1993) states that early on Moreno developed an idea of action research “in which action was about activism, not just about changing practice or behaviour understood in narrowly individualistic terms” (p. 2). Kemmis goes on to reflect that:

Critical or emancipatory research is always connected to social action . . . It is thus always critical, in the sense that it is about relentlessly trying to understand and improve the way things are in relation to how they could be better. But it is also critical in the sense that it is activist: it aims at creating a form of collaborative learning by doing (in which groups of participants set out to learn from change in a process of making changes, studying the process and consequences of these changes, and trying again). It aims to help people understand themselves as the agents, as well as the products, of history. (p. 3.)

Furthermore, Elliott (1990) maintains that “the overriding purpose of educational research is to bring about worthwhile educational change”; and “research is only educational when it is directed towards realising educational values in practice. It cannot be dissociated from conceptions of worthwhile educational practices”. (p. 4.)

Examples of critical action research provide hope for the empowerment of project participants and school change. McKernan’s (1996) writing on curriculum action research highlights the power of critical communities such as the “Collaborative Action Research Network”. This network, established in 1976 by John Elliott, has provided many case studies supporting professional learning and educational change through action research (Elliott 1991). Atweh, Kemmis and Weeks (1998) document more examples of action research projects for social justice in education, involving teachers, students and parents, in both schools and universities. Particularly relevant is the chapter on action research for professional development on gender issues by Brooker, Smeal, Ehrich, Daws and Brannock (1998).

Price (2001) examined the transformative potential of action research with 11 pre-service teachers. Based on their experiences, he unravelled ways in which the teachers were able to make connections between pedagogy, research and change. Gravett (2004) reports on an action research project aiming to “change the

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24 Collaborative Action Research Network (CARN): http://www.did.stu.mmu.ac.uk/carnnew/
perspectives and practices of higher education teachers from a teacher-centred to a learning-centred dialogic approach” (p. 259). Further examples of action research and educational change projects can also be found on-line.25

I now consider two action research projects closely related to the GLEE project. The first from UK was an approach to teacher empowerment through collaborative action research, which focused on classroom practice. Lally & Scaife collected accounts by teachers to explore the conditions necessary for the development of collegiality on in-service courses. They also considered the micropolitical, social and institutional conditions as they interact to shape the working lives of teachers. The researchers used collaborative autobiography, interpersonal process recall and a supervisory framework as tools to empower the participants. Through autobiography the teachers explored the history of their epistemologies and belief frameworks and connected them to their histories as teachers. The researchers concluded that it is through the understanding of the complex relationships and tensions between power, knowledge and schooling that “we become empowered to reconstruct these relationships and ameliorate the tensions that threaten to marginalise humane and educational values.” (Lally & Scaife 1995, p.337).

The second project was carried out by Slater (2004) in a unit for students with Special Educational Needs. The action research set out to investigate how homosexuality was approached in the researcher’s work, with the purpose of ensuring that “gay issues are included sensitively and with the understanding as part of a wider commitment to developing inclusive practice” (p. 123).

Slater got his 20 colleagues to answer questions on sexuality, and used the 10 responses received to create an information pack. Later on 6 colleagues gave feedback on the pack, and in a subsequent cycle gay, lesbian and bisexual teenagers gave comments and reflections. The researcher focused on participation, collaboration, commitment, confrontation, reflection and action. Slater commenting on the action research approach said:

When applied to education it is a model which gives teachers a real opportunity to effect change from within their own practices (pp. 127-128).

25 E.G: Centre for Action Research in Professional Practice, University of Bath, UK: http://www.bath.ac.uk/carpp
EmTech: http://www.emtech.net/actionresearch.htm
Jack Whitehead’s homepage: http://people.bath.ac.uk/edsajw
Bob Dick’s action research resources: http://www.scu.edu.au/schools/gcm/ar/arhome.html
Slater remarked that the project had been empowering for him, and thought-provoking for all participants. However he was unsure as to how much it had affected participants’ practice. Slater also noted that his project generated interest in other schools, providing a multiplier effect to address issues of inclusive education.

The focus of critical action research on empowerment and agents of change engaging in activism made it appropriate for the GLEE Project. Lather (1986b) refers to such approaches as research as praxis, designed to advance emancipatory knowledge, and where “in praxis thought and action (or theory and practice), are dialectically related” (Carr & Kemmis 1986, p.34). Critical action research approaches are also appropriate with their emphasis on collaboration, along with establishing self-critical communities, and a systematic learning process for the development of activist ideas and actions, their evaluation and refinement.

Some of the action research principles proposed by McTaggart (1989) have also influenced the methodological approach of this research. The first principle is the use of spirals of planning, action, observation and reflection, and systematically collecting and analysing data. Cycles of action and reflection enable theorising about practice, and putting ideas and practices to the test. Given the interwoven process of action and research this is important for the development of the Leadership Training Course pedagogy and its theoretical foundations. The course is developed on certain principles, and on the basis of data collected about the course and what transpires afterwards the principles are modified. The second principle is critical analysis that is essential to the political change process by keeping one focused on what needs to be transformed. The third principle involves systematic data collection and record keeping. The widening of participation as the research proceeds is the fourth principle. In the GLEE Project this is important as participation starts with the training team, then the course participants, and then widens to include the school colleagues of course participants, members of their local communities, and the wider public.

To further develop the methodological approach I used the action research typology of Hart and Bond (1995, p. 40). They have selected seven criteria to distinguish different types of action research. On the basis of that, they identified four types of action research: experimental, organisational, professionalising, and empowering. It was the criterion for the empowering approach that I was interested in, with a focus on consciousness raising and connections to Freirean pedagogy. According to Hart and Bond, empowering action research is problem-
focused, context-specific, future-orientated, and involves a bottom-up change intervention. The GLEE Project research fitted this description with its focus on the problem of homophobia and heterosexism in the context of schools, and is future-orientated towards overcoming oppression. It is a grassroots intervention that puts teachers at the centre of the change process. Hart and Bond also describe the research process as cyclic in which research, action, and evaluation are interwoven. In terms of collaboration, within empowering action research there are shared roles. This was the intention at the outset with the GLEE Project, given that it is about challenging inequity and power.

3.3.2 Methodological principles and cycles – the starting point

The influences of extant critical action research literature resulted in an initial methodological approach for the GLEE Project structured around a 3 year work plan. The plan included periodical face-to-face meetings between the training team, *Leadership Training Courses*, and a timetable for evaluation. From the research perspective the work plan fitted into spiralling action research cycles with four phases – Planning, Action, Observation and Reflection:

**Phase 1** Planning  
*Leadership Training Courses* and GLEENET.

**Phase 2** Action  
*Leadership Training Courses* and GLEENET.

**Phase 3** Observation  
Evaluation of *Leadership Training Courses*, course participants’ post-course actions and GLEENET.

**Phase 4** Reflection on Phases 1, 2, and 3, construction of web-assisted transformative pedagogy, revision of theoretical framework and methodological approach – followed by next cycle to develop the *Leadership Training Course* and GLEENET.

Initially, there were eight cycles of action research planned around eight face-to-face training team meetings. However, when the cycles were structured around the three planned *Leadership Training Courses*, it created three “macro-cycles” at yearly intervals. In each phase of the macro-cycles, quantitative and qualitative data related to the pedagogy and post-course actions was systematically collected and analysed to (1) have dialogue-based evaluations about participants’
empowerment and obstacles to activism faced, (2) develop the theoretical basis for the pedagogy, (3) inform discussion on the further development of the intervention and pedagogical approach, and (4) evaluate the methodological approach. GLEENET was developed and used to give web-based support to the action research, and data collected about its usefulness for the process. In addition, there was a need to return to the data after the 3 year GLEE Project ended, when the focus for this research report became clearer.

Carr and Kemmis (1986, p. 165) argue that there are three necessary and sufficient conditions for research to qualify as action research. Firstly, a project takes as its subject matter a social practice, regarding it as a form of strategic action susceptible of improvement. Secondly, the project proceeds through a spiral of cycles of planning, acting, observing, and reflecting, with each of these activities being systematically and self-critically implemented and interrelated. Thirdly, the project involves those responsible for the practice in each of the moments of the activity, widening participation in the project gradually to include others affected by the practice, and maintaining collaborative control of the process. Each of the three necessary and sufficient conditions are fulfilled by the GLEE Project research approach. Furthermore given the role of GLEENET and the aim of school transformation, I have called the methodological approach web-assisted transformative action research. The approach is characterised by reflection and action directed at heteronormative structures to be transformed. As such it is queer praxis. The initial methodological approach provided a vehicle for reflective action and was characterised by the following principles:

- Emancipatory aims and a catalyst for personal and societal change;
- Consciousness raising, empowerment, and activism of participants;
- Collaborative, experiential, and democratic participation in a self-critical community;
- Spirals of planning, action, observation, and reflection;
- Systematic data collection and record keeping; and
- Web-based support network.

Along with the theoretical framework and the initial methodological approach, the research project commenced in September 1999. In the next chapter I discuss in more detail the research developments including how the methodological approach evolved, including the innovative role of GLEENET.
4 Research developments

This chapter describes the research developments which took place during two periods. The first period is the 3 years (1999-2002) when the GLEE Project was funded by the EU and I worked collaboratively with the training team to develop the Leadership Training Course. The second period is from August 2002, when the EU funding came to an end, and I began the systematic dissertation writing process. Also in the second period, I continued to collect data on the activities of teachers who participated in the Leadership Training Course in 2002. Some of the data was from a transnational school project called Towards an Inclusive School (TIS) that was formed by course participants and continued (with other EU funding) until 2006.

Firstly, the influences of the EU funding on the research plans are considered. Secondly, the general project and research activities in each of the research cycles (from where the research data was collected) are summarised. Thirdly, I describe my researcher role and the roles of the training team and course participants. Fourthly, I discuss the role of GLEENET in the research process that provided the web-assisted dimension to the methodological approach. Fifthly, the data collection and analysis during the first period of the project are discussed, followed by a summary of the results from the Pilot Leadership Training Course and GLEENET network. Lastly, the research approach in the second period from 2002 is clarified and the research questions, data collection and analysis introduced. This is a precursor to chapters 5 and 6 where I focus on analysing and discussing data from the Leadership Training Course, what transpired in the participants’ schools afterwards, and developing web-assisted transformative pedagogy from the data of the first and second periods.

4.1 The influence of EU funding on the research

Having formulated some ideas for the action research GLEE Project, I began the process in 1998 of applying for EU funding from its educational Socrates programme. This firstly involved recruiting a training team by contacting universities, teachers’ organisations, and GLBTQ non-governmental organisations (NGOs) from different European countries. The EU provided funding for a 6 person training team to write a grant proposal for the GLEE Project which was submitted in January 1999. The proposal was subsequently accepted and the 3 year GLEE Project commenced in September 1999.
Inevitably all research ideas require resources for it to become a reality. Even if a research project is successful in getting funding, it may come with strings attached and therefore affect the direction of research. I therefore think it is important to reflect on the influences of funding on one’s research. In the case of the GLEE Project, I applied to many educational foundations that said they funded work in the area of discrimination, but in nearly all cases I did not receive a reply. I then turned to the EU at a time when the issue of discrimination was a hot topic as part of the Amsterdam Treaty.  

The actual realisation of the research was influenced to some extent by the requirements of the EU Socrates programme that funded the project. The project approach outlined in the grant application included a work plan with the meetings, activities, evaluations, participants’ roles, the role of GLEENET, and expected outcomes. Project activities covered the collaborative development of both Leadership Training Courses and materials, the construction of GLEENET, and project dissemination including web page construction.

The application required a demonstration of the use of technology in the project, and this requirement was fulfilled with the proposed creation of the GLEENET on-line community. The use of information and communications technologies was a central part of the working methods in the GLEE Project for enhancing the coordination and implementation. GLEENET was a support network that provided an environment for cooperative work, distance learning, emailing, and chat facilities. It also provided on-line resources on GLBTQ education issues and post-course support for participants’ actions. The particular relevance of GLEENET for the working methods was improved transparency through immediate access to project documents and a means to support research through the conduct of on-line data collection and storage.

Whilst annual reporting was required by the EU, with a description of all project activities and summative as well as formative evaluations, the EU did not require that the project result in a systematic research report – it was my personal choice to do so. The grant application demanded a mention of some research activities that were described as monitoring and evaluation. These were required to be the joint responsibility of the project partners. However, as I planned to use

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26 Article 13 EC of the Treaty of Amsterdam states that: “The Council, acting unanimously on a proposal from the Commission and after consulting the European parliament, may take appropriate action to combat discrimination based on sex, racial, or ethnic origin, religion or belief, disability, age or sexual orientation” (cited in ILGA-Europe 1999).

27 Continued funding by the EU for the project was dependent on the approval of these reports.
the project as the context for a doctoral dissertation the intended extent of the research went beyond the EU demands. As such, most of the research and evaluation activities were entirely my responsibility, along with the writing of the dissertation. The evaluation methods were initially left open to permit more time to planning them. Although there were scheduled monitoring and evaluation activities, there was not a strict timeline for research activities as project plans could change. I knew in advance that there was the possibility (with EU permission) to make changes during the course of the project, and therefore the project could grow organically and respond to changing circumstances and enable us to “make the road while walking” (Freire & Horton 1990). This flexibility would enable the collection and analysis of data, and permit changes according to the feedback.

The Socrates programme grant application document set out guidelines for the coordination, management and dissemination of projects. It mentioned that projects should involve at least one institution from a minimum of three EU or associated countries, and have a joint definition of project parameters, agreement on working methods, and joint implementation of outcomes. It went on to state that one institution must act as the coordinator and take the lead in preparing the outline of the project with partners, taking responsibility for submitting the project’s application for Community support, ensuring the smooth administration of the project, accounting for the spending of the Community grant and reporting on the project’s outcomes (European Commission 1997, p. 63).

In addition to the research activities, as the project coordinator these administrative and financial aspects were my responsibilities. Furthermore the EU document stated that:

It is essential that all the participating institutions within a project contribute equally and actively to the project activities, by pooling their expertise in the conception, implementation and evaluation of the project, as well as ensuring the dissemination of its results (European Commission 1997, p. 63).

The active, equal and cooperative contribution of project members is consistent with the demands of participatory action research, and this is also stressed in the project selection criteria and priorities:
In selecting the projects for support, particular emphasis will be attached to the extent to which they involve cooperative preparation and enhancement of materials and methodologies, sharing of experience and information, transfer of particular areas of expertise and acquisition of new competencies (European Commission 1997, p. 64).

The EU requirements, though not explicitly stated, resembled an action research approach. From my perspective, this meant that there were no constraints from the EU funding on my planned research approach, and furthermore all participants were bound by these EU requirements.

4.2 General GLEE Project and research activities in each action research cycle

As intended, the research followed a cyclical approach with planning, action, observation, and reflection phases. However, there also emerged a phase which can be best described as preparatory, coming before each planning phase. This preparatory phase did not directly involve the planning of the main actions in the project but was a phase in which there was a revision of the problem, goals, methodological approach, and theoretical framework. It involved the clarification of the project structure and management so that participants could proceed to their starting blocks prepared for the planning phase. The preparatory phase resembles the reconnaissance phase in the action research models of Elliot (1991, pp. 71-75) and Ebbutt (1985, p. 166).

Initially, three macro-cycles of action research were planned with a Leadership Training Course in each of the 3 years of funding. However, due to EU administrative delays, only two macro-cycles were completed with Leadership Training Courses in the first year (pilot course) and third year. The macro-cycles are shown in Figure 6.
Fig. 6. The methodological framework of the GLEE project research.
Whilst each phase had some particular focus, the following questions were ongoing up to the Leadership Training Course 2002 (after which my joint collaboration with the training team ended).

- What is the situation regarding GLBTQ equity in schools?
- What kind of teaching methods and content would empower course participants to engage in activism in their schools?
- What principles of extant pedagogical theory can inform the development of the Leadership Training Course?
- What kind of actions did teachers engage in after the Leadership Training Course? What barriers did they face? What factors could influence success?
- How could GLEENET support teachers in their activism?

With these questions in mind, data was collected in each phase of the two macrocycles, and the results used to inform the next steps in the practical and theoretical development of the pedagogy and GLEENET. Table 3 shows the project timeline and the main activities and events from which the data was collected (see Appendix 2 for more detail of the activities and events in each macrocycle).

In Table 3 those activities shown in bold provided the main sources of data for the research, and include: (1) the Pilot Leadership Training Course (see Appendix 3) in August 2000. This course led to the creation of a Pilot GLEENET network with school-based actions of participants, and (2) the Leadership Training Course in July 2002 in Oulu, Finland that was followed by the GLEENET network and school-based actions of participants.

In addition to individual actions in the schools of participants, the courses also resulted in two transnational School Development Projects (SDPs) to promote GLBTQ equity in schools. The first transnational project, Inequality in School (EI) received EU funding from September 2001 to August 2002 (see Appendix 4). The second transnational project, Towards an Inclusive School (TIS) received EU funding from September 2003 to August 2006 (see chapter 6).

All the training team meetings are noted in Table 3 and were mostly focused on the construction of the Leadership Training Course, GLEENET, and the Web pages.
Table 3. GLEE Project Timeline. Main activities and events from which data was collected.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Period</th>
<th>Activity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1: 1999-2002</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>January 1999</td>
<td>Training team Meeting 1 Oulu, Finland</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>September 1999</td>
<td>EU funding began</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>October 1999</td>
<td>GLEENET first version constructed for training team use</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>December 1999</td>
<td>Training team Meeting 2 Copenhagen, Denmark</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>March 2000</td>
<td>Training team Meeting 3 London, England</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>May 2000</td>
<td>First draft Leadership Training Course; GLEENET updated</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>August 2000</td>
<td>Pilot Leadership Training Course and Meeting 4 Oulu, Finland</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>February 2001</td>
<td>Pilot GLEENET network began with school based actions by course participants (until July 2001)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>April 2001</td>
<td>Second Draft Leadership Training Course</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>May 2001</td>
<td>Training Team Meeting 6 Bologna, Italy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>November 2001</td>
<td>Third Draft Leadership Training Course</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>February 2002</td>
<td>Training Team Meeting 7 Oulu, Finland</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>February 2002</td>
<td>Training Team Meeting 8 Lisbon, Portugal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>May 2002</td>
<td>Training Team Meeting 9 Brighton, England</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>May 2002</td>
<td>Leadership Training Course manual completed, GLEENET updated</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>July 2002</td>
<td>Leadership Training Course and Meeting 10 Oulu, Finland</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2: 2002 - 2006

| August 2003 | GLEENET network with school based actions by course participants         |

4.3 Researcher, training team and course participants’ roles

Recruiting persons with the necessary skills and commitment proved a difficult task even though I sent numerous emails to GLBTQ organisations and university departments throughout Europe, as well as using other means of recruitment such as presentations at conferences. The participants were recruited irrespective of their own sexual identity to stress that countering homophobia and heterosexism is in the interests of all members of society. The project was therefore formed around a common issue of concern rather than a common identity.

Considering the research project was covering new ground in creating interventions to challenge homophobia and heterosexism in schools, it is not surprising that there was not a large pool of individuals with experience in
research, learning, and teaching methods and their intersection with teacher training and GLBTQ issues in schools. Not only experience but also readiness and ability to participate were important factors. Some persons who expressed an interest to participate could not envisage getting administrative support from their schools. They asked me if they could take part without anyone in their school knowing. Another person said they would like to take part but that they were up for a promotion and thought that it would hurt their chances. It was a lesson for me in how institutionalised homophobia and heterosexism can act as a structural barrier, disempowering and deterring potential participants. It took one year to establish a stable core training team of six (including myself), that included three members from the original EU grant writing team. The core training team that emerged did have the support of their respective institutions which was an EU requirement for participation.

Table 4. The core training team.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Profession</th>
<th>Country of Residence</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Charles</td>
<td>HIV/AIDS Charity Manager</td>
<td>U.K.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Melanie</td>
<td>University Lecturer</td>
<td>Finland</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mira</td>
<td>School Teacher</td>
<td>Portugal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Simo</td>
<td>GLBT Education Director</td>
<td>U.S.A.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tim</td>
<td>School Teacher/Researcher</td>
<td>Finland</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tony</td>
<td>Web Environment Consultant</td>
<td>Finland</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Three types of project participants emerged. There was myself as the researcher, the training team responsible for the development and teaching of the Leadership Training Course, and the participants in the Leadership Training Courses. I worked collaboratively as an “insider” with the training team, participating in ten project meetings (two more than originally planned) that focused on developing workshops for the training courses and teaching them. At each meeting I gave feedback on my research findings and my ideas for further developing the Leadership Training Course. The ensuing discussion with the training team resulted in a plan for further developing the course until the next project meeting.

However, the original intent of equally sharing project tasks did not materialise, and the training team had almost no time to engage in evaluation and

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28 Apart from my own name (Tim), all others are pseudonyms. Where I have quoted any member of the training team, I have done so in the original language without use of [sic], as I feel this is more respectful to English as a second language users.
reporting activities. As a result, in the first period of the research my main role was project coordinator, and ensuring that the plans laid out in the grant proposal were carried out. Consequently I had less time for research activities, such as the analysis of the data, than I had anticipated. However, I knew I could return to the data after the 3 year EU funding for the GLEE Project was over, when my role would become mainly a researcher (as well as GLEENET participant).

The GLEENET usage statistics reflect the disproportionate amount of time spent by myself on the project. For example, the total time spent in GLEENET, the number of documents produced and messages sent by myself exceeds the combined total of the training team. I tried to rectify this situation 18 months into the project by collectively redefining the project partners’ roles and responsibilities as shown in Appendix 5. In spite of this, not a lot changed. This situation was a result of time constraints on the training team who all had full-time jobs and other personal commitments. I was able to negotiate some unpaid release time from my high school teaching position, but for the most part I did the research alongside my regular full time job. The training team’s workplaces allowed them time to attend meetings but required they catch up with their work on their return.

Despite the problems in establishing a training team committed to the tasks and aims of the project, the core that finally emerged worked effectively. Although most of the monitoring and evaluation, including data collection and analysis and report writing was done by myself, the training team did engage in workshop evaluations during the Leadership Training Course. They also gave feedback on my evaluation and reports during meetings or through GLEENET. My feeding back of project evaluations, research findings and pedagogical theory was an integral part of the methodological approach. This feedback along with the ideas of the training team members was the basis for further developing the Leadership Training Course, GLEENET, and their pedagogical foundations.

The role of the course participants can best be described as “open-ended”, as after the course they had no obligations to the project. They could decide whether or not to (1) be an active member of GLEENET, (2) engage in actions in their schools, (3) become part of an EU transnational School Development Project, or (4) report on their post-course actions. For the fifth training team meeting in Lisbon in February 2001, we invited 6 participants from the Pilot Leadership Training Course to attend to give ideas for the development of the course pedagogy and GLEENET. Two of these, Simo and Mira, subsequently became core members of the training team. Simo had a lot of experience with GLBTQ
education issues with the GLSEN organisation in the U.S.A., and the training team thought it would be good for Mira to facilitate the planning of EU project workshops (having just participated in the *Pilot Leadership Training Course* herself) in the *Leadership Training Course*.

### 4.4 The role of GLEENET in the research process

The major innovation in the action research methods of this project was the development of the GLEENET environment,\(^\text{29}\) which enabled a web-assisted transformative action research approach. GLEENET was tailored by participants to suit the specific needs of the project. It was mainly a protected environment for project participants although some parts of the site were made public. The front page of GLEENET is shown in Figure 7.

GLEENET contained a mail function giving the possibility to send private messages and also messages to the mailing lists. There was also a text chat facility. The mail and chats were stored in the GLEENET site for future reference. The environment also contained 11 main folders for different aspects of the project. Table 5 gives a description of each folder, the role they played in the project, and the material they provided for the research.

The learning environment was configured in such a way that access to folders could be restricted by the folder creator. The access control was usually motivated by a need for a private space or that the documents did not have general relevance. There was general public access to some documents in the first three folders. *Leadership Training Course* participants had access to most documents in the first six folders and the remainder were only accessible to the training team. I was responsible for the maintenance of the site and another training team member dealt with the technical aspects and user training.

It can be seen from Table 5 that GLEENET provided web-assistance to both the research and teaching activities in a variety of ways. Firstly, it acted as a means of communication which was important for the geographically distributed participants. Correspondence remained in the site rather than individual email.

\(^{29}\) GLEENET is based on the TELSI online learning environment developed in the European Union SIMULAB and TAKO-Rengas projects with the Continuing Education Centre division of Oulu University, Finland. Newer versions of TELSI were retitled Optima. Optima is being further developed by the company Discendum in Oulu and it is one of the growing number of online learning environments such as Blackboard, WebCT and Moodle. Furthermore, there has been a growth in the use of information and communication technologies (ICTs) to empower organisations and movements for social justice, see e.g. Association for Progressive Communications: www.apc.org.
accounts, and could be easily retrieved. GLEENET therefore enabled the project cycles to continue after the face-to-face meetings. Secondly, it acted as a means for data collection such as project evaluations, discussions, or reports of the actions of teachers in their schools. Thirdly, it was a transparent management system to plan and guide project actions. Fourthly, it provided on-going feedback loops into the project, for example, with feedback from the general public or from teachers in schools. Fifthly, it was an archive for future research. Sixthly, it provided a systematic way of theorising practice and constructing ideas using materials in the resource centre.

On 10 November 2003, I made a copy of the whole GLEENET site for data analysis purposes. In the on-going live site I continued to collect data on one of the transnational school projects formed after the Leadership Training Course – the Towards an Inclusive School (TIS) Project.

Fig. 7. Front page of GLEENET.
Table 5. GLEENET folders that were sources of research data.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Folder</th>
<th>Contents</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Project &amp; GLEENET Information</td>
<td>Information on the project provided for general public access. Those who viewed the site were able to give feedback to the training team which was fed into the project development.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leadership Training Course</td>
<td>Drafts and the final version of the Leadership Training Course, that provided a basis for on-going development of the course as well as an historical record of the process.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Resource Centre A</td>
<td>On-line documents (e.g., articles, website links, bibliographies, research, school curricula, staff development, etc.) that provided both practical and theoretical input for the project.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School Development Projects</td>
<td>Progress reports of the school development projects created after the Leadership Training Course. It also provided details of how the projects could apply for EU funding and for developing the action planning part of the Leadership Training Course including ideas of intervention strategies in schools.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Resource Centre B</td>
<td>Resources created by project participants who were encouraged to write them in their native language to help redress the lack of non-English language resources.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personal Action Plans &amp; Reports</td>
<td>Details of the action plans drawn up by each participant in the Leadership Training Course and a yearly report of their actions, providing the basis for monitoring and evaluating teacher interventions in their schools. This information could then be used in the planning of the Leadership Training Course.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Project Meetings</td>
<td>Agendas and minutes for each of the face-to-face project meetings. This gave an indication of the project development process.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dissemination &amp; Evaluation Strategies</td>
<td>Details of project dissemination activities as well plans for evaluations.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Project Management</td>
<td>The following documents: (1) work plan and roles, (2) tasks to do, (3) Leadership Training Course application documents, and (4) EU documents including the contract, financial aspects and project reports. It contained the aspects related to the organisation and implementation of the project – the when, where, how and who.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>External Web Pages</td>
<td>Development of the web pages as part of the dissemination process.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher Education Network</td>
<td>A space to develop a teacher education network on GLBTQ issues (created after the Leadership Training Course in 2002 at the request of one of the participants)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
4.5 Data collection and analysis in the first research period

The research activities in the first period were designed to further the development of the Leadership Training Course and GLEENET, and their theoretical foundations. Conventional and on-line methods through GLEENET were used to gather data in the following areas:

- Situation regarding GLBTQ equity in the teachers’ schools;
- Leadership Training Course materials, course content, and teaching methods;
- Role of GLEENET including monitoring of the support network usage and working time statistics;
- Actions taken by teachers after the Leadership Training Course including barriers and successes to activism and transformation.

Data was systematically collected from both the training team and course participants to get a broad perspective on the project activities. I analysed the data on the Pilot Leadership Training Course pedagogy and the actions of participants after the course using content analysis with emerging themes that included types of activism, usage of GLEENET, pedagogical principles and critique of the Pilot Leadership Training Course, barriers to activism, and empowerment. The results were then used by the training team to further guide project actions.

Data collection and analysis has been systematic and responsive to the emergent needs of the project, and in this long term process a lot of data was accumulated. The data included questionnaires, surveys, diaries, archived emails, on-line GLEENET use statistics, training materials, course participants’ workshop outputs, agendas and minutes of meetings, and course participants’ action plans. The data is mostly qualitative though there is also some quantitative data. In the first research period prior to the Leadership Training Course in 2002, the most intensive periods of data collection were during the Pilot Leadership Training Course and the Pilot GLEENET network (see Appendix 3) that started after the course. The data collected related to these activities were:

- From the Pilot Leadership Training Course: participants’ applications; teaching materials; participants’ workshop writings; participants’ course evaluations; participants’ Leadership Training Course first draft feedback; training team evaluations; participant evaluation report; EU report; and training team meeting minutes.
- From the Pilot GLEENET network: GLEENET and regular emails of Pilot Leadership Training Course participants; training team usage statistics; Pilot
Leadership Training Course participants’ GLEENET usage statistics; Pilot Leadership Training Course participants’ evaluations of GLEENET; training team evaluation of GLEENET; Pilot Leadership Training Course participants’ reports on post-course actions; EI SDP project evaluation of grant application procedure; EU report; and training team meeting minutes.

The analysis of the data in this first research period was constrained by the availability of time. Nonetheless I knew that after the Leadership Training Course, in the second period of the research, I could return to the data and rigorously re-analyse it in order to find answers to my research questions. For this reason I do not give details of the data analysis in the first period of the research, but rather discuss the data analysis in the second period.

4.6 Summary of Pilot Leadership Training Course and GLEENET network experiences

Below are the main outcomes and conclusions from the first period of the research.

The Pilot Leadership Training Course

This course took place in August 2000 in Oulu, Finland with 19 participants and 4 trainers from nine countries (see Appendix 3). It was based on a shortened version of the first draft of the Leadership Training Course (lasting four days instead of eight). There were four sequential parts to the course:

Part 1 Situation of GLBTQ equity in schools in each country
Part 2 Examples of transforming schools
Part 3 Action planning (individual and transnational)
Part 4 GLEENET network

The first two parts focused on raising awareness and the last two parts on action planning. Data collected and analysed from the course formed the basis of the feedback I gave to the training team for the further development of the Leadership Training Course which included:

- Ideas for transforming schools (from the 11 presentations by participants).
Data on the similarities and differences in the GLBTQ climate in schools, that could be used to develop a typology of schools from “GLBTQ hostile” to “GLBTQ friendly.”

The importance of giving more time to reflect and process ideas – the pace of the course was too rushed.

Addressing the domination of discussion by native English speakers.

Developing an understanding of key terms, especially given the diversity of participants’ languages.

Giving fewer presentations and making the workshops more participatory.

From the research perspective to construct pedagogy, certain principles that extant literature considered empowering could already be discerned in the Pilot Leadership Training Course’s pedagogical approach including: conscientisation, participatory, situated learning, affective, problem-posing, dialogic, and activist.

At the end of the course, participants returned to their schools with ideas for actions and the transnational Inequality in School (EI) Project was created (see Appendix 4).

**GLEENET and post-course activities**

The activity reports written by 6 of the participants 8 months after the course showed that respondents had undertaken some GLBTQ work in their educational settings such as workshops, awareness campaign, articles, meetings with youth workers, curriculum development, and work with NGOs. The reports were not very detailed and therefore it was not possible to establish whether participants were any more empowered or active than they would have been without participating in GLEE, except for the creation of the Inequality in School (EI) Project.

The use of GLEENET by participants up to 10 months after the Pilot Leadership Training Course was very variable. On average, each GLEENET member had 56 sessions with an average time of use of 8 hours. Documents produced averaged 10, messages sent 31, and messages read averaged 227. Only four GLEENET evaluations were received and three respondents spoke of technical difficulties and frustrations with the technology, and the need for more training. GLEENET was used as a resource, a central support mechanism, and as an energiser for their individual growth. It was also used by the EI Project to discuss ideas and complete the EU grant application.
The first year of the pilot phase for GLEENET ended in July 2001. Those that had used it the most were involved in the transnational EI Project, which bound them together as a sub-community; the implications of this for the Leadership Training Course were that:

- More emphasis needed to be placed on building community, for example, by including energisers and teambuilding exercises.
- It would be better to invite only those who would be eligible for funding in a transnational EU project (to avoid exclusion of those not eligible).
- More time needed on GLEENET training on both its uses and functions.

The EI Project successfully obtained EU funding from October 2001 to August 2002 and their work raised the expectations of the training team that the Leadership Training Course in 2002 would lead to the creation of more such transnational projects. However, the EI Project came to an abrupt end in August 2002 when one of the three national Socrates agencies refused further funding. One of the EI Project members believed it was homophobia within the U.K. national agency which had led to the ending of financial support, especially as Section 28 of the Local Government Act 1988\footnote{Section 28 of the local government act (1988) stated: ‘A local authority shall not (a) intentionally promote homosexuality or publish material with the intention of promoting homosexuality; (b) promote the teaching in any maintained school of the acceptability of homosexuality as a pretended family relationship’ (http://www.statutelaw.gov.uk/content.aspx?activeTextDocId=2194615). The law was repealed in 2003.} was still in effect. It has not been possible to substantiate this claim.

4.7 Research approach in the second period

Three years after the research started, the week-long Leadership Training Course took place in July 2002 in Oulu, Finland. The course marked the end of the first period of research, and also the end of EU funding, and with it the collaborative work with the training team. Then began the second period of action research where I continued to have dialogue through GLEENET with course participants, and collect data on their activities to promote GLBTQ equity. With this data and all the previously collected data, I began the task of writing this dissertation. My first task was to establish the focus, and I eventually decided on (1) exploring further the possibilities and limitations within the GLEE Project through educational means to foster teacher empowerment and promote GLBTQ
educational equity, and (2) continuing the process of constructing the principles for web-assisted transformative pedagogy based on the Leadership Training Course teaching methods, contents and materials, feedback from the training team, course participants’ experiences during and after the Leadership Training Courses, and other data from the GLEE Project as well as extant literature.

4.7.1 Research questions in the second research period

Reflecting my primary research interest in the field of critical pedagogy, the main research question in the second period was:

What were the possibilities and limitations within the GLEE Project to foster teacher empowerment and promote GLBTQ educational equity?

There were three sub-questions:

Question A: In what ways were the training team empowered to develop and teach the Leadership Training Course to foster teacher empowerment to promote GLBTQ educational equity?

Question B: In what ways were the course participants empowered to promote GLBTQ equity in their schools?

Question C: What were the empowering principles and characteristics of web-assisted transformative pedagogy?

Suffice it to say, without the development of the Leadership Training Course there would have been no participants and therefore no subsequent teacher activism in schools. Therefore question A considers the methodological approach and empowerment of the training team to develop the Leadership Training Course. Question B is concerned with an evaluation of the empowerment of participants and is a precursor to question C and the construction of web-assisted transformative pedagogy.

4.7.2 Data collection and analysis in the second research period

In chapters 5 and 6 the collection and analysis of data is introduced in the context of each of the research questions above. Here I describe in general the method for analysing the qualitative data in my research which reflects the epistemological and ontological assumptions discussed in chapter 3. The data analysis is based on
the view that research-based evidence can be derived from authentic data that reflects the experiences and practice of the research participants, and can be used as a basis for theorising and generating new knowledge that can be put to practical use.

According to Huberman and Miles (1994, p. 9), there are some common features to the diverse approaches to qualitative data analysis that include: (1) affixing codes to field notes and noting remarks, (2) sorting and sifting through materials to identify relationships, patterns, themes, differences between groups and common sequences, and use them for further data collection, (3) elaborating some generalisations, and (4) confronting these generalisations with a formalised body of knowledge in form of constructs or theories. The data analysis approach I have used exhibits these four common features and is based partly on Framework Analysis (Ritchie & Spence 1994). This method is a form of qualitative content analysis, where theme is the unit of analysis expressed in any physical linguistic unit – word, sentence, paragraph or entire document. Its usefulness for this action research lies in the systematic sorting of data that allows between and within case analysis, that is, comparisons between and associations within cases to be made. I was interested in both the experiences of each individual participant across a range of issues, for example, prior and post-course activism and school culture, as well as the range of experiences of participants across each theme, such as barriers to activism.

The Framework Analysis (Ritchie & Spence 1994) approach involves a systematic process of sifting, charting and sorting material according to key themes that are driven by research questions or issues which can be: (1) contextual – identifying the form and nature of what exists, for example, GLBTQ equity in schools, (2) diagnostic – examining the reasons for, or causes of what exists, for example, barriers to activism, (3) evaluative – appraising the effectiveness of what exists, for example, the Leadership Training Course and empowerment, and (4) strategic – identifying new theories, policies, plans and actions, for example, web-assisted transformative pedagogy. The data analysis therefore involves the tasks of defining concepts, mapping the range and nature of phenomena, categorising and creating typologies, finding associations, seeking explanations, and developing new ideas. The analysis consists of five stages:

1. **Familiarisation** is gaining an overview of the richness, depth, and diversity of a body of data related to each research question, and beginning the process of
abstraction and conceptualisation, as well as noting emerging themes and issues.

2. Developing a thematic framework requires deductive and inductive reasoning and intuitive thinking. It also involves making judgements about meaning, and the relevance and importance of issues, and connections between ideas. The framework or index is made up of categories which can be derived from (1) emergent issues raised by the respondents (e.g. evaluation of the Leadership Training Course) or analytical themes arising from recurrence in the data of particular views or experiences (e.g., GLEENET support), or (2) prior research, constructs and theory, and a priori issues which can be informed by the research aims and questions (e.g., empowerment). In the first case, the thematic framework is grounded or generative, meaning that the categories are derived inductively from the data containing original accounts and observations. This conventional content analysis approach is mostly used when developing new theory.

In the second case, the categories can be theory-guided or rooted in a priori ideas and studies, and is known as directed content analysis. However, applying the framework to the data may necessitate a refinement of index categories to respond to emergent issues and analytical themes. Making these refinements is an abductive reasoning process that necessitates shifting between the content of the data and category conceptualisations in order to find a position of stability that encapsulates the diversity of experiences, viewpoints, circumstances, etc. At some point the process must end, conclusions drawn, and the hermeneutic circle closed. According to Ereaut (2002), the criteria for closing the circle may be when the point of saturation is reached, “where new data does not lead the researcher to revise hypotheses, and where the researcher is satisfied that a full and valid account of the phenomena has been reached” (p. 122). The directed content analysis approach is mostly used to validate or extend a conceptual framework or theory (Hsieh & Shannon 2005).

3. Indexing or coding involves systematically applying the index categories (which may be grouped according to major subject headings) to all the data in its textual form. This requires making judgements as to the meaning and significance of the data. Single passages with different themes may require multiple indexing. The index provides a mechanism for labelling data in “manageable bites” for subsequent retrieval and exploration.
4. **Charting** involves lifting the data from its original context and rearranging it according to the relevant thematic reference. The charts are created so that for each theme there is data for each respondent and also for each respondent data for each theme as shown below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Respondent</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Theme A</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Category A1</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>C</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Category A2</td>
<td>D</td>
<td>E</td>
<td>F</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Theme B</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Category B1</td>
<td>G</td>
<td>H</td>
<td>I</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Category B2</td>
<td>J</td>
<td>K</td>
<td>L</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In each cell of the chart the data can be entered or is coded so that it can refer to the original data (A to L in Table 6). Under each theme there may be several categories (and sub-categories), for example, if the main theme B is personal action plans, the categories B1 and B2 could be the main priority and actions in/out school respectively (see Appendix 6 for an expanded example of framework analysis).

5. **Mapping and interpretation** is pulling together key characteristics of the data and searching for patterns and connections. For example, is there any connection between the degree of pre-course activism and post-course activism? What does the extent of pre-course activism indicate for post-course empowerment?

The specific data analysis method related to each research question is explained in chapters 5 and 6. Sometimes it has been theory-based and sometimes has involved emergent themes. Chapter 5 is concerned with research sub-questions A and B, the empowerment of the training team during the first period of the project, and the empowerment of course participants to promote GLBTQ equity following the *Leadership Training Course*. Sub-question C is the focus of chapter 6 and the construction of an empowering pedagogy and its further development.
5 Training team and course participant empowerment

This chapter focuses firstly on the empowerment of the training team during the first period of the project that ended just after the Leadership Training Course in July 2002. The possibility to empower school teachers depended on having a training team with the ability and drive to develop and teach the Leadership Training Course. I am therefore interested in the efficacy of the action research approach to empower the training team.

Secondly, I consider in what ways the participants in the 2002 Leadership Training Course were empowered both during and after the course, when they returned to their schools and engaged in actions to promote GLBTQ equity. This includes a consideration of the societal and school contexts in which their activism took place which can be beneficial for transforming schools but also a limitation, and therefore a challenge for the development of an empowering pedagogy addressed in chapter 6.

5.1 Training team empowerment

During the first 3 years of the GLEE Project the training team developed and taught 2 Leadership Training Courses (a pilot course in August 2000 and another course in July 2002, both in Oulu, Finland). I have collected data related to the empowerment of the training team and the efficacy of the methodological approach to develop the courses. This data is analysed to answer the sub-question:

Question A: In what ways were the training team empowered to develop and teach the Leadership Training Course to foster teacher empowerment to promote GLBTQ educational equity?

5.1.1 Data collection and analysis

Data collection about the training team was on-going since the beginning of the project, when the application for the EU grant was made. The regular mail and GLEENET messages of the training team and the agendas and minutes of each of the training team meetings were saved in GLEENET, and these provided data on what the training team thought of the course development process. At the end of the GLEE Project the training team also completed a detailed project evaluation.
(see Appendix 7). As this evaluation reflects on the entire project, it provided the main data for determining in what ways the training team felt empowered to develop and teach the *Leadership Training Course*.

The content analysis was theory-guided by the tools introduced in chapter 3 where I defined empowerment as a process that increases the *drive, ability,* and *possibility* of an individual or group to act on a problem of concern. Furthermore, I considered six dimensions of empowerment — cognitive, psychological, economic, political, legal, and socio-cultural. The unit of analysis was the theme empowerment expressed in single words, phrases, sentences, paragraph or entire documents. I coded the data according to initial categories (but open to emergent categories) based on expressions by each training team member of: general, cognitive (ability-related), psychological (drive-related), economic, political, legal, and sociocultural empowerment (possibility-related). I was interested to find out if the training team had (1) the skills and knowledge, (2) the drive, (3) the resources (e.g., time and money), and (4) support of others (e.g., colleagues) to develop and teach the course. Prior to the analysis I knew that the training team did develop and teach the course and were therefore actively empowered. Being transformatively empowered was contingent on whether the course participants were themselves empowered and able to transform their schools in some way.

### 5.1.2 Training team empowerment through action research

The importance of empowerment in this project cannot be overstated. Some participants faced a backlash from work colleagues, some were harassed by the tabloid press and some members of the European Parliament tried to ban the project. At the start of the project one training team member dropped out as she felt being involved in such anti-homophobia work would damage her promotion prospects. Some other persons expressed an interest to participate but could not envisage getting administrative support from their schools. They asked me if they could take part without anyone in their school knowing. Institutionalised homophobia and heterosexism therefore, so they said, denied the possibility for some to participate, disempowering and deterring potential participants. This shows that not only drive and ability were important to participate, but also the possibility. The core team did, however, have the support of their respective institutions which was an EU requirement for participation. In this sense they were to some extent politically empowered (as defined in chapter 3). Nonetheless,
those taking part still needed both strength and courage which stem from empowerment.

The data indicated that the training team did feel sufficiently empowered, and this is first and foremost demonstrated by the outcome of the Leadership Training Course (discussed in chapter 6). Further evidence is found in the comments they made in the end of project evaluation. \(^{31}\) Melanie’s comments indicate both cognitive empowerment from gaining more knowledge and skills, and psychological empowerment to continue working towards challenging discrimination:

\[
\text{All in all, it has been very educative for myself to take part in this project: it has confirmed my commitment in my personal and professional life: to do as much as I can to eliminate heterosexism and to establish safe space to live and work – not only for teachers and my own students but for as many people as I possibly can.}
\]

Melanie also commented on the good rapport that developed between the core training team:

\[
\text{The members of the present [core training] team seem to be working fine together, complementing each other’s areas of knowledge, skills, and personalities: Charles being trained in counselling of issues linked to sexual orientation, Simo being an experienced trainer from GLSEN in the U.S., Tony being an expert of technology but also motivated in promoting human rights, Mira representing another field (dance) and having herself started an SDP project after our pilot course; and finally, myself being a teacher educator, concentrating on pedagogy and school policy, and being a women’s studies scholar, concentrating on queer theory . . . Being the originator of the programme, Tim has demonstrated admirable dedication to the project as well as an impressive amount of determination to make it all work out.}
\]

Her comments reflect the skills (cognitive empowerment), and the dedication and motivation (psychological empowerment) of the training team. Mira also remarked about the cooperative spirit within the training team saying that “the group atmosphere were really great, everybody listens and give suggestions to find strategies.” There was therefore a sense of co-empowerment, that is, gaining

\(^{31}\) Pseudonyms are used. Where I have quoted any participant, I have done so in the original language without use of [sic], as I feel this is more respectful to English as a second language users.
power with others. Mira was a participant in the *Pilot Leadership Training Course* who very apprehensively went on to be the coordinator of the *Inequality in School* transnational project (see Appendix 2). Subsequently she became part of the training team and was responsible for teaching the section on the creation of transnational projects. As mentioned in chapter 6, her experience was also empowering to those on the *Leadership Training Course* who themselves were feeling apprehensive about taking part in a transnational project. Mira’s comment below demonstrates both cognitive empowerment and psychological empowerment – in terms of increased satisfaction and confidence.

Sometimes I had problems to carry out all the tasks that we have to develop, because of language difficulties; anyway, I’m satisfied with my contribution, if we think that 2 years ago I do not have any experience . . . and now we achieved the implementation of the pilot SDP, and I also could achieved the language issue with some extra training.

She also remarked about how the project organisation had contributed towards the effective development of the project. I would add that the organisation could therefore have contributed towards cognitive and psychological empowerment, by having a positive effect on drive:

About the work plan, it has created an efficient, effective and strong structure, with enough time to complete all the tasks (schedules, planning meetings, arrangements, workshop developments); the project development was truly effective.

Simo also commented about the efficient work plan: “overall the project has been extremely well managed and structured” and went on to write about the psychologically empowering impact that the project had had on him and others:

I have been working in the field for years and am not aware of any other program around ending anti-LGBT bias in schools that is as comprehensive and far-reaching. . . . [The project aims to] effectively combine motivational, theoretical, and practical components in a way that nurtures educators and compels them to act. . . . In the end, I found my participation in the project extremely gratifying and impactful, and would readily continue my involvement. . . . I was genuinely sad to have to leave early (due to work commitments), but am nonetheless grateful for a very emotionally and intellectually rewarding week.
His comments about wanting to continue with the project indicate a high degree of psychological and active empowerment. Tony commented that “the GLEE course should carry on for many years to come,” and added that “the project has impacted on me in many ways.” And Charles said:

At the end of the Leadership Training Course I felt empowered by the work I had done that week and the sense of team work that had developed.

Charles’ comment is echoed by Simo when he says that “in the end the entire training team pulled their weight and worked very productively as a unit.”

The training team mentioned the role of GLEENET in the project. In terms of the course development process Simo commented:

Training team members were readily accessible through the GLEENET system when communication/feedback was needed.

Tony felt that the “communication in the project group worked well,” and Charles emphasised that “GLEENET has proved an extremely important part of the project and provides a way for the network to exist.” Mira commented that

GLEENET was the main support to create 2 new school development projects, that’s why it is so important that it continues; through GLEENET all participants (and trainers) could exchange ideas about their personal work and also the new projects.

GLEENET was therefore an important part of enabling the project to develop, and it contributed to the cognitive and psychological empowerment of the training team. GLEENET helped develop skills and knowledge through resources and mail exchanges, and also kept the training team motivated between project meetings.

In considering these results on empowerment one has to take into account the fact that the training team members did not come into the project as disempowered individuals. Three members of the training team had already been involved in activism on GLBTQ issues including giving workshops. They therefore possessed knowledge, skills and drive, and had previously exercised their power. Furthermore, each member had at least some support of their organisation making it possible to participate. However, they all stated that encouragement and additional empowerment was necessary and expressed that they received it. Despite this, there was evidence of a lack of economic empowerment in terms of a shortage of time to carry out the project activities:
The most problematic thing has been the fact that my workload as a teacher educator has been so heavy that I have occasionally felt that I do not have all the energy that is needed in order to be involved in this project as deeply as I should. (Melanie)

At times I have felt that I would like to have contributed more and recognise that it has proved difficult to always fulfil GLEE commitments alongside demanding work pressures. (Charles)

I did all my tasks. Sometimes I was little bit late, but reasons for that was more because of my personal life not the project. (Tony)

These comments show the problems of doing projects such as GLEE alongside one’s regular job. Still, as long as they worked together they were able to exercise power and channel their ability and drive to activism.

From the EU grant application it can be seen that the project tasks were to be equally shared and to a certain extent they were done jointly. Whilst the training team was motivated and cooperative, they were constrained by time. As a result I found myself as coordinator having a much larger share of the workload (on top of the research tasks) than originally anticipated. Charles commented:

The project as a whole was very reliant on the project coordinator for most aspects of planning and budget control. The success of the project was therefore totally dependent on one person, if he for some reason had dropped out then undoubtedly the project would not have continued. Tasks and responsibilities were assigned to individual group members but lack of commitment and sometimes skills from some project group members meant that these were not always carried out which meant again the project coordinator having to pick them up.

His comments on lack of commitment and skills were particularly directed at the early part of the project, before the formation of the core team, when there were several changes in the training team. Charles also commented on how the effects of these changes had negatively impacted on motivation and drive:

Difficulty in building a ‘team spirit’ and commitment to each other with constant changes of membership.

This demonstrates the importance of a team having long enough to work together to become cohesive. The core training team that went on to teach the Leadership
Training Course was established just after one year into the project, and therefore worked together for 2 years.

Melanie commented on the long time frame for the project, highlighting how the research element had increased the time required:

The time spent on planning this course (2002) has been long. . . . On the other hand, for research purposes, it is necessary to have enough time to plan and realise an action research project for a doctoral dissertation. Also, time is needed for the participants to start transnational school development projects (SDP).

Though she did not say so, the comment may imply that the long planning time could have had a negative effect on energy and drive.

The comments of the training team indicate that they have been actively, cognitively, and psychologically empowered – they have gained more knowledge, more drive, and enthusiasm that led successfully to carrying out the Leadership Training Course. However, in terms of time they have not been so (economically) empowered, and that may account for not being so active after the course through GLEENET. Training team members have had though, the support of their institutions and in this sense have been politically empowered. Overall, the experience of the training team reflects positively on action research as an empowering approach that was characterised by spirals of planning, action, observation and reflection, consciousness raising and transformative aims, collaboration, and a web-based support network.

5.2 Participant empowerment at the end of the Leadership Training Course

Having considered the empowerment of the training team I now turn to look at the empowerment of the 2002 Leadership Training Course participants to answer the sub-question:

Question B: In what ways were the course participants empowered to promote GLBTQ equity in their schools?

I approach this question in 4 parts. Firstly, I evaluate the empowerment of the course participants at the end of the course. Secondly, I consider the societal and school contexts of the course participants, which can affect the possibilities for carrying out post-course actions. Thirdly, I analyse the actions that the
participants took, including the successes and barriers faced. Fourthly, based on these experiences (and also the pre-course experiences of participants) I draw some conclusions about the empowerment of the course participants to promote GLBTQ equity (and in the next chapter I also consider the pedagogical implications).

There were 11 participants from eight countries, five trainers, and myself at the Leadership Training Course in 2002.

Table 7. Leadership Training Course participants.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Educational Institution</th>
<th>Country of Residence</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Anne</td>
<td>High School</td>
<td>Germany</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aran</td>
<td>University</td>
<td>Sweden</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arthur</td>
<td>GLBT NGO</td>
<td>Hungary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fiona</td>
<td>High School</td>
<td>Portugal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Georgina</td>
<td>High School</td>
<td>Portugal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Irvin</td>
<td>High School</td>
<td>Hungary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jarna</td>
<td>Primary School</td>
<td>United Kingdom</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Joe</td>
<td>High School</td>
<td>France</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leo</td>
<td>High School</td>
<td>Italy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stefan</td>
<td>High School</td>
<td>Italy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ulla</td>
<td>High School</td>
<td>Austria</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

5.2.1 Data collection and analysis

In considering the empowerment of participants at the end of Leadership Training Course, latent empowerment (empowerment that has not yet translated into post-course activism) is the relevant concept. Latent empowerment is a feeling of having more drive, ability, and possibility to act individually and collectively to promote GLBTQ equity in schools. Furthermore, there are cognitive, psychological, economic, political, legal, and socio-cultural dimensions (as discussed in chapter 3). These concepts are used as the categories for analysing the data expressed in any linguistic units (word, sentence, paragraph, etc.).

32 Pseudonyms are used. Where I have quoted any participant, I have done so in the original language without use of [sic], as I feel this is more respectful to English as a second language users. In this chapter I consider the experiences of 9 of the 11 participants. The reason for excluding 2 participants is that they did not supply any data after the course. One of these participants was not a school teacher and the other was due to give birth after the course, therefore they could not engage in actions in schools after the course.
There was both a mid-course and end of course evaluation, each consisting of a written part with 10 questions and a discussion (see Appendix 8). The evaluation included data on course participants’ experiences and empowerment. The end of course evaluation for the participating teachers was firstly analysed by Charles. His content analysis resulted in eleven key emerging points or theme areas about the course. Five of these points are included in my own content analysis as they relate directly to empowerment. Other data was collected a short time after the course in GLEENET where participants spontaneously reflected, reported, and commented on the course. In addition, the course applications provided data giving an indication of the empowerment of participants prior to the course. Even if some participants were engaged in GLBTQ activism prior to the course, I am interested in the incremental power derived from the course, which I conceptualise as latent empowerment, that is, more power that has not yet translated into more activism.

5.2.2 Course participants and latent empowerment

The first key point in Charles’ analysis of the course evaluations concerned the overall assessment of the course and whether it achieved its goals:

The evaluations were unanimously positive, with all those who attended feeling they had got a great deal from the course and that it had met its objectives.

The main objective of the course was to empower the participating teachers to develop an action plan to establish education initiatives within their own school communities. Anne wrote in response to whether she thought the course had met its objectives:

I’m more aware of homophobia. I’ve got more strategies to combat. I can see the necessity of the LGBT issue.

Similar comments to Anne’s were also mentioned by others, and reflected in Charles’ second key point about learning and challenging homophobia, that emerged from his analysis of the course evaluation:

Participants all recognised that they had learned a great deal, not only about homophobia and ways of challenging it but also about themselves.
Charles’ third key point was about the effectiveness of the training approach which was also expressed by participants in the mid-course evaluation. He noted that the style of training was often quoted as being appreciated and valuable, making people feel “motivated, confident, involved, empowered, and more responsible.”

Question 8 of the evaluation asked: How empowered do you feel to begin working on challenging homophobia back in your school? Charles’s fourth key point indicated that all had felt empowered:

All the participants felt they were leaving the course empowered, encouraged, and far more confident to address homophobia in schools.

However, the responses to question 8 were varied with some participants expressing strongly a feeling of empowerment and others less so. The comments below show the contrast:


Very empowered and encouraged. I feel more self-confident. (Anne)

At least I can try to step on the track of Comenius 1. If my school doesn’t want to get involved. I’ll find another school through the tolerance project of the lesbian association. (Irvin)

Enough to start. (Stefan)

Further evidence of empowerment is that all the participants completed action plans for transnational projects which included teacher training, school policy issues, and curriculum development for their schools. Charles’s fifth key point was the possibility for future collaborative work:

There was a great deal of excitement about the possibility of Comenius projects receiving funding and continued work together.

Participants therefore felt that funding possibilities could give economic empowerment creating more possibilities for doing work on homophobia and heterosexism.

Course trainers in their end of project evaluations also felt that the participants had been empowered.
I feel that the training course content, pedagogy, and process are outstanding. Participants have expressed satisfaction across the board with the information and the approach. Likewise, the website and opportunity to develop school partnerships across countries is exciting and extremely innovative. . . . Having just spent a week with some of the most enthusiastic and talented activists I have had the privilege to work with, I have faith that this group of people will indeed change the landscape with regard to LGBT acceptance, and the GLEE Project has given them the launching pad from which to soar. . . . Overall, though, the course and web content are really exciting and have left participants feeling a great sense of urgency and empowerment around the work. (Simo)

The courses have been perfect… all contents, materials, training process, didactical approaches, teacher contribution, and the group were developed with complete professionalism, the teachers have given a lot of useful information to the participants, and the results are that they now could develop two more School Development Projects in their countries. . . . I think that we have all been empowered by the course, we’ve created strong links to continue working in our schools/associations. (Mira)

The strong links to continue working together demonstrate the importance attached to co-empowerment and a sense of power with others. Nonetheless, all the participants expressed some degree of fear of resistance to engaging in activism from both within and outside their schools, reflecting their socio-cultural contexts.

Immediately after the course, the participants began exchanging mail through GLEENET and named themselves the GLEEks. Ulla sent a mail indicating a degree of psychological empowerment from the bonding of the GLEEks:

It was a great experience for me to meet you, very different persons, and I like the feeling to be part of this group! It makes me safer and more comfortable to live as a lesbian since I met you.

And Mira responded:

Dear Ulla, For me it was also a great experience, I changed a lot (I hope..!) and now I have my heart plenty with such wonderful people... Lots of love.

Mira

Jarna also sent a mail saying:
I will finally be home tomorrow and back to everyday life very unsettled and inspired and surprised by the intensity of the Oulu experience.

Shortly after this, in a report she had written and disseminated about her experiences at the course she wrote:

I met inspiring people who share a vision of transformation within schools. . . . I gained tools and resources to contribute to the development of safer and more affirming schools for LGBT students, staff and parents. . . . I feel better prepared to contribute to teacher training, policy and curriculum development.

Jarna’s comment points to both psychological empowerment in terms of inspiration and cognitive empowerment from gaining tools and resources. And a month later she sent another mail as problems began to emerge with her school’s participation in the SDP:

I am missing the GLEEk. Being with you all was a very empowering experience.

As with the training team members, one has to remember the fact that participating teachers did not come to the course as totally disempowered individuals. Indeed we tried to recruit participants who were already familiar with the project issues and had some dedication and commitment to carry out actions, as can be seen from the selection criteria:

- Interest to realise the project’s aims and objectives;
- Interest to cooperate on an international level;
- Dedication of time and commitment to carry out actions;
- Support of administration, including the head of school and other teachers;
- Experience of issues of sexuality and multiculturalism;
- English language skills;
- Basic computing skills and access to a computer.

The course applications revealed that most participants had already been active on GLBTQ issues. For example, six out of nine participants had been involved in a GLBTQ organisation, three participants had been involved in GLBTQ teachers’ organisations of which two were within a trade union, and another participant had worked within the GLBTQ Christian movement. Two persons had written publications, two had given presentations, and two had given teacher training courses on GLBTQ issues in schools. However, only one teacher mentioned being
involved in a school-based project on homophobia (but gave no details), and one teacher mentioned they had been involved in no GLBTQ activities. Even though most participants had been involved in GLBTQ activities, and had at the end of the course the feeling of being more empowered this may or may not translate into more action – therefore I still refer to this as latent empowerment.

One of the main reasons for applying for the course was to exchange ideas, gain knowledge, and develop confidence and skills to counter homophobia and heterosexism. So although most participants already had experience with GLBTQ issues, they felt that they could be further developed. However, two of the more experienced participants commenting on the extent to which the course had raised their awareness of GLBTQ issues said: “More or less, I think we were conscious enough before” (Leo); “Good – though I was well aware of many of these” (Jarna). Another experienced participant, Aran, said that prior to the course his action plan “was already roughly ready, but I got my opinions verified.” For Aran it may be more a case of affirmation than empowerment, though being affirmed can in itself be psychologically empowering. In the case of Ulla, her comments were rather contradictory. Ulla was one of the participants who said that she had no experience with GLBT activities prior to the course, and in response to the question of ideas for actions after the course said “I fear I will not start any big activities as I am too anxious.” In her end of course personal action plans she said that her “own doubts” would be a barrier to beginning her action plans. Despite this she mentioned that she felt “very much” empowered to begin working on challenging homophobia back at school.

The above comments made at the end of the course along with the post-course reflections demonstrate that empowerment is relative and dynamic, one is neither empowered nor disempowered, but that one can become more (or less) empowered. This was illustrated by the bath tub analogy – Figure 4 in chapter 3. The supportive community at the course did co-empower individuals, but had there been no support and no chance to develop power with others this could have resulted in disempowerment. As for the GLEE participants they felt that they had been latently co-empowered by the course (according to my definition), although there were individual differences. There was a general feeling of having more ability (cognitive empowerment) and drive (psychological empowerment) to promote GLBTQ equity, along with a possibility of economic empowerment from EU funding possibilities. As for political and socio-cultural empowerment there remained some anxiety about being able to engage colleagues in school actions,
as well as other forms of opposition from outside school. I now consider further the participants’ school contexts regarding GLBTQ equity.

5.3 GLBTQ equity in the context of participants’ schools

This section aims to give some indication of the school contexts in which the promotion of GLBTQ equity took place. However, there was not much mention by participants of their societal contexts. All the teachers in the GLEE Project came from EU countries in which same-sex sexual relations are no longer criminalised. However, EU legislation to protect people in employment from discrimination based on sexual orientation came into force after the first period of the GLEE Project. The feedback from course participants indicated that GLBTQ equity experiences between and even within countries can be very different, for example, between urban and rural areas. The political climates vary from liberal to conservative, as does the influence of media and religious organisations on the issue of sexual diversity. Furthermore, there are differences in the laws, for example, regarding same-sex marriage. In some European countries, even in recent times, governments have shown hostility towards GLBTQ persons. In 2006 there were attempts to ban gay pride marches in Latvia. Human Rights Watch in 2007 criticised the Polish government which “declared it will fire gay teachers, and impose criminal penalties on anyone who promotes homosexuality or any other deviance of a sexual nature in education establishments.” Bulgaria held their first gay pride in 2008 and marchers were physically attacked by right wing groups.

The information obtained about the GLBTQ situation in the participants’ schools and communities is later used to reflect on the institutional and societal constraints on teacher agency, and hence the limitations for developing an empowering pedagogy. Furthermore the approach described below is a step towards benchmarking progress to achieve GLBTQ equity.

33 http://www.ukgaynews.org.uk/Archive/07/Nov/1503.htm
34 http://www.hrw.org/english/docs/2007/05/10/poland15894.htm
35 http://www.dw-world.de/dw/article/0,2144,3446567,00.html
5.3.1 Data collection and analysis

Both during and after the Leadership Training Course I collected data from participants on their perceptions of the GLBTQ situation in their schools. The post-course data was from GLENET mail and reports produced by participants at the end of the first year. I have used content analysis and the theme “GLBTQ equity in schools” as the unit of analysis expressed in any linguistic units. The initial categories were school policy, formal curriculum, school practice, and community.

The main instrument used during the Leadership Training Course to assess GLBTQ equity was the GLSEN school survey developed entirely by Simo. The survey was initially developed from the Pilot Leadership Training Course workshop in which participants described GLBTQ equity in their schools, and also imagined their utopia school. Content analysis created a typology of four types of schools ranging from GLBTQ inequitable (hostile) to GLBTQ equitable (inclusive).

The survey was included in The GLSEN Workbook: A Developmental Model for Assessing, Describing and Improving Schools for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender (LGBT) People, and contained 26 evaluative statements in 4 areas: school policy, curricular programming, extracurricular programming, and school practice (see Appendix 9). Each survey statement was scored on a 4 point continuum and the scores aggregated to give an indication of where the school stood in each of the 4 areas and also overall. The continuum includes 4 school types: (1) Hostile School, (2) Resistant School, (3) Open School, and (4) Inclusive School.

5.3.2 Hostile, resistant, open, or inclusive schools?

The results of the GLSEN survey amongst participants showed the following distribution of school types: 1 Hostile; 1 Hostile/Resistant; 5 Resistant; and 2 Open. Descriptions are provided in the workbook for the 4 types of schools, and below is the profile of the participants’ most frequent type – the Resistant school (see Appendix 10 for the other types).
The Resistant School

- Non-discrimination policies may include sexual orientation.
- Curricular inclusion of LGBT issues is limited to clinical references in Health/Sex Education classes.
- Access to books/materials with LGBT content is limited.
- Adults feel discomfort – may feel there is “danger” in exposure to LGBT people/issues.
- LGBT-themed clubs appear infrequently; students feel unsafe attending.
- Athletic programs are moving toward gender equity, but anti-gay attitudes remain an issue.
- Health/guidance staff show compassion, but information/support is not generally accessible.
- Anti-gay language is common in hallways, locker rooms, school yard, etc., though not in classrooms.
- A “don’t ask, don’t tell” atmosphere exists for LGBT people.

Despite its American context, having been developed by Simo based in New York, the GLSEN survey proved very relevant and useful for the participants and after the course was adapted and translated into four other languages. Irvin carried out the GLSEN survey in her school in Hungary, after which she wrote further about her perception of the GLBTQ equity situation. Some of her comments below add to the profile of a Resistant school. Even though her school had a diversity statement in place, she felt that this was insufficient to create a safe school for minorities:

Persons of a generally stigmatised community do not feel comforted by the implications of the diversity statement. It does not feel safe to be open. This is because people belonging to these groups have learned not to trust the majority, which withdraws respect and dignity from them very easily.

On the issue of GLBTQ curricular inclusion she said that:

Individual teachers have the possibility to deal with the subject of sexual orientation in various classes, like advanced language classes. This is what I did. Nevertheless, these occasions are optional, non-systematic and they are totally due to the teacher’s field of interest.

She further talked about dealing with “touchy topics” by which she means “sexualities and social attitudes towards them as well.” She indicates that such
topics are generally disregarded. On the issue of access to books and materials she said:

I did not find books in the school library which deal with homosexuality from either a positive or a negative point of view. It is practically unknown what kind of material reaches students regarding this topic. My experience is that the school librarian helps everyone who turns to her. She is not reluctant to help in anything. It must not be disregarded, however, that LGBT related books are often very hard to ask for, because this is a touchy topic for not only teachers but students as well. Often they choose the easy way out by suppressing their own questions, instead of looking for answers with the help of books.

The library experience alludes to the discomfort in exposure to GLBTQ issues, and the “danger” in being associated with such issues. Irvin said that “when a teacher starts to talk about homosexuality, it is almost always certain that he or she is personally involved in the topic.” The presumption therefore is that the teacher must not be heterosexual, which discourages heterosexual teachers’ involvement.

In school athletic programmes Irvin mentioned widespread homophobia:

It is greatly visible what happens in sports fields, in gyms. Homophobia is widespread in sports, where because of the close bodily contact, players are often in a relatively intimate situation. Homophobic words hurt not only the closeted gay people, but they create a bad atmosphere in sports, where fair play would have to be the ultimate principle.

Support from health and guidance staff is also lacking:

The school psychologist can be sought out with several problems and questions. However, there is no information whether the psychologist gives advice on the questions of teenagers about love, sexual orientation, gender identity, if she can be asked confidential questions about such things. The way things seem to be suggests that all areas of the school psychologist’s work get an equal accent. But it is not so. Many times it is experienced that psychologists’ words swarm with common stereotypes. A student who would turn to the psychologist with his or her question cannot be sure whether he or she will not be ‘dissuaded’ from being gay instead of reaching a good listener about his or her questions of identity.
Irvin also gave examples of the “don’t ask, don’t tell” atmosphere for GLBTQ people – one which perpetuates a culture of silence. She said that “LGBT teachers are invisible in the school. They are doomed to secrecy or silence, which in turn shows them uncredible, limited, and lacking any life skills.” There are no out gay teachers in her school and a climate where “there is no message coming from the school to introduce the existence of same-sex partners without discomfort or a sense of ridicule.” She went on further to talk about the attitudes of some of her colleagues towards homosexuality:

There is a colleague who is convinced that one’s queerness should be always kept a secret, and this person thinks that this is the only way of protection and survival for the gay colleague. There is one who claims that his only problem with homosexuality is that it is just not natural, and said that in the face of a gay colleague, who he did not know to be gay. There are some who use a derogative word for gay people to express their dislike about just anything. A colleague like this is not even aware what she is saying, she just wants to say something really really bad. I have met only few colleagues who stand up for gay people with a careful understanding of the issues surrounding them.

Like Irvin, after the course Stefan also did the survey in his school in Italy with 15 colleagues. Taking an average impression for each question he found his school fell between a resistant and open school, somewhat more favourable than his own course evaluation that was resistant. A comment in a report on Stefan’s survey also points to the culture of silence and inaction:

Homosexuality is not outlaw in this school. Regarding practice, the school is open but nobody does anything. The issue is ignored.

Georgina reported similarly about her school in Portugal:

My school was identified as a resistant school. Nobody talks or comments anything on the matter. A seminar on sexual education for teachers provided by the teachers’ formation centre had zero inscriptions.

The GLEEks developed other surveys on discrimination, for example, one given by Jane for German teachers. There were 35 respondents and the survey showed that:

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36 Jane replaced Anne as an official partner in the TIS transnational project, as Anne’s school was ineligible to participate as it was already involved in an EU project. Anne continued to work with Jane as an associate partner in the TIS Project.
The teachers did not notice any form of discrimination. Students are victims mainly because of their aggressive or anticonformist behaviour or because they are shy. Being fat is another cause of discrimination. Colleagues think that people use incorrect terms rarely based on sex, family, and race. Students who do discriminate are pupils who have low self esteem and the ones without a strong family with problems of understanding: the people responsible for discrimination acts are people with problems. Teachers react by speaking to all the people involved or to the victim or to the class…

Discrimination acts: men are always responsible. Victims are mainly females, homosexuals and fat people.

Whilst the survey points to evidence of discrimination, Jane said that “these results are difficult to be analysed because a lot of colleagues don’t have a clear idea of discrimination. [There is] confusion between discrimination and bad behaviour.” This points to a problem of getting satisfactory data on discrimination in schools. Another survey carried out by Jane with students aged 10-12 years found that gays and lesbians are the most discriminated groups.

Furthermore, Leo reported that a survey in his school in Italy among 14-15 year olds showed that homophobia is strong. He concluded that his school must be resistant or hostile.

In his course application Joe mentioned the lack of respect for lesbian and gay students and how his school has not been a gay friendly place:

As a gay teacher, I have never been bullied either by the pupils or by my colleagues but I have soon noticed that pupils/students have not been educated by their parents to think about and respect lesbian or gay mates. I know that they tend to show acceptance when they realise that their teacher(s) can be gay or lesbian and most of all when they take part in a formation course which enables them to overcome taboos and learn about what is unknown to them and sounds weird.

I have also realised that too many pupils had to hide and could not be themselves and express their feelings: I have met some of them a few months after they had left the school who could then be openly gay. School has not been a “gay friendly” place: things can change only if some teachers have the courage to get involved and be role models.
Although according to the participants’ responses there were variations between their schools, they all shared (to differing degrees) some common elements of GLBTQ discrimination. These have also been identified in the extant literature described in chapter 2, and resemble the Resistant school type mentioned earlier in this section. In each of the participants’ schools teachers reported some verbal and physical harassment against GLBTQ persons, and a lack of respect and dignity for GLBTQ persons. GLBTQ teachers were generally invisible and there was a culture of silence, though some of the participants were “out” in their schools. The schools lacked anti-discrimination/diversity policies, and there was an absence of inclusive GLBTQ curriculum, information about sexual identity, and support programmes for GLBTQ students. Participants generally felt that there was a lack of knowledge and teacher training amongst colleagues on GLBTQ educational issues. It is within this context (based on participants’ perceptions) that each of the teachers following the Leadership Training Course tried to put into practice their action plans to challenge homophobia, heterosexism, and heteronormativity in their schools.

5.4 Teacher activism and barriers faced

I will now look at the activism of the course participants up to 2 years following the Leadership Training Course. I then consider the barriers and problems they faced and whether they were able to overcome them and make the actions a success. The results are then used in section 5.5 to analyse whether the latent empowerment of the GLEEks resulted in active empowerment after they returned to their schools.

5.4.1 Data collection and analysis

As mentioned before, immediately after the course the teacher participants in GLEENET named themselves GLEEks. I collected data on the GLEEks’ action plans at the end of the Leadership Training Course and 2 months afterwards when they were posted in GLEENET. As for the actions they carried out in schools, I got data from GLEENET mail and also from their reports written at the end of the first year. In addition, I have collected a series of project reports on the face-to-face meetings written by the five participants in the Towards an Inclusive School School Development Project. This project received EU funding from the beginning of the second year (September 2003).
The data analysis is based on the Framework Analysis approach (Ritchie and Spencer 1994) described in chapter 4 and Appendix 6. There are three main themes related to activism and barriers for the content analysis: (B) Personal action plans; (D) Post-course activities and barriers; and (E) SDP project activities. Each document is coded according to emergent categories, such as ‘activity descriptions’ and ‘use of GLEENET’ for theme D. A chart is then created using the three themes and emergent categories as headings, which becomes a reference for accessing and analysing data from each of the nine participants. For illustrative purposes this is shown in the chart in Table 8, where I have given a few examples of categories. The numbers in each cell refer to the original data, for example, 64-1 in the first cell refers to document 64, respondent 1 (Irvin) related to category B1 (coded 64-1: B1).

Table 8. Example of a framework analysis chart.

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5.4.2 Action Plans and foreseen barriers to activism

Two months after the Leadership Training Course the GLEEks reformulated their action plans they had put together at the course, and posted them in GLEENET. Teacher training and the formation of a teacher group remained the top priority, followed by curriculum development, and the formation of a student group.
School policy was also mentioned as important. In terms of out of school actions, forming alliances with other organisations such as GLBT NGOs or trade unions and contact with school authorities were mentioned.

The main foreseen barriers to starting actions were resistance from colleagues or parents, lack of time, and lack of funding. The number of GLEEks expressing resistance from colleagues in the reformulated action plans had fallen from eight to five. This may indicate a more positive response from colleagues to GLEEks’ efforts than expected, or reflect the empowerment of GLEEks. In their reformulated action plans, GLEEks gave less importance than previously to gaining allies and the support of colleagues in order to overcome barriers. However, they felt that funding and gaining support from other organisations were important for activism. It was apparent that funding for anti-homophobia initiatives was not an integral part of school policy. The most important allies were seen to be GLBTQ NGOs, some colleagues, and trade unions, respectively. The most common first steps were presenting and discussing plans at school to find supportive colleagues. This was followed by planning the transnational project. Then, of equal mention, were producing materials in local languages, finding collaborators out of school, and discussions with students.

5.4.3 GLEEk Year 1: Teacher activism

The first year of GLEEk actions is from immediately after the Leadership Training Course to July 2003. The GLEEks’ end of year reports showed that most of their effort was focused on individual rather than transnational actions. The transnational actions involved putting together the EU grant application for the TIS Project. All the participants reported taking the first step of talking with their colleagues and headteacher about their plans including participation in a transnational project. The discussions and presentations had a mixed reception. Anne wrote about the reaction to her report on the Leadership Training Course from her headmistress: “she was very interested, wants to support me, [and] gave me the possibility to present GLEE to my colleagues.” Whilst after a meeting with her headteacher Jarna reported that he was “politely interested – not keen to take on a project.”

One GLEEk reported teacher training sessions carried out in school. Stefan organised, in conjunction with a GLBTQ NGO, a training course for 12 teachers from his school authorised by the Ministry of Education. It involved five training
meetings and a total of 11 hours. He was one of three trainers and wrote that the main goals of the course were

to give the teachers the appropriate tools to increase awareness and change the attitudes concerning the discrimination based on sexual orientation, ethnicity, religion, and gender (the horizontal approach). Some activities involved groups of students (role play, discussions). A group of students met a group of young gays and lesbians of the local gay and lesbian centre. The project included the implementation of a counselling service for gay and lesbian students within the existing counselling services of the school.

Other training sessions and workshops were given to teachers and non-teachers but took place out of school. For example, Irvin reported about a GLBTQ tolerance in education workshop given by her at a Lesbian and Gay Festival, and Leo participated in a training course for young people on sexual orientation. The reason for doing workshops mostly out of school is unclear though there may be a clue in what Jarna writes in her course application:

I do not want to work on these issues in my own school. I feel more confident and less vulnerable to work to train others/inspire them or to be shipped in as the “expert” to talk with/teach children in someone else’s school.

So maybe it is easier in some contexts and particular stages to do work outside one’s school than within? Indeed seven of the nine GLEEks had been involved in out of school activities prior to the Leadership Training Course whilst only two mentioned some activity in their school, and none had been involved in a transnational project. Furthermore, actions out of school do not usually require the sanction of anyone in school, whilst EU transnational projects need the support and involvement of others in one’s own school community including the headteacher.

In terms of work within their own classrooms, five GLEEks reported developing teaching materials and teaching GLBTQ issues. Anne reported that her class talks about GLBT issues nearly every week and her lesbian students had written in the school newspaper about their experience in school. Leo was involved in a project with his students to create posters for a campaign against sexual orientation discrimination organised by the local government. Aran developed a curriculum and support booklet on GLBTQ issues, and after lobbying, it became a compulsory part of teacher education at his University. In addition to these examples, the only other significant in-school action was the conducting of
the GLSEN school climate survey in four schools. Furthermore, one school authority planned to send a translated version of the survey to all schools and publish the results.

In total, three GLEEks had had contact with their local education authorities or government. For example, Jarna met with GLBTQ youth and civil servants from the education department to take forward tentative plans for formal consultation structures with the GLBTQ community. Other out of school activities included contact with GLBTQ NGOs, especially to increase the possibilities for training teachers, reaching a larger audience and getting support for the transnational projects. Anne wrote about contact with one NGO:

We discussed a cooperation between me and them. We met 3 times to talk about still existing homophobia, the ignorance of some teachers and how difficult it is to get the possibility to train the teachers. We also shared ideas what to do in future to improve the situation. We agreed to start a training course at my school and at Jane’s school. They want to support the TIS project in the school year 2003-4 (with material).

Joe also visited his local Gay and Lesbian centre with the aim of disseminating information, meeting people and trying to reach a larger range of schools. He described his visit as

the easiest and most pleasant job: on my return from Oulu, I met members of the Centre, introduced the project. It was agreed on and a student from the Arts University offered to go and speak to young people on demand.

Four of the GLEEks had written articles on their work and Anne had been interviewed on television about GLBTQ problems at school. Two others mentioned contact with their trade union, one positive and one negative. The different types of activism and the number of GLEEks engaging in it is taken from the framework analysis theme D, post-course activities, and summarised in Table 9.
Table 9. GLEEk year 1 activism.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of activism</th>
<th>Number of GLEEk reporting</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Presentation and discussion with colleagues in school</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GLBT issues with students in classroom</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TIS EU Grant Application</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teaching Materials</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GLSEN school climate survey</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GLBT student group</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GLBT student counselling</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher training sessions in own school</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher education training curriculum and support materials</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Creating posters for anti-discrimination campaign</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Writing in school newspaper</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Workshops out of school</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Contact with GLBT NGOs</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Articles or reports</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Contact with education authorities</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Contact with Trade Union</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TV interview</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In summary, all of the GLEEks in the first year had engaged in some form of discussions, workshops or training of teachers, though the extent of in school training carried out was less than that in their action plans. In terms of curriculum development, there was only one concrete example, a course at Aran’s University, though GLBTQ issues have been incorporated into some of the teaching of other GLEEks. A student group was only created at Aran’s university – none developed in the other schools although this was a top priority. There is no mention of policy changes which was also a top priority. It is not clear whether this was simply a failure to mention policy changes, or there had been efforts that failed, or the GLEEks pursued other activities. Besides, policy changes are usually the realm of administrators, over which teachers may not have a lot of influence. Outside school, contacts with NGOs have been strong though there is no mention of any concrete cooperation activities. GLEEks overall seem to have been more active out of school than in with workshops, presentations, articles, dissemination activities at conferences, festivals, trade union meetings, and contacts with NGOs and local authorities.
5.4.4 GLEEk Year 1: Barriers to activism

Seven out of nine GLEEks mentioned barriers they had faced in carrying out their action plans. The most common one was opposition or lack of interest from colleagues or the headteacher. This barrier had been anticipated as the biggest challenge for GLEEks in their personal action plans written at the end of the course. Simo, one of the course trainers, addressed the issue of the need and difficulty of mobilising support:

Where educators have the community support to bring this work to their schools, I feel the impact will be dramatic as this will be the first time most students have been engaged in the issue. Unfortunately, there are still many places that will resist exploration of this topic and no adjustments to the course can change this fact (only time can).

In order to participate in the transnational project the EU required the consent of the headteacher, though in one case the application was sent and accepted without the head’s signature. This was the replacement school for Anne’s school, whose school was ineligible to participate as it was already involved in another EU transnational project. Anne continued to work with Jane from the replacement school as an associate partner. Three other GLEEks (Irvin, Jarna, Georgina) did not receive the support of their headteacher and did not participate in their proposed *Windows and Mirrors* transnational SDP project. Without the school support, and especially EU funding, it would be difficult to do the project. They each described their schools as resistant, and Jarna wrote:

I spoke with my head teacher about Oulu. I said how great it was and that I want to get our school involved in an SDP. . . . My headteacher was not keen. He finds my enthusiasm bewildering . . . He thinks it will be too much work. . . . I can see that I may persuade him and my colleagues to take this on – if I can do it in a way that does not ask a lot of their time… I left my meeting with the head feeling a bit low because he doesn’t share my vision of transformation.

Three months later Jarna wrote that “my headteacher has refused to allow me to propose any project within the deadline for 2003.”

Irvin wrote about the difficulties of getting others involved in a transnational project, though immediately after the *Leadership Training Course* she was very optimistic:
It was liberating to take the first ever step today. I spoke to one of the three headteachers in my school. She was supportive and encouraging. I focused on the complexity of diversity issues involved, and did not leave out LGBT issues. She agreed with me that we need to combat homophobia too. She hopes I will present the project in the very first staff meeting in front of the teachers of the whole school.

But later she wrote of opposition and fears expressed about participating in the project:

My colleagues are still worried if the kids are too young, if NGOs would cause problems in the working of the school, especially with the parents.

Especially the senior teacher in the small school came up with reservations recently, after I’d wanted to talk to them about the GLSEN survey. . . . the leader of the small school is afraid of parents’ opinions even before she has heard about them at all. A seemingly friendly, but all the more binding homophobia is at work. (I know you are gay, and don’t mean any harm to you, so also in your best interest, to protect you, I don’t want LGBT topics to turn up).

I have many times experienced uneasy reactions from other teachers. I will only mention one example here. One of my colleagues, when I told her about the COMENIUS 1 school development programme and the student exchange relating to it, advised us to postpone the idea until the children are 15-16, because that’s when we might have the chance to successfully deal with parents’ complaints about our alleged intention to change kid’s sexual orientations.

The school did not take on the transnational project. Although Irvin was very active she described her year as “only mildly successful for me as far as my SDP plans are concerned.” At the end of the school year she left the school and gave lack of institutional support as one of the reasons. She said “I would be facing a lot of attacks from parents. So I just decided not to face more insults.”

Georgina also did not participate in the transnational project as she was advised by her coordinator not to and “also because there were no other teachers interested.”

Joe faced many challenges in persuading his school to become involved in the transnational project and do work on GLBTQ issues. Prior to the course he
mentioned that he had the support of his headteacher and said he “is a very open-minded man who is very respectful of all sorts of ways of life.” And he also said that:

I have told a great number of colleagues about my applying for this course (as everybody knows I am gay, it was not difficult at all). They all encouraged me to do so and I can count on at least 10 of them to help me work on the project. They are all concerned with fighting against discrimination. They all teach different subjects in different sections of the school: so they could all talk to pupils I never meet and be a kind of link to inform and be informed.

Our school… has always been involved in projects to help our students behave as real citizens, respectful of others (whatever religion or social background) and of laws, but has never tackled this [GLBT] topic. One of our aims, as part of the community, is to show pupils/students respect of one’s fellows is one of the keys to success in life.

In the GLSEN survey he described his school as open but went on later to say:

It may be regarded as a hostile school in some ways. It’s open if one considers that no one seems openly hostile to any gay or lesbian (and we reach a total of 5% of openly gay staff), but on the other hand some forms of discrimination are likely to happen if gay and lesbian staff try to be assertive.

As I managed to present the project to the parents’ association and they were much satisfied, I would now be more inclined to say that the school is open.

On returning to his school after the Leadership Training Course he discussed the project with many people including the headmaster who “agreed that respecting gays and lesbians should be part of our school policy.” The most difficult meeting was with the superintendent of the school district who had sent a letter to the headmaster saying he “was going to take me to court if I kept dealing with the subject.” Joe explained that everything he had done had been approved by the headmaster and at the end of the meeting the superintendent had “realised the importance of the project.” Other meetings with the deputy headmaster, librarian, the gay and lesbian centre, the press and teacher training centre were all positive.

The meeting with his colleagues did not go as well as expected, he wrote:

I wasn’t as successful as I thought I would be. I think I had overestimated the majority of my colleagues’ open-mindedness: some of them (quite a small number actually) complained about the project with the usual biased
arguments (proselytizing, dealing at school with non pedagogical issues, and so on.). What I found frustrating was that those colleagues did not come to me for information or to ask questions. They just complained in secret and the headmaster refused to tell me who. I would have liked to justify what I was trying to set up. . . . I made allies with some of them (about 10 out of 100 teachers, including gays and lesbians).

Joe also mentioned the importance of having straight allies and said that “they can be very convincing when talking about gay and lesbian issues. They cannot be said to have a biased point of view.” However, he said that some colleagues continued with their complaints to the headmaster about the project:

Some of my colleagues complained about the project saying that it was enough, and that they had heard too much. Actually I didn’t do anything except presenting the project and making it official that I was meeting my European counterparts in Bologna. Some others are also using the cliché about influencing the pupils: so it’s a hard time at the moment. I’m still going on, we have to.

Thank you so much Aran and Tim. I do appreciate your help while some of my colleagues reveal their real inner behaviour. I have been sacked by someone I have known for 17 years! And I would never thought this man would be able to come to this end.

You’re right Aran when you say that we threaten their hegemony: actually this is the point. We have been shutting our mouths and not complaining and this is what I’m not doing anymore. I had a meeting with the headmaster to tell him about what is going on and I’m also telling the colleagues I trust most, trying to make allies. While in Oulu or more recently in Italy, I had not imagined I would have to teach my colleagues: but this is it! I have to.

Despite the opposition, Joe was able to make the transnational project go ahead, though, as can be seen from the next section, resistance still remained throughout the second year.

In addition to opposition from headteachers and colleagues, and fear of complaints from parents, students, and school authorities, the GLEEks mentioned lack of time as a major barrier. Their GLBTQ activism was done on top of their usual workload and carried out on a voluntary basis, and made the work demanding.
No particular strategies for overcoming barriers stand out, with only four out of nine GLEEkS suggesting any. Gaining support of the school administration and colleagues was clearly important for the success of activism, as well as perseverance. Three GLEEkS mentioned that a way of gaining credibility for their work, and also allies, was to stress that it was part of an EU project. Funding from the EU was also the only possible source of financial support mentioned by participants. Many of those participants who had been active in GLBTQ education issues prior to the course, felt they were doing their work in isolation. Through an EU project they could find on-going support for their actions.

5.4.5 GLEEk Year 2: Teacher activism in the TIS Project

During the Leadership Training Course the participants divided themselves into two groups to plan transnational projects. Within a few months after the course it became clear that one of the projects known as Windows and Mirrors would not be able to continue due to the lack of support in their schools as discussed above. After the first year of the project I did not receive further data on the activities of the 4 GLEEkS from Windows and Mirrors, so in this report of the second year I focus on the actions of the five GLEEkS from four countries who created an EU-funded Towards an Inclusive School (TIS) Project.

The TIS Project members met in Bologna in November 2002 to plan their 3 year project and completed the application forms for EU Comenius 1 funding. Funding was granted and the project began in September 2003. Like the EU programme that funded the Leadership Training Course, the Comenius 1 programme had a structure which resembled the planning-action-observation-reflection cycle. During the first year there were three face-to-face meetings in three of the five participating schools. After each meeting and at the end of the year a report was written by the project members and posted in GLEENET. I have based the description about activism in this section mostly on these reports. A summary description of the TIS Project was written after the Bologna meeting:

The TIS Project aims at creating more inclusive, safer and affirming schools for all students with a particular reference to gays, lesbians, bisexuals, and those students who are not sure about their sexual orientation. The main activities will consist in conducting an assessment survey for teachers and students, producing a video, organizing a teacher training course, producing guidelines for teachers. It will involve schools from Germany, Austria, Italy,
and France. In the first year the project involves three transnational meetings and aims at getting as many teachers as possible involved in the school activities. Moreover, institutions as trade unions, town councils, local school authorities, or other schools will be contacted and involved. The activities will be evaluated during the scheduled meetings and in the final report.

The concrete aims of the project were mentioned in the EU grant application and they give an indication of the intended focus of the activism in the TIS Project:

- Increasing awareness about the existence of discomfort for gay and lesbian pupils and the limits homophobia imposes on their personal achievement.
- Strengthening the function of the school as a safe and inclusive place.
- Clear statement of the engagement of the school in a non-discriminatory policy.
- Including gay and lesbian themes in curricula.
- Creating positive references for gay and lesbian pupils in the school environment.
- Organising social and psychological support to gay and lesbian students and to those who are not sure about their sexual orientation to prevent the lack of motivation and of self esteem and to grant them an environment based on safety and respect.

It can be seen then that the TIS Project aimed to work with educational stakeholders to raise awareness of GLBTQ inequity and create safe and inclusive schools where there is visibility of GLBTQ students in the school policies and practices.

**Berlin Meeting**

The first face-to-face meeting took place in Berlin in October 2003 and each GLEEK also brought along a colleague or headteacher from their school. A 5 hour training course was organised for those accompanying the GLEEkis titled *School is a safe and affirming place for everybody*. It included awareness raising on GLBTQ issues and also developing strategies to address GLBTQ inequity in schools. An evaluation of the training course with participants was conducted and they received positive feedback:

They said the training courses had been of much interest and that they could have a better understanding of the project. They agreed that it was much more
interesting to work concretely and that it was the kind of work which should be done with students: in other words, fighting against discrimination meant concrete work with students being involved in the project. They said they were also eager to start something in their schools. As they saw drama at school, they asserted it would be interesting to introduce drama as a new element as nothing had been done before, and that this aspect could be a creative element. They also enjoyed visiting a foreign school with pupils much younger than the ones they are used to teaching. The role playing activities impressed the teachers and helped them feel how GLBT students can feel due to homophobia.

Getting colleagues and headteachers on-board, as well as involving students in the project got off to a very good start. During the remainder of the time the TIS members met to plan their other activities. This included a school survey which provoked discussion on whether to focus just on homophobia or discrimination in general (horizontal approach), and the development of guidelines for an anti-homophobia booklet.

**Graz Meeting**

In January 2004 in Graz teachers from the host school were presented the TIS Project and were involved in a role play. The TIS team met three groups of students and they completed the survey on discrimination in school followed by a discussion. The report of the reactions of the students said that “most of them could speak freely, they wished we could have come earlier because they are about to leave to go to university.” This probably indicates that such issues had not been addressed earlier in their education and that the discussion was valued.

The results of other surveys in schools were also discussed and have been mentioned above in section 5.3. The big involvement of students and teachers is most notable about this TIS meeting.

**Rennes Meeting**

The third TIS meeting took place in Rennes in May 2004 and included some colleagues from the participating schools. The meeting was advertised to the 100 teachers in the host school. The TIS team met and discussed with four classes who had also completed a survey. Unlike in Berlin and Graz where meeting with
students had not been a problem, there had been some resistance in Rennes. The host in Rennes wrote that:

Allowing the TIS team to meet the students was a challenge . . . but thanks to our work in inviting the students’ parents to come to a presentation, we relieved the director of any fear.

Relieving the director of fear had been a 4 month project and is described more fully in the barriers to activism section below. The sessions with the 17 to 20 years old students went ahead, and Joe’s report indicated that the discussions were hard with strong resistance from some students:

We started every session by presenting the partners and the project. Then if they were a little bit too shy, we would use a story to start the discussion . . . It was taken from a French gay magazine, Tetu, and was a letter from an 18 year old man who showed how difficult it is to have a boyfriend at school. This revealed to be a good way as a starting point to a discussion.

Maybe because of a male majority in these classes, homophobia was detectable among some young men: the discussion was hard and we had to face some stubborn reactions although none of them was openly violent and homophobic: most of them based their argument on commonly used fact that a relationship is only a man with a woman to have children.

…the most difficult part was with the youngest ones. Although it was a hard job, the most intolerant were the most passionate and the most interesting as we had to justify our project and show how useful it would be. All the students were aware of the stay of European colleagues and of the aim of their presence thanks to posters in the school library.

Having risen to the challenge of overcoming the director’s and parents’ fears and students’ comments, the TIS participants did an interview with a regional newspaper which “has proved over the years a homophobic newspaper especially when the law about the gay partnership was discussed in parliament.” An article with a picture of the TIS team was published telling without any negativity what the project was about with some quotations from the TIS team. Joe said he “did not believe this would happen” as the newspaper is still influenced by its conservative Catholic origin.

Three months after Rennes the TIS team produced their booklet for teachers and others involved in educational issues with guidelines “to understand how
homophobia can hurt and how we can all find ways of avoiding it” (Joe). Later the project went on to produce a didactic documentary film, *Free to be*, about the experiences of gays and lesbians in schools. The results of the project were disseminated through press releases and contacts with GLBTQ organisations, trade unions and local school authorities. The TIS website (www.inclusiveschool.org) contains all of the materials produced by the project.

5.4.6 GLEEk Year 2: Barriers to activism

The major barrier that was reported by participants in the TIS Project was a continuation of opposition in the coordinator’s school. Joe reported on the opposition of the headteacher and the postponement or cancellation of a meeting with the parents’ association:

The headteacher was not willing to see any action at school. He accepted the project itself as long as it was just a project and nothing visible was done in school. Once we asked . . . for the permission to meet the students on a discussion basis, he refused and said either that it was too early or that we had no reason to talk to them or his last argument was that “talking about sex at school was irrelevant”!

Too much work to do here and somehow disappointed by the attitude of the headmaster at school: always slowing things down and interfering (I was supposed to talk to the parents’ association last Thursday and it has been postponed and maybe cancelled: I was told that the people taking part in the meeting had to be talked to before!)

Joe decided to set up a meeting with the President of the parents’ association and after 4 months he finally gave a presentation. He wrote:

The President was present of course along with my headteacher who looked stressed. My colleague was there too and we presented the project: we had wonderful reactions and I must say that most parents welcomed the project and even said that this issue should have been tackled a long time before. They were all asking questions and seemed to want more done for their children. This action was a very successful one thanks to our will to reach our goal and to our learning of “diplomatic relations.” What we regarded as a mere administrative task (asking for a permission) revealed to be more of a diplomatic task.
In a report written by Joe at the end of the second year he pointed to the success of diplomacy in building allies getting people on board:

The main institutional barriers have been overcome thanks to a new “diplomatic” way of contacting and reaching the different goals. One of the greatest barriers is the teachers themselves. Few of them seem to be concerned and convinced. They either ignore the project or try to interfere using rough methods as still pretending I am a proselyte, lobbying through the headmaster to put an end to the project…

I have noticed that teachers, although they are well educated, or were good pupils when they were themselves at school are nevertheless stubborn and narrow minded: as a consequence I have learnt to use much more diplomatic ways of communicating by making trustful allies. Once you can rely on a small number of trustful allies, you can do the job. I have also learnt that communicating regularly even on details could result in a better understanding. Lastly, one of the main objectives is to work openly which goes with communicating on the issue. Actually the more hostile the environment, the better the job: I mean that the best work done was with people (especially students) who were or are or pretend to be very narrow minded. Then your part is to discuss, give arguments, contradict them. When the TIS were in Rennes, the best work done was with 18 year old students who often are prejudiced maybe because they lack some historical, philosophical knowledge.

Despite Joe describing that the project was “heavy work and I got involved much more than I had expected to be” he continued to coordinate the TIS transnational project until EU funding ended in 2006.

5.5 Participant empowerment after the Leadership Training Course

I have earlier reported on the latent empowerment of the course participants at the end of the Leadership Training Course. This was most evident in terms of cognitive and psychological empowerment – increased ability and drive (two of the three components of empowerment) to engage in activism. Now I concentrate on their empowerment based on their experiences following the course. As can be seen in the preceding two sections all of the GLEEks carried out some actions following the course, which is evidence in itself of active empowerment.
However some GLEEks faced barriers to their activism and were therefore at times not actively empowered. Here I explore the differences in the empowerment of the participants, and try to identify the factors that critically affect their power, that is, their drive, ability, and opportunity to engage in activism in their schools. The section therefore addresses the sub-question:

   Question B: In what ways were the course participants empowered to promote GLBTQ equity in their schools?

5.5.1 Data collection and analysis

I have revisited the documents with data on the activism of teachers prior to and after the Leadership Training Course, and the barriers faced. These documents have been recoded with the themes active and transformative empowerment. As categories I have used the six dimensions of empowerment: cognitive (ability-related), psychological (drive-related), economic, political, legal, and socio-cultural (opportunity-related). The data on empowerment along with that from section 5.3 on GLBTQ equity is used to construct a profile for each participant. In this way it is possible to identify differences in the teachers’ experiences. As the categories are pre-determined, this is therefore a theory-based content analysis with no emergent categories.

5.5.2 Active and transformative empowerment of participants

Three of the participants wrote about how the Leadership Training Course had provided a solid foundation for their activism, and hence active empowerment. Stefan mentioned cognitive empowerment and the development of more skills:

   The leadership training course made a very important contribution towards carrying out my activities, regarding the skills I attained and the cooperation of people.

Joe reported both cognitive empowerment and political empowerment that comes from the “status” of being in a European project:

   Even though some actions have been difficult to carry out, I feel I was empowered first by the knowledge I got in Oulu and of course by the fact that the TIS Project is a European project.
And Jarna wrote also about cognitive and psychological empowerment and an increase in drive:

The training has given me a huge resource, a precious experience of empowerment and ongoing inspiration, courage and commitment to making change for LGBT people within and through education.

Seven out of the nine GLEEks described their first year as having been successful or very successful. One of the GLEEks said their year had been mildly successful while another one reported that they had “done nothing special.” These responses are generally positive from the perspective of psychological empowerment, though none described any high points for their year and three described low points (lack of colleague interest). Also positive from the psychological empowerment perspective, is the drive and motivation of teachers. I have no evidence that teachers lacked drive and even setbacks seemed to make them more determined. For example, Irvin wrote about the frustration of not getting her school to participate in a transnational project:

I personally felt very frustrated when it became clear for me that I would have more difficulties than I thought. I’m not giving up though. I am keeping up the project in everyday teaching.

Prior to the course, Ulla expressed anxiety and self-doubt about engaging in activism. But she later mentioned both a degree of psychological empowerment and increase in drive from participation in the Leadership Training Course and subsequently the TIS transnational project:

I learned to be more covered last summer in Oulu!

I think that the LTC was very important, because otherwise I wouldn’t have got the idea to do things like the TIS Project. And I felt pushed to do so. But without being pushed, I wouldn’t have done it.

Opportunity to engage in activism is the third component of empowerment. Other than the three GLEEks that were denied the possibility to do a transnational project, only two GLEEks mentioned activities that they planned to do but were unable to. Joe was denied time on two occasions to talk about the GLEE Project and give a workshop on school policy. Ulla had also planned to lead a workshop in the lesbian centre and in the teacher’s consulting centre, but they did not take place because “there were not enough teachers among the LGBTs and not enough LGBTs among the teachers who were interested.” Actions out of school were
more numerous than in school and it is possible that teachers did not feel as empowered to engage in activism in their own schools – Jarna mentioned feeling “more confident and less vulnerable” working out of school.

Although there is some evidence of all the teachers being cognitively and psychologically empowered to engage in activism, economic and political empowerment is markedly different between two groups of teachers. These two groups faced different circumstances in their schools. Those in one group had a comparable smooth ride (Leo, Stefan, Ulla, Anne, and Aran) whilst the others a rough ride (Irvin, Jarna, Georgina, and Joe). The five smooth riders engaged in many actions in and out of their schools and although all had expressed in their action plans that they may face resistance, none was mentioned in their end of year reports. The results of their self-evaluations of their schools revealed one hostile school, three resistant and one open school. Each of the five smooth riders also had the support of their headteacher and some colleagues, and had engaged in discussions about the project with them. All except Ulla had been involved in some form of GLBTQ educational activism prior to the GLEE Project – in three cases for some considerable time. Four people from this group (Leo, Stefan, Ulla, and Anne) went on to participate in the TIS transnational project – Aran was unable to participate in the TIS Project which was for pre-tertiary school teachers only (EU rule). This group showed that they were politically empowered to involve others in their work. The EU grant subsequently received for the TIS Project also gave some economic empowerment.

The rough ride group (Irvin, Jarna, Georgina, and Joe) faced opposition from colleagues and their headteachers to participate in initiatives in their own schools, as well as a transnational project. Only in Joe’s case was he able to overcome resistance to participating in SDP, through what he describes as “diplomatic relationships”, and participate as coordinator in the EU-funded TIS Project. Joe’s “diplomatic ways” included efforts to make it understood that homophobia and heterosexism are everyone’s concern, making trustful allies, regular communication, effective presentation of ideas, and working openly. Joe demonstrated a degree of political empowerment, whilst the other three found themselves in environments which made it impossible at the time for them to mobilise the necessary support.

Comparing the experiences of the smooth riders with those of the rough riders reveals that the major factor affecting the activism and transformative power of GLEEkis is the extent of the support of the headteacher and other colleagues. Where support did not already exist or where there was little
possibility to mobilise such support, the power of the GLEEk was severely limited, even with all the drive in the world. Counting on support can also be unpredictable. In Irvin, Jarna and Georgina’s situation they had little support from others in school despite their efforts at mobilising interest. Crucially they did not have much support from their headteacher. In these cases there was a climate of fear about the project, including what the reactions of parents may be. In the case of Joe, despite opposition to the project it did not affect his drive, and he was able to mobilise a core group of allies. Furthermore, discussions which he had with other stakeholders such as the parents’ association were successful.

The results on empowerment also have to take into account the abilities and drive of participants prior to the course. Just to secure a grant to participate required a certain degree of empowerment – out of 120 interested participants only 11 obtained a grant and participated. The Leadership Training Course applications also indicated that participants had some drive prior to the course. Participants expressed a desire to promote GLBTQ educational equity and carry out actions such as curriculum development and teacher training after the course (which was one of the selection criteria). Only Ulla who had not had any experience with GLBTQ activities prior to the course expressed anxiety towards starting any initiatives, however she went on to successfully participate in the transnational Towards an Inclusive School (TIS) Project.

In terms of political empowerment, prior to the course it seems that participants could not count on support of colleagues. The responses in their course applications to what their school hoped to gain from their participation were very general and only one specifically mentioned the development of teacher education training course on GLBTQ issues. Reducing GLBTQ discrimination and creating a good school climate was the response of three participants. Raising awareness and debates on issues of sexuality were both mentioned once. One participant stated that they did not know what the school hoped to gain. There was little evidence that participants had asked others in their school community, except their headteachers, about their participation in the course.

Overall the teachers were actively empowered after the course and carried out some actions in their schools. The participants’ perceptions of their GLBTQ school culture (e.g. hostile or open) or prior engagement in activism were not critical factors to engaging in activism. Instead, support of headteachers and other teachers was critical to activism. Although all of the GLEEks wanted to take part in a transnational project, three of them were not sufficiently politically
empowered to mobilise the necessary support of their colleagues and participate in a transnational project. Although the teachers reported on their actions, they did not generally give detailed evaluations other than to say it was successful or otherwise. The TIS Project reports of their workshops give the most detail. In these workshops they reported that the participants showed some positive personal transformation, with greater understanding of GLBTQ issues and a call to action. There is, however, therefore little reporting of school transformation and therefore a lack of evidence of transformative empowerment – increased ability, drive, and possibility to engage in activism and transform schools.

I shall later, in chapter 7, refer back to the experiences of participants discussed in this chapter, when making conclusions about the possibilities and limitations within the GLEE Project for empowering teachers to promote GLBTQ equity. Furthermore, in the next chapter where web-assisted transformative pedagogy is constructed, the pedagogical implications of the teachers’ post-course experiences to promote GLBTQ equity are considered.
6 Constructing principles for web-assisted transformative pedagogy

This chapter focuses on the construction of the theoretical foundation and principles for the practice of an empowering pedagogy based on the results of the Leadership Training Course and literature. It explores how to empower through pedagogical actions. Both empirical data and extant theories are used for the construction of the theoretical basis for web-assisted transformative pedagogy. After considering the theoretical principles and characteristics of the Leadership Training Course, the aspects which empower are explored. This is followed by a consideration of the web-assisted role of GLEENET after the Leadership Training Course and its empowering aspects. Finally, I evaluate criticisms of the Leadership Training Course and GLEENET as part of the action research process to further develop the pedagogy. Sub-question C is therefore central to this chapter:

Question C: What were the empowering principles and characteristics of web-assisted transformative pedagogy?

6.1 Pedagogical principles of the Leadership Training Course

After 3 years of development, the 8 day Leadership Training Course took place in July 2002 in Oulu, Finland. There were 11 participants (see Table 7) with five trainers and myself. Eight of the participants were teachers from secondary school, one teacher from primary and one from tertiary education, and one from a GLBTQ NGO. The course workshops (as presented in the training manual) were divided into the following eight sections:

Section 1 Introduction
Section 2 Cultural Diversity & Identities
Section 3 Sexualities & Gender
Section 4 Homophobia & Heterosexism
Section 5 Transforming Schools

The course was advertised through the GLEE website, at conferences, through teachers’ organisations and GLBTQ NGOs. Over 120 persons expressed an interest in doing the course, and by the January 2002 application deadline 47 had completed an application for pre-registration. Of these 47, some 32 met the basic criteria for selection and were pre-registered for the course. Eventually out of the 32 pre-registered persons 11 went on to secure an EU grant and attend the course.
6.1.1 Leadership Training Course objectives

The Leadership Training Course had three main objectives:

1. Empower teachers to develop an action plan for education initiatives within their own school communities to:
   - Raise awareness of the extent and destructive effects of homophobia and heterosexism on all members of the school community, and the need to counter them.
   - Challenge heteronormativity in school policies, practices and curricula and create a safe learning environment for all.

2. Create an internet-based support network (GLEENET) to provide, after the course, a resource centre and facilities for on-going communication between course participant schools to share ideas and collectively develop materials for their own local actions.

3. Create projects on an international level and form EU-funded School Development Projects (SDP).

As can already be seen from these objectives, the pedagogical principles of ethical orientation, conscientising, and promoting activism were central to the course. The data on the Leadership Training Course will now be more systematically analysed to further discuss these three theoretical principles along with others that characterised the transformative pedagogy.

6.1.2 Data collection and analysis

The development of the pedagogical principles and characteristics of the Leadership Training Course started from the very beginning of the project. The course was influenced by (1) the experiences of the Pilot Leadership Training Course and network, (2) extant literature on GLBTQ educational issues and critical pedagogy, and (3) the exchange of ideas that took place between the training team at ten project meetings and via GLEENET. The agenda and minutes of the ten training team meetings along with the course drafts give an indication
of the development process. However, I am interested here in the outcome, and therefore the more relevant data is the 200 page training manual produced by the project, which contains descriptions of all the workshops and the course materials. In addition, the following data is also relevant to identify the pedagogical principles: (1) written documents created during workshops, (2) individual workshop evaluations by the training team, and (3) evaluations mid-course and at the end of the course by the training team and the participants.

Given that principles from critical pedagogy (see chapter 3) had been the starting point, and that I had been involved with every step of the course development process, I had a sense of an idea what the pedagogical principles of the Leadership Training Course were – what Glaser (1978) refers to as theoretical sensitivity. I began a theory-guided content analysis with the training manual, coding it using the initial pedagogical principles for the categories, and looking out for redundant or emergent categories, or whether to combine categories. I then proceeded with this abductive process to code the rest of the data above, which reflected the participants’ and training team’s views on what actually happened at the course. After several attempts the saturation point was reached and the categories reflected the diversity of the data. The next stage was to lift the data from each document and place it under each pedagogical principle category.

**6.1.3 The principles for a transformative pedagogy**

The analysis of the data resulted in seven pedagogical principles:

1. Ethical
2. Conscientising
3. Activist
4. Situated
5. Diversity-affirming
6. Affective
7. Participatory

These principles informed and guided the teaching practice of the Leadership Training Course to foster empowerment and promote social transformation. Although to some degree the principles overlap and are interrelated, I now discuss each of the principles separately to demonstrate how they are grounded in the data.
1. Ethical principle

The theoretical framework for constructing web-assisted transformative pedagogy (in chapter 3) shows that the ethical principle was the starting point for the whole action research process. The pedagogy is rooted in the ethics of human rights, and moral principles of equity, social justice, non-discrimination, and non-violence. The ethical orientation is reflected in participants’ shared and agreed objective of overcoming oppression.

2. Conscientising Principle

The workshops from the eight sections of the Leadership Training Course were sequenced in four interrelated phases of the learning process. The phases reflect the importance in critical pedagogy discussed in chapter 3 of both developing critical understanding that leads to activism, and praxis, that is, reflection and action directed at transformation. The content of the first three phases were about conscientisation, that is, developing critical understanding of heteronormativity as a pre-requisite for the fourth phase of reflection and planning actions.

Phase 1 Developing critical understanding of the manifestations, effects, and root causes of homophobia and heterosexism (heteronormativity).

Phase 2 Developing strategies and skills to challenge homophobia and heterosexism.

Phase 3 Exploring examples of promoting GLBTQ equity and transforming schools.

Phase 4 Reflection on Phases 1-3 and post-course action planning.

The first three conscientising phases consisted of workshops from sections 1 to 5 of the course, and the fourth phase consisted of workshops from the remaining sections 6 to 8 (Appendix 11 lists all the workshops from each phase).

To demonstrate the conscientising principle I discuss some of the workshops from these first three phases, along with comments of the course participants and the training team.

In Phase 1, the workshop *Power and Privilege* introduced the idea of “unearned privilege”, and explored the ways in which certain groups hold power within our society. It also considered the ways in which one can become allies to groups that have been traditionally deprived of privilege and power. It therefore relates to the Shor’s power awareness quality of critical consciousness mentioned.
in chapter 3. After participating in the workshop, I noted how it had raised awareness amongst participants of the privileges associated with different aspects of one’s multiple identity (gender, sexuality, ethnicity, class, etc.). It also exposed how structures perpetuate discrimination. Furthermore the workshop raised awareness in the discussions about intersectionality and the interconnections between different forms of oppression. The workshop also gave an early reminder that although the course focused on discrimination based on sexual orientation, one could not ignore the multiple dimensions of identity, and that for an end to oppression all forms of discrimination have to be addressed. Furthermore, the workshop demonstrated that education for diversity and social justice needs to not just be a struggle of the oppressed, but also engage and conscientise privileged groups. This point is made by Goodman (2001):

From a social change perspective, people from privileged groups perpetuate oppression through individual acts, as well as through institutional and cultural practices. They have access to resources, information, and power that can either block or help facilitate change. . . . Even though more people from oppressed groups are likely to push for greater social justice, as people from privileged groups join in the struggle, it increases the critical mass needed to effect change. (p. 2.)

Another workshop in Phase 1 explored How Homophobia Hurts Us All. Charles in evaluating this workshop noted that the exercise raised awareness of differences between countries and that it drew parallels with racism. The group produced the list below that shows awareness and understanding of the negative effects of homophobia and heterosexism.

- Restricted career choices. Restriction of personal freedom, ability to express yourself.
- Discourages girls from learning. Different pressures around gender and sexuality.
- Pressure to be homophobic, conform even if means being an aggressive bully. Encourages boys to be macho, violent.
- Pressurises people to make unhealthy/unwanted sexual choices. Peer pressure leads to unwanted pregnancies and sexually transmitted diseases.
- Discourages straight people from being involved in LGBT issues for fear of being labelled.
- Breaks up friendships. Discourages healthy physical contact.
While some commented that the exercise was all too obvious, Joe stated in his evaluation:

I can also argue that [homophobia] is any teacher’s issue (not only gay teachers as the majority tend to think).

The point made by Joe is important especially when planning actions in schools and getting “straight allies” on board; the workshop can be reproduced with teachers back in the participants’ schools to conscientise other teachers and increase their involvement in countering homophobia.

Another Phase 1 workshop gave the opportunity for participants to assess the school climate for GLBTQ school students and staff and determine its position along a continuum from hostile to inclusive (see Appendices 8 and 9). All but one of the participants evaluated this as their favourite workshop. Many remarked how the exercise had given them a valuable tool to identify GLBTQ inequity and language to name it. Becoming more aware of the problem of homophobia and being able to articulate that to others is part of the conscientising process.

In Phase 2, two workshops addressed the permanent desocialisation quality of critical consciousness described by Shor (1992). The workshop *Strategies for Combating Homophobia in Schools* involved participants identifying real examples of when they have been aware of homophobia in their every day school situations and considering successful strategies in tackling homophobia. Simo noted in his evaluation that:

Participants got much out of sharing personal stories and hearing about situations in other countries. Specific strategies were distilled from their stories and they came from the participants. Participants felt a strong connection to the subject matter.

The second workshop dealt with *Challenging Stereotypes and Myths*. It was facilitated by Charles and aimed to give participants experience of challenging homophobia and identifying successful techniques. Tony noted in his evaluation that the strength of the workshop lay in its ability to develop participants’ skills at “facing different kinds of arguments and stand against them.”

There was a series of four workshops in Phase 3 whereby the training team and the participants took turns to present examples of ways to transform schools and promote GLBTQ equity. One of the workshops was *Conducting Effective Anti-Discrimination Training*. The objective was for the participants to develop skills to facilitate anti-homophobia workshops with their colleagues on returning
to their respective schools. The pedagogy for the *Leadership Training Course* had been developed for a group of participants who were already committed to countering homophobia. Now it was time for participants to consider about approaches towards anti-homophobia education with persons who themselves may have strong homophobic attitudes or little knowledge of GLBTQ issues. The workshop was led by Simo who had produced material on conducting school-based anti-bias training that included (1) components of a balanced workshop, (2) principles of diversity training, (3) training with adult learners, and (4) strategies for working with schools to adopt anti-bias training. Furthermore, advice was given on how to deal with hostility and avoid getting sidetracked by questions about explicit sexual behaviour.

The workshops in Phase 3 gave participants an opportunity to start reflecting on possible actions they might take in their schools. Shor (1992) refers to this when describing the qualities of critical consciousness and “using critical reflection as a basis for cooperative action in society.” Charles as the course leader wrote in summarising the course evaluations that “participants all recognized that they had learnt a great deal, not only about homophobia and ways of challenging it but also about themselves.” Anne commented:

I’m more aware of homophobia. I’ve got more strategies to combat. I can see the necessity of the LGBT issue.

The conscientising workshops had therefore focused on developing critical understanding and participants’ abilities to challenge homophobia and heterosexism. This was then followed by reflection on what had been learnt and channelling this into making actions plans, another step towards school activism.

3. **Activist Principle**

Following the three conscientising phases, reflection and planning for activism was the content focus in Phase 4 of the course. Particularly workshops in sections 6, 7, and 8 of the course focused on planning both individual and collective post-course actions, as well as the development of the GLEENET on-line support network.

**Section 6 Action Planning**

| Workshop 6.1 | Organising for School Change |
| Workshop 6.2 | School Development Projects |
Workshop 6.3  School Development Projects & GLEENET
Workshop 6.4  School Development Project Planning
Workshop 6.5  Looking Ahead: Sharing Individual Action Plans & the Next Steps
Workshop 6.6  An SDP Example – The EI Project

Section 7  GLEENET Support Network
Workshop 7.1  The Uses of GLEENET
Workshop 7.2  The Functions of GLEENET

Section 8  Evaluation and closure
Workshop 8.1  Evaluation and Closure

It can be seen from the workshops in Section 6 above that the activist principle was manifested in exploring possibilities for action and change, action planning, and steps towards action implementation. In Section 7, the workshops focused on creating a web-based network after the course to support participants’ actions, and encourage reflection and evaluation of actions to transform schools. During the course the whole Phase 4 was therefore particularly focused on planning the activities after the course and how they could be implemented and sustained.

During the workshops of Phase 4 participants explored some principles of direct action organising including the development of a transnational School Development Project (SDP). The first workshop focused on reflection and exploration of initial steps towards moving participants’ schools to becoming more inclusive. The typology of schools (see Appendix 10) from a previous workshop was revisited and from this some preliminary ideas for actions were formulated. This workshop was followed by four workshops on SDPs. In the first workshop Mira told how after the *Pilot Leadership Training Course* she had developed the *Inequality in School* (EI) Project (see Appendix 4). The workshop presented the procedures, materials, and results of the EI Project and discussed the successes and problems encountered during the process, and how problems and doubts were overcome. The next workshop focused on the more technical procedures to create a School Development Project, including applying for EU funding. Time was then allocated to planning in groups, followed by two workshops on using GLEENET to support the development of an SDP such as grant writing, carrying out and reporting project activities.
Finally, participants presented their SDP and individual action plans. Their next steps after the course were clarified, including the yearly reporting system of post-course activities, and a date set 2 months afterwards to reflect and refine their plans. By the end of Phase 4, each participant had produced an individual action plan for their school. Two SDP project groups had also been formed. Charles noted in his course evaluation summary that one of the key learning points mentioned by participants were the “methods and strategies for work in schools.” The course had generated enthusiasm to get involved in GLBTQ activism, and there was also a lot of excitement about the possibility of doing EU projects together.

4. Situated Principle

The situated principle refers to learning that is located in the life experiences of participants, and is based on learning that maximises the possibility for each participant to share and connect with their own experiences. The training team worked hard to avoid what I would call a “one way fits all” model, and to create situated learning experiences that maximised the possibility for each participant to contextualise and adapt the content. The training team was also committed to using accessible language and being sensitive to participants’ needs and backgrounds. This included building flexibility into the workshops to identify what learners already knew and what they would like to know, which can then be used as a starting point for the workshop rather than what the teacher has already decided to teach. As the course was planned so far in advance this was not always easy to do.

One of the key learning points mentioned by participants and noted by Charles was “the range of materials already available to adapt and use.” These materials included books and videos as well as ones available in GLENET. The participants had also developed their awareness of their own school context and appropriate ideas for activism after the course. Aran said that “you [the trainers] have wisely left us to decide from our own cultural education systems how to do it.” And Leo commented that “I could reflect on the situation of my school and after to receive some support on how to confront with it.” The workshops of Simo using his *GLSEN Workbook: A Developmental Model for Assessing, Describing, and Improving Schools for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender (LGBT) People* proved to be very effective in contextualising the course content. The workbook was subsequently adapted, translated, and used by participants after the
course in their own schools. The workshop provided participants with a conceptual framework for GLBTQ equity and a body of information and skills to analyse the situation in their schools.

Simo’s workshop demonstrated how to meet the challenge of creating course content that is an appropriate starting point for each participant, especially when one does not know the participants in advance. The pedagogy of each workshop therefore had to have a flexible pitch to take into account the prior knowledge of participants and the trainers. Also generative themes emerged during the course that guided the emphasis in workshops as participants articulated their particular interests. Participants were also invited to make workshop contributions during the course about their own GLBTQ work on issues in their own country, and four did so. In the latter part of the course participants worked in small groups to generate a list of advice for carrying out actions in their schools. Each group fed back their ideas and these were summarised on a flipchart by Charles as follows:

- Take a deep breathe – keep calm;
- A few useful facts help to set the scene;
- Recognise the value of any intervention;
- Most useful to get engaged on an emotional level not intellectual;
- Be reflective;
- Try and put yourself in their shoes – empathy;
- Look after yourself;
- Be authoritative/confident – not arrogant/confrontational.

Using this approach ensured that the ideas were relevant as they were situated in the experiences of participants, rather than dictated by the trainer. Furthermore, they made post-course action plans for their particular school contexts.

5. Diversity-affirming principle

The diversity-affirming principle here has multicultural, intercultural and intersectional dimensions, which are particularly relevant to an international project focused on promoting non-discrimination and GLBTQ equity. This principle provides the frame to learn from the varied life experiences of other participants, and is therefore about having productive cross-cultural learning experiences. The training team came to the conclusion early on that a multicultural, intercultural approach involving learning about the situation in other schools and countries would also be a good way to learn about one’s own
context. In much the same way as when one is immersed in another culture it is possible to learn a lot about one’s own culture. The international composition of the training team and participants provided an opportunity to learn from diverse environments and cultures, as well as identify common threads. Irvin remarked the course demonstrated that “we can learn from each other.” In the course evaluation one of the participants said they wanted even “more information about situation in different countries.”

One of the workshops at the beginning of the course was titled Definitions and Language of Diversities. The purpose of this workshop was to initiate discussion about the meanings of terms to be used throughout the course, understand cultural differences in usage and reach agreement on definitions. The terms discussed were: prejudice, discrimination, homophobia, heterosexism, homosexual, transsexual, sexuality, gender. In small groups participants discussed the different words and terms and tried to reach agreement on a definition, and recorded this on the flip chart. Afterwards the whole group discussed each term and agreed on a common understanding. I observed that this was an excellent way to affirm the diversity of the group and at the same time increase understanding between participants. Simo evaluated this workshop and said that “this exercise was an excellent way to begin the course. It helped to establish a common usage of language for the week and inspired a multi-levelled discussion about key concepts.” The approach made it more meaningful compared to imposing a set of definitions on the group.

The Power and Privilege workshop discussed under the conscientising principle above showed the importance attached to a consideration of intersections of different forms of oppression. In particular the workshop highlighted the diversity both between and within cultural categories, and problematised the notion of uniform and stable identities. The consideration of a portfolio of identities based on class, race, gender, sexual identity, occupation, etc., highlighted the complexity of power and privilege, and the shifting between centre and margin depending on the context.

6. Affective Principle

Learning involves both cognitive and affective dimensions, and educational experiences can generate positive or negative feelings for the learning process. Education is most often effective when it generates positive feelings towards the learning process, as well as providing opportunities for processing emotions.
The affective dimension of the course was visible in both the positive learning atmosphere and the emotional responses to the workshops. In their evaluations participants spoke about the good learning environment, sharing of ideas and exchanging experiences, and everybody’s participation and valuable contributions. The workshop *Challenging Stereotypes & Myths* stands out as an example for the intense emotional response of the participants. The workshop began with the group brainstorming homophobic statements that they had heard. These statements were recorded on slips of paper. Half of the group were invited to take their chairs and make a circle facing outwards in the middle of the room. The remaining people then each took their chairs and sat opposite from one of the people in the middle so that each person had a partner. The people on the outside were each given a slip of paper which contained one of the homophobic statements, for example, “Lesbians shouldn’t be allowed to have children, it’s unnatural.” These “outside” persons had the role to act like someone who believes their statement to be true and to be prepared to defend that point of view to the “inside” person. The exercise was then repeated with the roles reversed. After the second round of debriefing the facilitator created with the participants a list of the things that were felt to be useful and not useful when challenging homophobia in this direct way. A final discussion then considered how this relates to the school environment. Melanie commenting on the workshop said:

> Participants seem to be curious, interested and motivated . . . follows lively discussion! . . . The discussion is so lively Charles nearly cannot stop it! People are getting “overwhelmed”, upset . . . so Charles stops and asks people to express feelings. Then more intellectual-level discussion, about strategies, theories . . . also with a good amount of humour! A healing moment.

Other workshops that demonstrate the affective dimension in the learning situations can be seen in the discussion of the participatory principle below.

### 7. Participatory Principle

The participatory principle is about teaching and learning that is experiential, dialogical, democratic and inquiry-based, as mentioned by critical pedagogy theorists and discussed in chapter 3. Experiential learning is inherently participatory as it involves a process of constructing knowledge and gaining skills from direct experiences. The dialogical principle relates to Freire’s (1970)
problem posing approach which is characterised by active questioning and an ongoing exchange of ideas between the trainer and student. “The teacher is no longer merely the-one-who-teaches, but one who is himself taught in dialogue with the students, who in turn while being taught also teach. They become jointly responsible for a process in which all grow.” (p. 61.) This also connects to the democratic principle in which there is shared power and participants have a chance to express ideas. Together with the dialogical and democratic principles inquiring is one of the characteristics of Freire’s problem posing approach discussed in chapter 3, which sees the role of the trainer as not an expert but rather as an animator facilitating a participatory inquiry. In the course of the project there had been “experts” among the participants who had been keen to show the right way of doing things and impose their ideas, but one year into the project a training team committed to a democratic participatory pedagogy was established.

In the Introductory workshop of the course the trainers and the participants were involved in an exercise to come to some agreements for creating a democratic learning environment suited to all. Palmer (1998, p. 104) describes these as a *consensual framework of procedural rules*. The following agreements emerged which were posted on the wall until the end of the course: confidentiality; listening; respect; time keeping; keep it simple; responsibility; positive thinking; constructive. Also in the introductory session, participants were invited to express any fears and anxieties that could then be addressed as the course progressed. Four fears were expressed: resistance back home; difficulty with language – English and others; technical difficulties; not being equal to the task. And finally, we asked what the participants’ goals and expectations were so that we could respond to these in the workshops. A summary is given below:

- Return home inspired to begin an intervention program;
- Talk to pupils (especially boys) about homophobic jokes/language;
- Involve straight allies;
- For colleagues and students to reflect on this issue, not just tolerance;
- Gain instruments to involve schools and other organisations in this work;
- Good progressive ideas;
- Information and experience to implement a program on sexuality and diversity;
- Get reassurance and courage;
- Institutional backing/certification.
The summary shows that the participants’ focus for the course coincided with the stated course objectives produced by the training team. From a participatory perspective it was as if the course had been structured around the generative themes of the participants. Had there been a lot of deviation between the participants’ and trainers’ goals, changes in the contents and methods would have been required, given that the course aspired to be a democratic participatory learning community.

I noted that these participatory exercises produced a good classroom climate from the outset. Ulla commented that the sessions that had been most useful for her were those in which one spoke “about ones feelings, doubts, and fear (so I had the feeling of being involved in the process).” In the shorter Pilot Leadership Training Course the same introductory exercise was omitted due to time constraints, and the classroom climate clearly suffered as a result.

The mid-course evaluation produced positive feedback about the learning environment. Most of the anonymously written comments on what worked well made reference to the participatory principle such as:

- Exercises, environment and commitment of people, input, to hear people;
- Team building, games;
- Exchanging experiences;
- Good at listening;
- Everybody’s participation and valuable contributions;
- Active pedagogical structure of workshops;
- Trust games and other games for energy and relaxation.

The participatory principle is also evident in the energisers, as well as the icebreakers and team building activities. Charles noted that participants in their end of course evaluation felt that “warm up exercises and games were seen as being an essential part of the programme.” Nearly all the workshops were experiential that involved inquiring and active participation. Melanie evaluated the Power and Privilege workshop and commented on how it reflected the participatory principle:

All the components of the workshop involved a lot of personal input and doing the exercises demanded personal commitment from the participants. Thus, this goal (commitment and maximum participation) set by the organizing team was achieved. The atmosphere, the “educational climate”
was beneficial to learning: all the participants shared some of their thoughts and feelings, and seemed to feel good about this.

The previously mentioned workshop *Challenging Stereotypes & Myths*, in which participants had to reply to homophobic statements made by their peers, was an example of experiential learning. The exercise was positively evaluated by other training team members, and was also considered to be the most useful to some participants. Ulla remarked how active participation through role play led to better understanding.

In addition to the participatory aspects of particular workshops, the course participants and the training team made general remarks about aspects of the participatory principle. Commenting on whether the course had met its stated objectives Georgina said “very well, in a very active and pedagogical way. You made us more aware, more confident, motivated, involved, and more responsible.” She went on to say that the best three things about the course were “the friendly and motivating climate, the active pedagogical workshop, and accommodation and nurturing.” Jarna remarked that the course had a “good focus on our own knowledge and experience as a community of learners.” She also added that “the participants and trainers commitment and integrity,” and the “active engaging training” were amongst the best things about the course. Commenting on the teambuilding exercises she said that “the results speak for themselves.”

Jarna also highlighted the strength of the participatory learning community when she said that “perhaps you need to have less attractive intelligent articulate participants so I could focus on learning from books and other expert texts!” Her comment reminds me that friendliness and humour played a very important part in the course. Aran remarked that the best three things about the course were “openness, honesty, and humbleness.”

The comments above demonstrate that a participatory learning community characterised the *Leadership Training Course* that included dialogue, and experiential and inquiring learning activities. The *Leadership Training Course* resembled what Shor (1992) describes as frontloading the participants’ expression and backloading the trainers’ expertise and bodies of knowledge – the trainer’s role was to act as a facilitator or animator. Through a dialogical approach the input of participants can be maximised.

The workshops on GLEENET provided the foundation for the continuation of the learning community after the course. GLEENET was designed to support the
development of transnational projects and the individual actions of participants in their schools. Mira commented that:

All the participants understood the GLEENET main functions, some of them with more difficulties than others, but all the group has now the capacity to work together using GLEENET.

From the above it can be seen that the pedagogy of the Leadership Training Course is characterised by seven main principles that are based on the theories of critical pedagogy and are manifested in the data. The aim of the pedagogy that was developed was to empower the participants and make learning personally and socially transformative. In chapter 5, I concluded that course participants had been predominantly latently empowered at the end of the training and more actively empowered afterwards, as they engaged in activism in their schools. Given this, I turn my attention to considering what aspects of the course empowered the participants.

6.2 Leadership Training Course: Empowering aspects

In this section I try to establish a connection between each pedagogical principle and empowerment, based on data from the participants and training team.

6.2.1 Data collection and analysis

I have revisited the data on the Leadership Training Course and searched for the interrelationship between the pedagogical principles and empowerment, that is, having more drive, ability, and possibility to act. The content analysis is theory-bound and based on the teacher participants’ and training team’s perspectives. I have coded the data that shows a connection between the principles and cognitive (ability-related), psychological (drive-related), political, economic, legal, and socio-cultural empowerment (opportunity-related).
6.2.2 Pedagogical principles and empowerment

1. Ethical principle and empowerment

The ethical orientation of the pedagogy is what bound the participants together creating a community that shared the values of non-discrimination and equity. Considering that participants had expressed that they sometimes felt isolated in doing work on GLBTQ issues, this had an empowering effect. The chance to work with like-minded others and the prospect of developing more skills had given them drive to come to the course.

2. Conscientising principle and empowerment

I have previously described the first three phases of the Leadership Training Course transformative learning process as conscientising. Each of these phases was concerned with cognitive and psychological empowerment with a focus on improving the ability, capacity, and drive of participants to promote GLBTQ equity. The first phase focused on developing a critical awareness of homophobia and heterosexism that increases the understanding of participants of its manifestations, effects, and root causes. The second phase dealt with strategies and skills to challenge homophobia and heterosexism, and the third phase explored examples of transforming schools.

There is evidence of cognitive empowerment in each of the workshops of these three phases, which focused on active learning. In one of the first workshops participants had to respond to a series of power statements to do with rights and access to resources. This uncovered privilege and exclusion for different groups in society. Reflection and discussion on the exercise led participants to gain a deeper understanding of issues of power and marginalisation, personal and structural discrimination, the interconnections between forms of oppression and the multiple dimensions of identity.

According to the course leader Charles, participants gained knowledge of differences between countries regarding homophobia in a workshop on How Homophobia Hurts Us All. Participants also felt that the workshop with the GLSEN school climate survey had given them an increased ability to identify and name GLBTQ inequity in their schools. Tony pointed out that in a workshop on challenging homophobia, the participants had developed skills at “facing different kinds of arguments and stand[ing] against them.” The workshops on transforming
schools (given by the training team and participants) gave further ideas and skills for post-course actions. The post-course evaluation (see Appendix 8) indicated that participants had learnt a lot and gained more skills to be able to challenge homophobia and heterosexism. They had therefore been both cognitively empowered and conscientised through the pedagogy.

In terms of conscientisation, activism, and political empowerment (i.e. the ability of participants to mobilise others to take part in their post-course actions), there are several examples. Firstly, there was a workshop that included discussion of the way in which individuals can become allies to marginalised groups. Another workshop focused on how homophobia hurts everybody. Joe commented on this saying he was now able to argue that homophobia is any teacher’s issue. Both of these workshops were evaluated to be potentially useful for mobilising teachers and others back in the participants’ schools. Also the school climate survey was viewed as a tool for participants to use with their colleagues after the course, to assess GLBTQ inequity in their schools, and thereby raising awareness of homophobia and heterosexism.

In terms of psychological empowerment there is some evidence that conscientisation had strengthened the will, motivation and drive of participants to act. Anne remarked about her increased awareness of homophobia, having more strategies to combat it, and that she “can see the necessity of the LGBT issue.” Also, I observed the reaction of participants to the sharing of examples of transforming schools and noted that it had increased the confidence level of participants to take actions. I discuss this further below.

3. Activist principle and empowerment

Reflection and planning concrete actions to promote GLBTQ equity was the fourth phase of the Leadership Training Course, with a focus on channelling conscientisation into action. This was reflected in Simo’s comment that “the GLEE Project effectively combines motivational, theoretical, and practical components in a way that nurtures educators and compels them to act.” Accordingly, cognitive empowerment therefore fosters psychological empowerment, that is, increased drive to act and transform schools. This increased drive is also highlighted in Charles’s comment about the “excitement and possibility of Comenius projects receiving funding and continued work together.”
Based on my observations, there were several elements of the activist orientation of the fourth phase of the course that led to further cognitive and psychological empowerment:

- A focus in action planning on identifying initial steps. This increased participants’ belief in their ability to carry out their plans.
- Using a concrete example of developing a School Development Project (SDP). This was presented by Mira who had already successfully completed one SDP project. This not only gave participants the know-how of SDP projects but increased their self-efficacy beliefs, as Mira had been in the same position two years earlier as a participant in the Pilot Leadership Training Course.
- Giving time for reflection to develop and present plans. This enabled sharing of action plan ideas, and both giving and getting advice that contributed towards the co-empowerment of participants.
- Clarification of post-course procedures including GLEENET. This made it seem possible to sustain the planning process after the course, especially the exchange of information for creating a School Development Project. A lot of uncertainties and confusion could have had a negative effect on both cognitive and psychological empowerment. Failure to get EU funding would also have negatively impacted on economic and political empowerment.

4. Situated principle and empowerment

The situated learning principle and its positive effect on cognitive empowerment was remarked on a lot. Charles noted that participants had gained an “awareness of the situation in their own schools and clarity about what needs to be done.” He also mentioned the range of materials available at the course that could be later adapted and used by participants. Simo talked about how “the project meets educators wherever they may be with regard to their experience around LGBT issues, and provides them with a relevant conceptual framework, body of information and skills, and the support to remain motivated.” A pedagogy that starts at where the participants are at rather than where the trainer is at is therefore important to empowerment. It would be especially important when the participants return to their schools and engage colleagues with less awareness of GLBTQ issues. Simo’s school climate survey also proved effective in situating the course in the experiences of each participant. As Joe put it, “Simo helped me
to have a clearer understanding of my school context . . . I managed to focus on my school and have a clearer view of the job to do.” A series of presentations about the participants’ schools enabled everyone to pick and choose ideas to suit their own school context. Both Aran and Leo stressed the importance of providing space for the participants to reflect on their own schools and contextualise the material.

5. Diversity-affirming principle and empowerment

Aran commented on the diversity-affirming principle and cognitive empowerment, saying that “ideas emanating from different cultures” were a key learning point. Similarly Jarna commended the learning from the course’s “common threads and diverse environments across countries” and “international perspectives.” The workshop on Definitions and Language of Diversities was both cognitively and psychologically empowering by affirming diversity and at the same time increasing understanding between participants. Simo remarked that this workshop “helped to establish a common usage of language for the week and inspired a multi-layered discussion about key concepts.” Most of the course participants spoke English as a second language, and without attention to this, the course could be a disempowering experience, as witnessed to some extent in the Pilot Leadership Training Course.

6. Affective principle and empowerment

The affective aspects of learning generated emotions that strengthened the drive to act. At the start of the course participants were encouraged to talk about their fears and anxieties, that if not addressed could act as psychological barriers to learning. In other workshops there was time to process emotions, and participants felt that they could freely express themselves and share with others. This contributed towards participants feeling positive about themselves and the course and therefore towards psychological empowerment. In addition, the evaluation of the learning environment indicated that through the sharing of experiences it had contributed towards cognitive co-empowerment.
7. Participatory principle and empowerment

As mentioned, the participatory principle in this context incorporates characteristics of experiential learning, a dialogical approach, democratic culture, and an inquiring learning process. At the beginning of the course there was an emphasis on participation to create a democratic learning community. This involved teambuilding exercises where participants got to know each other to develop trust. This was followed by a workshop to build a consensual framework of rules and create a positive climate for all. Participants also talked about their expectations and goals. The outcomes of these introductory workshops were posted on the walls of the classroom as a constant reminder throughout the course. Participants spoke positively about the learning community. Leo remarked “I feel myself part of a free community and it doesn’t happen often.” Others commented positively on how the participatory environment had contributed towards learning, and how they had benefited from: listening to people’s input; exchanging experiences; a constructive, friendly and relaxed atmosphere; the active pedagogical structure of workshops; trust games. Simo described the atmosphere of the course as one in which “participants felt comfortable expressing their needs (language and otherwise) and creating a space that felt right for them. The warmth, support and level of bonding that took place was truly inspiring and went a really long way in helping people through any challenges and toward the ultimate goals of the course.” Melanie commented that:

In 2000, the pilot course as a whole went well, but the 2002 course half-way through, has been even more successful than the pilot one. Surely, this is not just due to the training team but due to the fact that the participants are all highly motivated and progressively thinking people . . . I have also felt that the group has welcomed and accepted all the members of the training team, myself included (hopefully, I am right at this point!)

These descriptions of the course atmosphere point to it contributing towards both cognitive and psychological empowerment. Comments by participants on whether the course had met its stated objectives (that includes the empowerment of teachers) revealed connections between the participatory characteristic and empowerment. Georgina felt that the course had met its objectives “very well, in a very active and pedagogical way.” She went on to say that the course had a “friendly and motivating climate” that made her “more aware, more confident, motivated, involved.” Her comments indicate both cognitive and psychological
empowerment. Jarna referred positively to the active pedagogy saying that the course had a “good focus on our own knowledge and experience as a community of learners,” and that the “active engaging training was amongst the best things about the course.” Her remark on the teambuilding exercises pointed to success in creating a learning community, when she said that “the results speak for themselves.” Joe said that he “really liked the friendliness which prevailed all along the course (between participants and between participants and organizers).” He added that “open-mindedness was a factor of success.” Irvin remarked that one of the key learning points that the course demonstrated was that “we can learn from each other.” His point emphasises the importance of co-empowerment, that is power with others.

These comments from participants point to ways in which a participatory learning community in the participants’ views could foster empowerment. In this participatory problem posing pedagogy the trainer is not “the sage on the stage” but rather “guides from the side.” As Jarna said above, the learning has a focus on the participants’ knowledge and experience. Recognising that each participant has something to contribute is empowering, in contrast to the banking approach. The dialogical approach aims to maximise learner input and create a space for generative themes that are relevant for participants in their contexts. Dialogue engages trainers and participants and this increases interest and motivation. Engaging jointly in experiential learning enables participants to co-construct knowledge. Beginning with a concrete experience, for example, challenging homophobic comments, the participants can reflect and develop together principles to guide actions to challenge homophobic comments in their schools. Experiential learning is a powerful participatory way to cognitively empower individuals.

From the above it can be seen that there is evidence to connect each of the seven principles of the Leadership Training Course pedagogy to the empowerment of participants. In chapter 7 I discuss these pedagogical principles and empowerment further in relation to extant critical pedagogical theories. More courses could either confirm or refute the connections between the principles and empowerment, but for now I consider the seven empowering principles of transformative pedagogy to be: Ethical; Conscientising; Activist; Situated; Diversity-affirming; Affective; Participatory.
6.3 GLEENET, empowerment and pedagogical principles

The participatory learning community did not stop at the end of the Leadership Training Course – GLENEET enabled the transformative teacher education process to continue. As Simo reflected, “the use of a vibrant internet learning environment and school development project structure ensure that participants communicate and follow up on the course goals long after the course is over.” And Charles noted that “the participants felt that the most important thing for the future was to stay in touch with each other to provide support and ongoing ideas. There was a great deal of excitement about the possibility of continued work together.”

The GLEENET learning environment made it possible for GLEEks after the course to (1) sustain the work they had begun at the course, (2) provide resources, (3) support each other in the activism in their schools, and (4) create transnational projects. GLEENET therefore provided the web-assisted dimension of the transformative pedagogy. In this section I firstly consider the role of GLEENET and in what ways it further empowered participants following the Leadership Training Course. Secondly, I consider the web-assisted aspects of GLEENET in relation to principles of transformative pedagogy.

6.3.1 Data collection and analysis

The usage of GLEENET was automatically monitored in the web environment with statistics on the number of sessions and time spent, the number of documents produced, and mails sent and read by each GLEEk. All documents and messages were automatically stored and accessible for analysis. The GLEEks’ end of year reports, the Towards an Inclusive (TIS) school transnational project reports, and the numerous messages sent between GLEEks provide evidence of the transformative learning function of GLEENET and the possible empowerment of its users. In coding the data I used the concepts of cognitive, psychological, economic, political, legal and socio-cultural empowerment. Furthermore, I have looked for emergent discussion themes in the GLEENET mail that illustrate its supportive and empowering role. To characterise the web-assisted dimension of GLEENET I have initially used the seven principles derived from the transformative pedagogy of the Leadership Training Course as categories to code the data.
6.3.2 The role of GLEENET and empowerment

Over the 15 month period following the Leadership Training Course the nine GLEEks used GLEENET on average 10 times per month, and a total of 2 hours per month. The mail and document production statistics give some indication of their activity in the site. The average number of messages sent was 79 (approximately 5 per month), and documents produced was 19 (approximately 1 per month). The interaction was almost exclusively between GLEEks and with myself. Interestingly there was very little GLEENET interaction after the course between the training team and the GLEEks, though I continued to keep in contact with the training team.

The most common use of GLEENET was for communication between the participants. The uploading of documents was the second most common use. The documents included articles, resources, accounts of project meetings, and reports. Getting information and materials from the resource centre was the third most common use. Other uses reported were for project dissemination, in the school classroom, and for preparing the preparatory visit for the transnational TIS Project.

The evaluation of GLEENET by GLEEks was generally positive. However, three GLEEks mentioned difficulties with handling the technology, for example Joe remarked:

The site is a very good means of gathering and archiving mails and getting in touch with everybody. It is convenient to be informed in a very short time. As I found [it] quite difficult to use the resources part of it, I dare say I have not been looking for much info: it is only recently (as I needed info about youth and suicide) that I got used to browsing the site and opening documents. But to my mind and according to my limited skills concerning computers, it is still too sophisticated to find the way to the right document and upload a new one. I need some more time to get used to it.

One of the limitations of the environment was that there was no search function, which would of course have made it easier for the GLEEks to access documents. The use of GLEENET diminished in the second year after the Leadership Training Course. In terms of hours of usage and number of sessions it was at about 25% of the first year usage rate. The most active users were those involved in the TIS Project which began at the start of the second year. By the third year the site was hardly used at all. This was due to GLEEks preferring to communicate through regular email, a preference to access resources through
search engines such as Google (especially as GLEENET did not have its own search engine) and a decline in propensity to communicate.

The data from the GLEEks demonstrated the supportive role that GLEENET had played in carrying out their action plans. There is evidence that this support role contributed towards psychological and cognitive empowerment strengthening both drive and ability to engage in activism. This is reflected in the following comments of four GLEEks that show how GLEENET increases drive, inspiration, and ability to work towards transforming their schools:

By enabling me to become part of a network of teachers throughout Europe the training has given me the support and inspiration to keep working towards equity within education. . . . I thoroughly enjoy hearing people’s news and despite the failure of our group project to get off the ground I feel included supported and inspired by the GLEE[K]s. (Jarna)

Staying in contact is encouraging and interesting. Without GLEENET maybe the contact would have fallen asleep. (Ulla)

GLEENET: a good resource, for myself it would be good if participants use it more regularly, I wish to keep in touch about the situation of others. (Anne)

This kind of project would not be possible if it was not carried by a team, by people who keep in touch and plan to act with the same goals. . . . I can also rely on the advice I can get from the other participants in the TIS project: this is, as I said before, one of the most reliable allies because it’s easy to keep in touch through GLEENET. (Joe)

Some GLEEks also mentioned how being part of an EU project and GLEENET increased the credibility and status of the project in the eyes of their colleagues and thereby contributed towards political empowerment, that is, the ability to mobilise support from others:

I was very empowered, because without GLEE I wouldn’t have had the slightest motivation to make such a project. And the main argument was that it was a European project. This was very important to convince other persons!!! (Ulla)

Working with partners is always enticing as you have to respect deadlines and be in constant contact with everybody. Also you feel supported and more trustful because in a case of a particular barrier, you can at any time suggest that this is a multinational project. . . . Relying on a team as the TIS partners
along with the official support of Comenius and GLEENET has always been the ultimate incentive. (Joe)

As a very cheap resource GLEENET contributed towards economic and political empowerment. So long as members have access to a computer then it can sustain an on-line network at little cost. All resources can be accessed for free and one has a support system whose only costs are the time put in by those involved. GLEENET was used in the process of collaboratively writing an EU grant for the TIS project, and contained the application procedures and forms. Since the start of this research other learning environments have become available, such as the free, open source Moodle, which make this technology even more accessible.

To further consider GLEENET and empowerment I next present the four main discussion themes that emerged from the analysis of the GLEEks’ mail. The first three provide evidence of psychological empowerment through GLEENET’s role as a support network, and the last one cognitive empowerment through gaining more knowledge and skills.

1. Helping to come out

One of the discussion themes of the GLEEks was the question of disclosure of one's sexual orientation in school. Given the culture of hostile or resistant schools GLBTQ teachers may choose to be closeted, that is, hide their sexual orientation. To be *out* or open about one’s sexual orientation often takes a lot of courage. Furthermore, sexual minorities are never completely out, having to make decisions about disclosure of their sexuality with each new person they encounter. Ulla said in her project report that “I wouldn’t have had the courage to go to the headmaster of my school authority and out myself.” She went on to wonder what the persons from her EU National Agency (who know her from another project) would think about her and her school being involved in the GLEE Project.

In December 2002 Irvin sent a mail to all GLEEks about a problem she was having in school with a particular student, who suspected that Irvin was queer:

In this environment I feel my 100% coming out is very close. Otherwise it will be really difficult to reconcile the situation. I have talked to one of my closest colleagues about this, and he warned me that I should be very careful not to turn the situation even worse by calling on the parents’ anger and opposition, and driving all the kids totally away from me… there is no law to protect LGBT from discrimination in employment yet, but I’m sure my
colleagues would not make a big scandal. However I have some experience that if they have to stand up and do something in favour of a “buzi”, they will be in complete silence. What do you think?

Irvin received the following response from Georgina:

Hallo, far away Irvin

If I were you, I would come out as soon as possible. Then, nobody has a reason to attack you. I faced here the same problem with my colleagues and now some are very friendly but with bosses (LESBIANS INCLUDED) and the majority I’m facing a wall of silence. I wish you good luck. Kisses and love. Georgina.

And Aran responded to both Irvin and Georgina:

Georgina and Irvin!

I do recognize Georgina’s case very much: The colleagues all of a sudden see they didn’t know you, now they understand some things and feel threatened, for they have built their relationship to you on the loose sand. And you, when you come out, you stand on a solid mountain.

Irvin, I’d say: if you feel you’re strong enough, do come out! Some colleagues will feel much easier with you, but learn from Georgina: the walls will be there – but that’s because of their fragility.

About the boy: He needs to be like that just now, and you’re the wall he has to have in front of him – without resistance the muscles will not grow. Aran

Irvin later wrote that “things still haven’t settled, but they are not so bad now. . . . I am finally out at my school in a “don’t ask, don’t tell” atmosphere, which is not bad, but not the thing I would be really happy for either.”

Though one cannot attribute the decision to come out at school entirely on communication through GLEENET, the GLEE Project had established an environment where GLEEks felt comfortable to turn to each other for support. As well as sharing ideas in situations like the above, GLEEks have also sought each other when there has been a lack of support for their activism in schools.
2. Finding international support

As mentioned, at the end of the Leadership Training Course the participants divided themselves into two transnational project groups. On returning to their schools the participants tried to gain support for their project. In October 2002 Georgina sent a mail saying that “my coordinator told me after a meeting that the GLEE Project was neither appropriate nor accurate to our school at the moment. Without support I can’t go on.” To this she received four responses:

Georgina, I do hope you have still the force to walk up the hill the director of your school has put in front of you. I think you feel the support from all the GLEEks, and I hope you have been filled up with anger, that holy anger that can remove mountains. (Aran)

Dear Georgina, it is a pity for us, but I hope, things can change! (Ulla)

Dear Georgina, I am sorry you have met with such a response. I think it is wise to notice where you are supported and to go through doors that are unlocked. Support and success are vital. With love. (Jarna)

Don’t give up Georgina! You will have plenty of time until March to try to show your point of view, I’m sure that in Bologna we could work and decide strategies to help you and in Portugal I can help you in whatever you need. Love, Mira.

Georgina responded by thanking GLEEks for their support and saying she still planned to try and go to Bologna for the planning meeting of the transnational project, but subsequently did not attend. A year later she wrote:

Although I haven’t been able to implement the project at my school, I’m trying to go on, this time preparing a seminar about LGBT issues with people belonging to a left wing party here in town. The goal is to make clear what we are and what we want. I’ll talk about our rights, my girlfriend about co-education and sexism, and I invited Fiona to talk about lesbian motherhood and adoption. All that I’ve learnt with GLEE will be used. I appreciate your support and new ideas. Always GLEE, Georgina.

In this case although the support of the GLEEk did not open up the possibility for Georgina to participate in the transnational project, still a year on Georgina shows a lot of drive and ability and the possibility to do work outside of school. One
could say that she is not actively empowered in school to do a transnational project but is actively empowered out of school.

3. Sharing and encouraging when under attack

During the developmental stages of the Leadership Training Course I received a phone call from a member of the European Parliament saying a small group of right wing members were trying to ban the GLEE Project. Shortly afterwards two negative and twisted articles appeared in British tabloid newspapers criticising the project (though the European Commissioner for Education and Culture defended the project). In October 2003 one of the GLEEks was attacked in two British newspapers for her involvement in a project that used dolls to introduce diversity into the classroom. She wrote:

Dear GLEEk,

I have had so much to tell you that I have not been able to start! I have also been angry and upset to be clear to go over the story. But what I lack here is support and encouragement from folk like you who are trying to make a difference in education – so here goes…

Together with another parent at my daughter’s school I got a grant to make my dolls and to research and print a teachers resource which was planned to include many diverse personae dolls. . . . We had arranged to go along to a meeting of a lesbian mothers group to begin the second part of our project – researching/creating personas in cooperation with diverse groups . . . I thought this would be a nice safe place to test out our ideas for a workshop with adults. However, a tabloid newspaper spies to this meeting . . . and printed an article full of lies – “OUTRAGE AT LESBIAN SEX DOLLS GIVEN TO PRIMARY SCHOOLS.”

I was not mentioned by name, but my school and my daughter’s school were. This has been particularly difficult at my school where my headteacher has been frightened. It seems impossible he will ever feel safe enough to allow me to use the dolls with my class! . . . I have been outed to every member of staff at both schools . . . many parents and staff have been supportive. . . . I know I will need much more strength to deal with these negative judgements and reactions. . . . I am finding ways of moving forward work for change and I will write again about an action planning conference on LGBT issues in
education I am helping to create. I can see so much to be done and I am telling myself that I have the capacity to do it. But for now I think I need to lick my wounds and take stock.

I and Ulla responded to this mail:

Dear Jarna,

I know how angry and upset you must be feeling. That same awful newspaper did a story on the GLEE Project also full of lies and nastiness!! . . . Ironically or paradoxically these awful attacks justify the project and the great work you are doing. But nonetheless such things still hurt and it is important to take good care of yourself . . . Tim

Dear Jarna

I feel for you. In times when we think most of the work is already done (it is not possible to throw a politician out because of his being gay). But at school things are developing more slowly. You are such a sympathetic person, that every mother and father can learn from, that lesbians are people like you and me (good joke! Excuse me, I know, that things are not funny for you in this situation).

Keep smiling, keep GLEEk, keep believing, that you are going to be successful! Hugs. Ulla

Despite the hurt that the incident had caused, the drive and determination to continue remained with Jarna. Furthermore, her daughter’s school planned to continue with the project with support from parents and staff.

4. Getting ideas and knowledge

The resource centre in GLEENET was used to get information on GLBTQ issues and ideas for workshops and other actions. New resources were uploaded into GLEENET by myself and GLEEks. Exchanges took place to get ideas and information that contributed towards cognitive empowerment: Georgina announced in a mail that she had just given a teacher’s training seminar for 40 teachers and two GLEEks responded wanting more information so they could incorporate the ideas into their own training. Jarna sent a message saying she was writing a leaflet for parents and teachers and needed a good definition of homophobic bullying. And Aran requested suggestions for the new mini-course
and course booklet on GLBTQ issues that he was to teach at his University. Not only getting information, but knowing how to act in certain situations is also part of cognitive empowerment, and examples of that are shown in the discussion themes above. There are also many examples of the productive exchange of ideas between GLEEk.

From the above four themes there is evidence that mutual support, sharing of vicarious experiences, knowledge, and encouragement strengthened teachers’ belief in their abilities to organise and carry out actions. GLEENET had some impact on the psychological and cognitive empowerment of teachers, which strengthened their ability and drive to engage in activism. GLEENET also opened up possibilities, such as participating in a transnational project, as it increased in the eyes of school heads the credibility of projects. However, in some cases it did not open doors to participating in an EU project due to a lack of political empowerment of teachers to engage others in their work.

6.3.3 GLEENET and the web-assisted transformative pedagogy learning cycle

GLEENET sustained the transformative teacher education process that began with the four sequential phases of the Leadership Training Course (mentioned in section 6.1.3). The first three LTC phases were focused on the conscientising principle and the fourth phase (reflection and action planning) on the activist principle. After the course Phase 4 continued, and during this time participants reconsidered their action plans and within 2 months resubmitted them to GLEENET. This was then followed by two further activist focused phases supported by GLEENET: Phase 5 - carrying out actions; Phase 6 - evaluation of actions.

The separation of the phases into conscientising and activist is to emphasise the focus in different stages of the learning cycle, not to suggest that the two are mutually exclusive. Indeed, the post-course emphasis was on praxis – action and reflection to further develop critical consciousness and transform schools. The six sequential phases of the learning cycle are shown in Figure 8.
Fig. 8. The conscientising and activist phases of the web-assisted transformative pedagogy learning cycle.

On reaching Phase 6 of the learning cycle, Phases 4 to 6 are then repeated. As such the post-LTC phases resemble spiralling cycles of action research (reflect-plan-act-evaluate) discussed in chapter 3. The completion of each successive learning cycle aims to further empower the participants and develop critical consciousness. As part of the action research process participants were encouraged to write a report (at the end of each year) with an evaluation of their activism and their future action plans, followed by further activism.
After the LTC the GLEENET learning community was driven by spontaneous dialogue between GLEEks to co-construct knowledge and gain skills to transform their schools. Each GLEEk was both a teacher and a learner, and the educational content was driven by generative themes. Based on the previous discussion about the role of GLEENET and empowerment, the post-course educational experience of GLEEks showed a continuation of the principles of the LTC. GLEENET’s resource centre and on-going exchanges between GLEEks have contributed towards sustaining conscientisation and activism by increasing awareness and understanding of homophobia and heterosexism and ways to challenge them. Some of the messages exchanged were affective, conveying personal difficulties and arousing emotions.

The exchanges between GLEEks were situated in their life experiences and relate to issues both inside and outside their schools. GLEEks came from a variety of cultural contexts and in this way the learning experiences reflected diversity. Furthermore, they bonded through a common ethical commitment to human rights, equity, and social justice. GLEENET provided possibilities for participatory learning where issues arose from questions and concerns that GLEEks brought up. At least some GLEEks learnt collaboratively and experientially, supporting each other as equals in their efforts to promote GLBTQ equity.

6.4 Criticisms of the Leadership Training Course

In this section I try to identify criticisms of the Leadership Training Course. This is part of the action research process of working towards the improvement of practice. Some of the criticisms to further develop web-assisted transformative pedagogy are addressed in chapter 7.

6.4.1 Data collection and analysis

I have revisited the participants’ and training teams’ evaluations (see Appendices 6 and 7) of the Leadership Training Course and used conventional content analysis to derive emergent categories with the theme “Criticisms of the Leadership Training Course.” The criticisms include aspects that were considered not useful or a waste of time, or which respondents have suggested require improvement or which they would have done differently. I have also reflected on
the post-course experiences of participants to consider the limitations of the course and GLEENET to empower participants.

6.4.2 Results

I have presented the results in five themes that emerged from the data.

1. Insufficient attention to the affective principle

When constructing the course we considered whether to schedule time for processing participants’ feelings, an exercise we called Pods. In this exercise the entire group is divided into smaller groups who at the end of the day would meet with a trainer to raise and process any matters they wanted to discuss. Some time into the course we asked participants about the Pods idea and all except two thought it not necessary as the group was small enough, and the residential nature of the course allowed for informal evening discussions. We therefore did not adopt Pods, and as a result the emotional needs of the two who were positive towards the idea may have not been met. Simo acknowledged the emotional demands of the course and the need to deal with this. He highlighted the concerns expressed by some participants about feeling at times overwhelmed, and there not being sufficient time to process thoughts, feelings, and anxieties:

Some participants felt overwhelmed by the work due to their personal experiences of bias at home, difficulty with the language, and the daunting task of addressing LGBT issues in some very unaccepting communities. It is my belief that the course could not be structured in a way that would alleviate these personal feelings as they are a part of the process we must all go through. Building in more time for people to express/work through their feelings and discuss challenges in both small and large groups may help in the future, but this will come at the expense of important content. (Simo)

A solution was suggested by Ulla, who was in favour of Pods:

Maybe the course could be stretched to two weeks – one week for self-experience, awareness, creating self confidence, confidence to the others, looking at own doubts, personal affirmation in one’s special situation.

A longer course would also enable more free time that was a suggestion of several participants. From the perspective of participatory action research, it would
enable more time for reflection. However, diminishing returns could set in and make the extra days become less productive.

2. Integrate more diversity of training approaches into workshops

Ulla remarked that games, energisers and role plays should be not only for warming up, but also more integrated into the workshops. She also remarked that there should be a “combination with creative access (Gestalt pedagogy, dance, drama, art…” Jarna also felt there should be “a little more play/activity to break up some of the earlier talking and listening sessions.” And Irwin commented there should be more simulations to combat homophobia.

3. We already know this!

Two workshops in Phase 1 of the course focused on queer theory including transgender, inter-sex, and bisexual identities. The main aim was to take a critical look at the dichotomous sexual system. Interestingly the workshop on Queering Identities proved to be the least popular. Irvin commented that the workshop “may be useful for another set of people, I think we were clear about the idea.” Jarna remarked there was “not enough discussion, use of group knowledge, not clear what the purpose was, is it to raise our awareness or to show us how to raise others?” And Leo remarked “I know well queer theory.” It’s clear that the pitch of the workshop was misplaced, did little to raise critical awareness, and it was insufficiently participatory. This highlights the important challenge of situated learning that meets participants’ needs.

4. Language as a power issue

One of the observations during the Pilot Leadership Training Course was that native English speakers spoke in workshops disproportionately more than non-natives. This power issue that led to exclusion raised concerns that it went against the principle of fostering cross-cultural dialogue. The experiences subsequently led to a greater sensitivity of the trainers to the language issue in the Leadership Training Course. Simo commented that:

It was more challenging than I anticipated to facilitate in English (as a native speaker) to people who speak 8 different languages, but I feel as though my
sessions were largely effective nonetheless. Slowing down and simplifying ideas may be necessary in the future.

Simo did however feel that the language issue had not prevented the creation of a supportive and positive learning environment:

The atmosphere was such, however, that participants felt comfortable expressing their needs (language and otherwise) and creating a space that felt right for them. The warmth, support and level of bonding that took place was truly inspiring and went a really long way in helping people through any challenges and toward the ultimate goals of the course.

However, according to the evaluation midway through the Leadership Training Course, the language issue had not been completely resolved to everyone’s satisfaction – with comments that some people speak too quickly or it is difficult to read some of the materials. Aran suggested that the language issue “maybe solved by having one more leading person non-native English speaker” (three out of the five trainers were non-native speakers).

5. More attention to overcoming resistance in schools

Although the Leadership Training Course had empowered participants, and GLEENET provided a support network for the teachers after the course, it is clear that the school cultures and structures limited the agency of GLEEks. Political empowerment proved to be insufficient, that is, the ability to influence, persuade and mobilise others in the school community to promote GLBTQ equity. The GLEEks gave advice to each other to overcome problems encountered, but as they were geographically distributed they each had a limited knowledge of each other’s societal and school contexts. And besides what may work in one school may not in another. Furthermore, no matter what some GLEEks tried, it simply was not possible to persuade some other key individuals, for example, headteachers, let alone change the school and societal culture. Although a lot of attention was given in the Leadership Training Course to action planning and engaging colleagues, more attention needs to be given to finding allies for activism.

The criticisms of the Leadership Training Course are concerned with both course content and pedagogical principles. The comments express participants’ and training team’s views that the educational approach should be even more
participatory using more diverse methods, for example, dance, drama, art, simulations, role play, etc. Furthermore, some comments suggest that the course paid too much attention to cognitive aspects and the emotional dimension should have been more addressed. In constructing the Leadership Training Course there needs to be more consideration given to structural barriers to promoting equity. Therefore more attention needs to be given to the role of GLEENET and other support systems to strengthen possibilities for activism and political empowerment.
7 Discussion and conclusions

This final chapter discusses the findings from the three research sub-questions in chapters 5 and 6 to evaluate (1) the empowerment of course participants, (2) the empowering principles of web-assisted transformative pedagogy, and (3) the methodological approach to empower the training team to construct an educational intervention to counter heteronormativity. Together these evaluations address aspects of the main research question:

What were the possibilities and limitations within the GLEE Project to foster teacher empowerment and promote GLBTQ educational equity?

As well as a discussion on the validity of this research, there are recommendations to advance the work of promoting GLBTQ equity, the contributions to knowledge made by this research and a concluding comment.

7.1 Evaluation of course participant empowerment

In this section the empowerment of teachers who participated in the Leadership Training Course is evaluated, including a discussion based on the findings of sub-question B introduced in chapter 5.

Question B: In what ways were the course participants empowered to promote GLBTQ equity in their schools?

The intended outcome of the Leadership Training Course and GLEENET was the empowerment of participants leading to activism and school transformation, that is, transformative empowerment. The course pedagogy therefore aimed to foster transformative teachers who are willing to “take risks, to struggle for institutional change, and to fight both against oppression and for democracy” (Giroux 1988, p. xxxiii).

In this research I defined empowerment as a process that increases drive, ability, and possibility of an individual or group to act on a problem of concern. It was so defined as these three elements of empowerment are necessary conditions for activism and transformation. Drive is concerned with the motivation and propensity to act and is connected to psychological empowerment. Ability is connected to cognitive empowerment and the skills and mental capacity to act. Possibility relates to: (1) economic empowerment (having resources to act), (2) political empowerment (mobilising and working with others to act), (3) legal
empowerment (laws which support or make it possible to act), and (4) socio-cultural empowerment (societal structures, institutions, and cultural attitudes that make it possible to act).

Three key concepts of empowerment were developed to distinguish between feeling empowered and empowerment that has led to activism (actions to challenge discrimination and oppression) and transformation: (1) latent empowerment – a feeling of being empowered that has not yet led to activism, (2) active empowerment – a feeling of empowerment that translates into activism, and (3) transformative empowerment – a feeling of empowerment that translates into activism and school transformation towards GLBTQ equity. The distinction between the concepts highlights that latent empowerment may not necessarily translate into activism, and active empowerment may not necessarily bring about the desired transformation. As empowerment in this research was a collective endeavour it could also be called co-empowerment rather than self-empowerment, as discussed in chapter 3.

Data collected during and at the end of the Leadership Training Course showed evidence of the latent empowerment of participants. All expressed an increase in knowledge and desire to challenge homophobia and heterosexism in their schools. Furthermore, within a year after the Leadership Training Course all participants had exercised their power and engaged in some forms of activism, such as workshops, articles, presentations at conferences, and teacher training (see Table 9) – this is evidence of active empowerment. Some GLEEks expressed that it was easier to be active out of school than in, as it did not require permission, and they felt less vulnerable doing one-off activities with other teachers than continually dealing with their own colleagues. In this sense, GLEEks were more actively empowered out of school than in, and exploited different opportunities to do their work, wherever they could find an opening.

One year after the Leadership Training Course the Towards an Inclusive School (TIS) EU project began with five teachers from four countries. This lasted for 3 years and included a variety of actions such as workshops, production of a website,38 a cd-rom and a booklet on GLBTQ issues in schools. The funding gave a degree of economic empowerment to those participating, including time for face-to-face meetings. EU support also gave legitimacy and credibility to the TIS Project. However, the efforts by GLEEks to create EU projects showed that some of them lacked political empowerment. These teachers had drive and ability to

38 http://www.inclusiveschool.org
participate (psychological and cognitive empowerment), but they did not have the opportunity due to lack of support from colleagues and headteachers. Some headteachers seemed to fear the reaction of parents or school authorities to doing anti-homophobia work.

The important role of administrators to support school transformation is highlighted by Lipkin (1999):

> We cannot ignore the role played by administrators in this or even less grandiose visions of school change. Making the tone of the institution less homophobic requires backing from principals and superintendents and their associates. (p. 254.)

Marinoble (1997, pp. 258-259) has suggested some ways for gathering principal support on GLBTQ issues such as: (1) setting up a one-on-one meeting focusing on equity and human relations, (2) engaging parents, (3) videotaping and showing training, (4) approaching teachers’ unions, and (5) working for inclusion of sexual orientation in the school non-discrimination policy.

It is clear that leadership is needed to have an impact on the school culture. Fullan (2007) maintains that the role of the principal is pivotal as gatekeeper or facilitator of change (p. 15), and that he or she is the person most likely to be in a position to shape the organizational conditions necessary for success, such as the development of shared goals, collaborative work structures and climates, and procedures for monitoring results (p. 96).

Given their key role, it is essential that administrators are also educated about sexual orientation and discrimination in schools. Lipkin (1999, p. 255) is however rather sceptical about educating administrators in anti-homophobia work for the following reasons:

- Underlying discomfort with sexuality as a school matter causes obstructionism.
- Male dominance in administrative positions is often associated with sexist and homophobic attitudes.
- Fear of opposition to programs that upset convention.
- Denial of a problem of homophobia in schools.

These reasons are not surprising if one considers that the headteachers represent the school to the outside world. They may be wary of parents, educational
authorities, religious organisations, and the press, if they make a stance promoting GLBTQ equity. The potential backlash may be perceived as large in relation to the rewards of challenging homophobia in their schools. A comprehensive approach is therefore needed to address this situation, and responsibility lies with all stakeholders, including law and policy makers, education authorities, and school management. Such a holistic approach to educational change is advocated by Fullan (2007, pp. 300-301), who advises stakeholders in the change process to: (1) understand better their role and gain insights from successful examples, (2) understand the roles of other stakeholders, and (3) get a sense of the big picture and place their work in the context of society. However, this approach does not guarantee that administrators will alter their opposition to the teachers’ plans for action and change. And as Fullan points out “most principals do not play instructional or change leadership roles” (p. 95). However, where there was a lack of administrative support the GLEE teachers still had some freedom for activism in their own classroom, which generally does not have to be sanctioned. GLEEks therefore found safe places to demonstrate their activism and gain strength to carry out work wherever they thought they could have an effect, both in and outside school.

Nonetheless, there was some opposition from parents, students, and school authorities, which is difficult for an individual teacher to address, especially without administrative support. The way in which the school and society views the role of the teacher is important here: is the role of the teacher to transmit the dominant cultural values (which may be homophobic), or to be an activist to promote equity and social justice? In public education teachers are likely to be viewed as civil servants with a duty to reproduce rather than transform society. There are therefore cultural constraints to teachers as transformative intellectuals. Carr and Kemmis (2005, p. 350) argue that since the 1980s the assumption that teachers should exercise autonomous professional judgement has been profoundly undermined. Furthermore, the social and political conditions of work in the profession are counter to the trend of teacher as reflective practitioner. If this is so, then the GLEEks were swimming against the tide, demonstrating the power needed to do GLBTQ equity work. Fullan (2007, p.18) points out that “a teacher cannot sustain change if he or she is working in a negative school culture”. Anti-discrimination legislation is therefore key to legal empowerment, making it a duty to promote educational equity. This could also lead to more recognition of the work of the GLEEks especially as the other main barrier to carrying out their actions was a lack of time. The activities of teachers to promote GLBTQ equity
were done on top of their regular workloads, and teachers received very little or no release time.

In evaluating the results on empowerment I noted that participating teachers did not come to the course as disempowered individuals. Benchmarking their pre-course empowerment was crude, if at all possible, and therefore I relied on the teachers’ perception of empowerment. From their course applications many GLEEks had already been active on GLBTQ issues. However, in a workshop at the beginning of the course even experienced participants expressed fears and anxieties indicating the need for the further empowerment. What was clear was that at the end of the course all of the participants were highly empowered cognitively and psychologically, and had what they thought were realistic action plans. However, the fear of encountering resistance back in their schools became a reality for some GLEEks. Had the project continued, according to the ideas of action research that would have been the next problem to address together, as well as exploring what makes the step to political empowerment so big, and how it can be attained. Joe’s example documented in chapter 5 of “diplomatic relationships” shows that opposition can be overcome. More examples of how teachers had successfully overcome resistance and mobilise support would be useful, and that is why praxis, reflection and action directed at transforming oppressive structures, is so important.

Empowerment was not necessarily related to prior experience with GLBTQ issues. Some experienced teachers lacked support in their own schools, and were limited in their actions. On the other hand, teachers with less experience but with school support were able to engage in more actions. In the reports written by teachers on their post-course actions there is not a lot of indication of the impact of their actions on the situation of homophobia and heterosexism in their schools. So whilst there is evidence of latent and active empowerment, there is less evidence of transformative empowerment. This was partly due to the difficulty of evaluating the success of interventions, and measuring or describing improvements. The GLSEN survey (see Appendix 9) is a step towards describing GLBTQ school climate and monitoring progress. But still there was a lack of data from the participants showing concrete, positive changes towards GLBTQ equity. And besides changes may not be readily visible, or seeds planted now may not bear fruit until later years. The research would have benefited from benchmarking and giving greater support to participants on evaluating the impact of their work on school transformation. However, this was not an easy task and I fear it would have placed too many demands on the teachers.
Maxine Greene has said: “There is the question of being able to accomplish what one chooses to do. It is not only a matter of the capacity to choose; it is a matter of the power to act to attain one’s purposes.” (1988, pp. 3-4.) I think this is very true for those GLEEks who were constrained in carrying out their action plans. The webs of power within which action occurs are complex, and no matter how much one may feel empowered, the possibility to carry out actions can be severely limited as one may not have sufficient power. As was pointed out in chapter 3, empowerment represents just an increase in power (a flow) whereas the level of power (a stock) is what is decisive for transformative action. Therefore latent empowerment is not necessarily sufficient to translate into active and transformative empowerment, though in the long run it may do so, especially as teachers may gradually find more channels to promote educational equity. The Leadership Training Course is somewhat limited in ensuring that participants’ intentions to take actions actually translate into activism. This is because whilst the course can foster power within and power together to increase ability and drive, the opportunity component of empowerment is more dependent on external economic, political, legal, and socio-cultural factors. Creating opportunities for activism may be a long process, and engaging colleagues may necessitate taking them down a long road of conscientisation before there is any desire for them to engage in activism. In the meantime, hope for changing schools may diminish leading to disempowerment and despair.

Each participant had to ground the course in the lived experiences and culture of their own schools. The GLSEN survey showed that most of the participants perceived their schools as resistant (see Appendices 8 and 9). This shows both the need for and difficulty in promoting GLBTQ equity. Whilst there is on-going harassment of GLBTQ persons, this takes place within a culture of silence around non-heterosexuality that is reflected in GLBTQ invisibility in school curricula and policies. Furthermore, schools as part of the wider society are just one place in which homophobia is learnt and unlearnt, therefore anti-discrimination legislation is important, as well as international declarations and covenants. The experiences of the participants illustrate Thompson’s (1998) view that both structure and agency are important in either condoning or reinforcing existing inequalities or challenging and diminishing them (as shown in Figure 5 in chapter 3). Structure has constrained the agency of some participants whilst agency has contributed towards a change in structure. As for some administrators, the culture of fear and silence negatively influenced teacher agency to address GLBTQ inequity in schools. Increasing agency and diminishing constraining structures to address
GLBTQ discrimination and oppression is central to the continuation of this empirical research. Therefore gaining more insights from recent literature on educational change would be beneficial (e.g. Elliot 2006; Fullan 2007). Furthermore, getting more information on the societal contexts in which GLEEEks carried out their work is also important.

Although there are laws in the EU that cover many areas of discrimination including sexual orientation, up until now the European Monitoring Centre on Racism and Xenophobia (EUMC) has collected data only on racism. A new Agency for Fundamental Rights replaced EUMC in 2007 and in June 2008 completed a report titled *Homophobia and Discrimination on Grounds of Sexual Orientation in the EU Member States Part I – Legal Analysis.* The report is the first ever comparative study on the situation concerning homophobia and discrimination on grounds of sexual orientation in the EU. This data, along with a second report due in autumn 2008 on social aspects of GLBTQ discrimination, could provide for the first time an indication of GLBTQ equity in each EU country, and provide further justification for anti-discrimination work as well as assist legal challenges. In addition, the data could give an indication of the societal and cultural constraints on teacher activism, as well as benchmarking transformation.

### 7.2 Evaluation of web-assisted transformative pedagogy (WATP)

Here the principles of web-assisted transformative pedagogy (WATP) and the role of GLEENET are discussed. This is followed by a consideration of queer pedagogy in relation to transformative pedagogy, a critique of critical pedagogy, and further ways to develop the web-assisted transformative pedagogy of the GLEE educational intervention. This evaluation is based on the findings of sub-question C introduced in chapter 6.

Question C: What were the empowering principles and characteristics of web-assisted transformative pedagogy?

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7.2.1 Principles and phases of the web-assisted transformative pedagogy (WATP) learning cycle

The construction of web-assisted transformative pedagogy was based on (1) educational ethics (human rights; equity; non-discrimination; social justice; non-violence), (2) aims and assumptions of critical teaching and learning, and (3) views of sexuality, homophobia, and heterosexism. Within this framework each training team member developed several workshops, which were discussed and critiqued by other members in face-to-face meetings and through GLEENET. In August 2000 the Pilot Leadership Training Course took place, during which data was collected and subsequently analysed. The findings were presented to the training team to further assist the pedagogical development process.

In May 2002 the training manual for the Leadership Training Course was completed and the course took place in August 2002. The empirical data collected was analysed and revealed seven pedagogical principles as the theoretical foundation of transformative pedagogy: (1) Ethical, (2) Conscientising, (3) Activist, (4) Situated, (5) Diversity-affirming, (6) Affective, (7) Participatory. After the Leadership Training Course, the participants became part of the GLEENET web-based learning community. The main role of GLEENET was to continue to support what had been started during the Leadership Training Course to empower teachers to carry out actions to promote GLBTQ equity. The “real” participatory learning community of the Leadership Training Course therefore became a “virtual” web-assisted one using GLEENET. Whereas the course had been a structured learning experience, interaction in GLEENET was driven by the generative themes of GLEEks. Nonetheless, the post-course educational aims, objectives, and principles carried on from the Leadership Training Course with GLEENET adding the web-assisted dimension.

At the start of the GLEE Project, the use of web-based learning environments was a quite new phenomenon and therefore research was limited on their pedagogical function. However, Leinonen, Botero and Wideroos (2000) have pointed out that Information and Communication Technology (ICT) has been mostly used to support the banking concept of education. Furthermore, they argue that “ICT environments for problem posing education should offer a space where all participants are free to create new ideas and have an open dialogue,” as is the case with GLEENET.

Walch (1999, p.145) provides a list of twelve categories of computer support for emancipatory social action, many of which relate to the function of
GLEENET and include: (1) “Creating and enhancing interaction” of activists, (2) “Breaking the censorship of silence” such as on GLBTQ educational issues, (3) “Bypassing hierarchy” and enable teacher to teacher interaction, (4) “Linking the periphery” – many teachers work in isolation on GLBTQ issues, (5) “Distributing knowledge” and sharing work to transform schools, (6) “Crisis communication” for example when problems arise in schools, and (7) “Advocacy” where individuals and groups can promote GLBTQ educational equity.

More recently Bouras, Igglesis, Kapoulas and Tsiatsos (2005) have researched the characteristics and requirements for a web-based virtual collaboration community. They argue that in such a learning community the group members are related by the following minimal requirements: a common purpose; a common cultural context with a collective identity that includes values, beliefs, attitudes, and accumulated experiences; a co-location where all members of the community share a common physical and/or virtual space; and voluntary participation. Each of these conceptions of a learning community are reflected in the characteristics of GLEENET.

Web-assisted transformative pedagogy has many of the characteristics of the critical pedagogies of Shor, Freire, and Giroux. Shor’s (1992, p. 17) eleven values (principles) for his empowering pedagogy mentioned in chapter 3 are either explicitly or implicitly present in WATP. Kincheloe’s (1993) post-formal teacher thinking introduced in chapter 3 also has commonalities with WATP. These pedagogies are inquiry-oriented, power-aware, dialogical, situated, critically reflective, multicultural/pluralistic, and committed to action. Now I discuss further the principles of WATP.

**Conscientising and activist principles**

The special attention paid to conscientising is also a central aim in all approaches of critical theory, critical pedagogy, and critical action research. Freire (1970) refers to *conscientisation* as “learning to perceive social, political and economic contradictions, and to take action against the oppressive elements of reality” (p. 17). Conscientisation proceeds through praxis, that is, action and reflection directed at transformation. These critical approaches therefore aim at changing practices and structures through reflective activism; accordingly this was the aim of the GLEE Project. *Conscientising* involves raising awareness of (1) the manifestations, root causes and effects of homophobia and heterosexism (heteronormativity), (2) developing strategies and skills to challenge myths,
stereotypes, homophobic encounters and heterosexism, and (3) exploring ways of transforming schools. *Activist* is about reflection on the conscientising process including the skills learnt and ideas for transforming schools, followed by the development and carrying out of action plans after the course, including finding allies and a support community.

As previously mentioned in chapter 6 the conscientising and activist principles describe the six sequential and interrelated phases of the web-assisted transformative pedagogy which together make a spiralling learning cycle. Phases 1 to 4 take place during the *Leadership Training Course*. The focus of Phases 1 to 3 is conscientising while Phase 4 is activist. Using GLEENET, Phase 4 continues after the course, followed by Phases 5 and 6 which also have an activist focus. Repeated cycles of phases 4 to 6 then follow.

Although the phases are separated into conscientising and activist to emphasise the focus in different stages of the learning cycle, they are not mutually exclusive. Praxis is evident in all phases of the learning cycle and activism can lead to conscientisation and empowerment which leads to further activism and so on. To the phases of the learning cycle I have also added the principles of web-assisted transformative pedagogy as shown in Figure 9.
Giroux’s border pedagogy, as with WATP, explicitly mentions the view that ethics is central to education (hence its emphasis in Figure 9). Participants stressed that equity and non-violence were the driving force that gave purpose to their activities, and they are therefore connected to the affective principle. Without ethical considerations pedagogy can be de-motivating and negatively affect the drive of course participants to act. As Shor (1992) points out, learning is
emotional as well as rational, and critical thinking is simultaneously a cognitive and affective activity:

The difference between empowering and traditional pedagogy has to do with the positive and negative feelings students can develop for the learning process (p. 23).

Furthermore, Lorde (1984) regards the examination of feelings as the genesis of ideas for transformative action:

As they become known to and accepted by us, our feelings and the honest exploration of them become sanctuaries and spawning grounds for the most radical and daring of ideas. They become a safe-house for that difference so necessary to change and the conceptualization of any meaningful action. (p. 37.)

The feedback from course participants showed that WATP constructed with the ethical principle as central had had a positive effect on the feelings of participants, and gave them a common purpose that led to GLEEk solidarity. Reflection on the learning process provided a space for processing feelings that led to the planning of actions to transform schools.

**Participatory principle**

Freire’s influence on WATP is reflected in the participatory approach with a learning community actively engaged in a cooperative inquiry. Dialogue is central to the learning community and is in contrast to the banking approach in which students passively absorb the knowledge and ideas of the teacher. The learning community is based on cooperation, mutual support, trust and respect and empowers learners to act in ways that promote justice and equity. It is also a community that leads students to find their own voices and develop self-understanding. The participatory principle of WATP was emphasised by the participants, and echoes the qualities of a supportive learning community. Such a community is important as it can be difficult to find such spaces in work places.

Palmer idealises such a learning community, and also points out six paradoxical tensions within the teaching and learning spaces that resonate with the teaching of the *Leadership Training Course*. He says that the community in order to support learning should:
- Be bounded and open – it can’t be a space for discussing all and everything but it needs to be open to paths of discovery.
- Be hospitable and charged – it needs to be a safe environment whilst also one that challenges learners’ views.
- Invite the voice of the individual but also be a place in which the group’s voice can affirm, question and challenge the voice of the individual.
- Honor “little” stories of the individual and the “big” stories of the disciplines and tradition.
- Support solitude and surround it with the resources of the community.
- Welcome silence and speech. (Palmer 1998, pp. 74-76.)

I would also add that the learning community should offer many perspectives but also commit to human rights, and not allow human dignity violations or discrimination.

Experiential learning is also an aspect of participatory learning, as is learning by doing and learning through reflection on experiences. This is not a new idea having been expressed in the much quoted proverb of Confucius (circa 450 BC): “Tell me, and I will forget. Show me, and I may remember. Involve me, and I will understand.” The experiential learning theories of Kolb (1984) and Revans (1982, 1983), though not explicitly critical, share Freire’s on-going cycle of reflection-action-reflection focused on addressing some problem to be overcome. Kolb explored a cyclical learning process through which a learner constructs knowledge and gains skills from direct experiences. The learner begins with a concrete experience which leads them to observation and reflection on their experience. After this the learner creates abstract concepts about what occurred that serve as a guide for future actions. Then the learner actively tests what they have constructed leading to new experiences and the learning cycle continues. Revans’ action learning describes in the same way the learning process in which a group of people come together to help each other learn from their experiences. Each person may have their own particular problems to solve or there may be a common problem. Action research also follows the same idea of a cyclical learning process to understand and change societal problems. However, the action research process is understood to be a spiral, rather than a circular rotation, and critical understanding and empowerment are strengthened with each cycle.
**Situated principle**

The participants emphasised the significance of their different contexts and cultures and situated learning. The context of learning has also been the concern of many learning theorists such as Dewey. In his work *Democracy and Education* (1916/1966) and *Experience and Education* (1938/1963) he asserted that real related learning must be linked to the life experiences and interests of students. He advocated learning in democratic classrooms and active learners. Dewey believed that only if students are actively involved in their learning can they become informed participants in society. Hooks (1994) uses the term engaged pedagogy to describe a dialogical classroom characterised by cooperative, constructivist and experiential learning and building skills to act. Like Freire, she also stresses the importance of addressing the connection between what students are learning and their overall life experiences. Lave and Wenger (1990) argue that knowledge needs to be presented in an authentic context, that is, situated in settings and applications that would normally involve that knowledge. Banks (1995) argues that the consideration of cultural contexts makes learning meaningful and relevant.

**Diversity-affirming principle**

There are a broad range of multicultural education theories related to the diversity-affirming principle, and many of them are specifically concerned with “issues of justice and social change and their relation to the pedagogical” (Kincheloe & Steinberg 1997, p. 27). These theories are called, for example, critical multiculturalism (Kincheloe & Steinberg 1997); education that is multicultural and social-reconstructionist (Sleeter & Grant 1994); education that changes students and society (Kumashiro 2002); social action approach (Banks 1997); affirming diversity (Nieto 2000). However as I previously mentioned in chapter 2, sexual orientation is not often addressed within a multicultural educational context. As Pallotta-Chiarolli (1999) comments on Australian schooling:

> Despite the pedagogical discourses of social justice, access and equity for all students to all educational resources, and inclusive curricula used in all government and independent religious school policies to frame curriculum
and student welfare programmes and practices, the interweaving of sexuality with categories such as ethnicity, gender and class is largely lacking (p. 284).

Although the GLEE Project focused on sexual diversity it implied a broad multicultural approach, along with a consideration of intersectionality. Besides the participants made up a multicultural group focused on transformation. Participants commented that learning from each others’ cultural context was a major strength of the course. The EI and TIS transnational projects took different approaches. The former took a horizontal approach, whilst the latter had a single GLBTQ issue focus. Based on these projects the question whether a more horizontal approach to discrimination and oppression would be better is inconclusive.

7.2.2 Web-assisted transformative pedagogy: empowering aspects and principles

As can be seen from Figure 10 the aim of WATP is to foster teacher empowerment and promote GLBTQ educational equity (GLEE).

![Fig. 10. Fostering teacher empowerment to promote GLBTQ educational equity through Web-assisted Transformative Pedagogy (WATP).](image)

The educational intervention in the GLEE Project focused on empowerment through a *Leadership Training Course* and GLEENET. However, as can be seen from the above discussion the pedagogical principles of web-assisted transformative pedagogy are intertwined and therefore it is not straightforward as to what really empowered the course participants. Nonetheless, it is possible to say that according to the participants, each of the principles had an empowering
effect. The conscientising principle contributed towards cognitive empowerment with its focus on developing a critical awareness. Conscientising also strengthened political empowerment by exploring ways to develop the awareness of others (such as teaching colleagues) of the importance of challenging homophobia, and thereby gaining allies. Increased awareness of GLBTQ inequity can also translate into more drive, and hence psychological empowerment to take action to address it. The activist principle also contributed to cognitive empowerment with a focus on developing skills for individual and transnational action planning. In turn this led to psychological empowerment with participants having the excitement and drive to carry out their plans in their schools, supported by GLEENET. Success in getting EU funding impacted positively on economic and political empowerment.

The common ethical orientation bound participants together and therefore contributed towards the successful creation of the GLEENET support network. The situated principle ensured that the pedagogy was relevant to the participants’ own context, even if it did not provide simple answers to changing each specific school institution. This developed local knowledge and thereby cognitively empowered the participants. The affective principle served to channel emotions into a positive learning experience and give the participants drive. The diversity-affirming principle meant that the content provided both a mirror for each participant and a window into other participants’ lives. This raised awareness of both common problems and aims within diverse environments, contributing to cognitive empowerment through increased knowledge and know-how for addressing GLBTQ issues, and psychological empowerment by affirming diversity and common goals.

The participatory principle that includes experiential, dialogical, democratic, and inquiring dimensions was very important to participants and according to them, contributed towards their empowerment. There is evidence that the participatory learning community of both the course and GLEENET contributed towards both cognitive and psychological empowerment. Exchanging ideas and experiences had contributed towards gaining more knowledge and skills, and the encouraging and supportive environment increased drive and confidence to act. Participants and trainers considered the active pedagogical approach as a key factor in enhancing learning and empowerment. Also participants found partners for EU projects which helped economic empowerment.

However, despite the creation of a cohesive web-based community after the Leadership Training Course (a sub-culture of GLEEks), the task of transforming
schools was not an easy one. The course had lasted just a week and could not deal with all issues that would emerge. Although the participants remained connected through GLEENET there was not necessarily support on the spot in each school. Nonetheless GLEENET enabled participants to call on support from GLEEks and sometimes this was successful in overcoming problems. The creation of the transnational School Development Projects helped to forge a common purpose and identity with shared beliefs and goals. It also gave added credibility to the work in the eyes of colleagues and administration. However, in some cases there were some strong structures to shift, including attitudes of educational stakeholders. In these cases neither the Leadership Training Course, nor GLEENET community could sufficiently empower teachers to transform those structures. Nonetheless a sustained praxis, that is, action and reflection to transform structures, may eventually lead to results whereas without determined effort things are unlikely to change.

The TIS Project participants were able to meet again several times after the course, and this certainly strengthened the bonding between the group members. Had other participants had a chance to meet this would probably have been beneficial to their activism. This also highlights the limitations of web-based meetings compared to face-to-face contact. However, GLEENET did enable geographically distributed teachers to work towards common goals. There is no doubt that web-based environments can be a powerful tool at the service of international educational projects to promote educational equity.

### 7.2.3 Transformative pedagogy and queer pedagogy

At the same time as this research started, Luhmann (1998) posed the question: how can one imagine a queer pedagogy?

Is a queer pedagogy about and for queer students or queer teachers? Is a queer pedagogy a question of queer curriculum? Or, is it about teaching methods adequate for queer content? Or, about queer learning and teaching – and what would that mean? Moreover, is a queer pedagogy to become the house pedagogy of queer studies or is it about the queering of pedagogical theory? (p. 141.)

Though the answers to these questions are still debated, the transformative pedagogy constructed within the GLEE Project has similarities to queer pedagogical ideas that have been expounded (Britzman 1995; Bryson & de
Castell 1993; Ford 2004; Gosse 2004; Luhmann 1998). Both transformative and queer pedagogies see homophobia and heterosexism as not just as a problem of lack of representation, or distortion of GLBTQ persons, or their invisibility, or the result of ignorance. They view school change as more than the addition of GLBTQ content and positive role models to the curriculum, because such an approach does not challenge the processes by which subjects are normalised and others marginalised. Britzman (1995) warns:

Curricula that purports to be inclusive may actually work to produce new forms of exclusivity if the only subject positions offered are the tolerant normal and the tolerated subaltern (p. 160).

Britzman (1995) also points out the problems of just providing information or using techniques of attitudinal change as pedagogical strategies on GLBTQ inclusion. She says:

These two strategies are emblematic of the limitations produced when gay and lesbian subjects are reduced to the problem of remedying homophobia, a conceptualization that stalls within a humanist psychological discourse of individual fear of homosexuality as abject contagion and shuts out an examination of how the very term homophobia as a discourse centers heterosexuality as normal (p. 158).

In terms of the typology of pedagogical approaches to GLBTQ issues in education (shown in chapter 2), both transformative and queer pedagogy are not simply about teaching for or about GLBTQ persons, but rather critical teaching about othering and heteronormativity. As such, they go beyond the safety and equality intervention paradigms.

Transformative and queer pedagogy are counter hegemonic cultural work and through educational interventions seek to transform thinking and cultural practices. The approaches reflect an appreciation of difference, a resistance to essentialising and categorisation, and an attempt to transcend binarisms. However, commenting on their queer pedagogical practice Bryson and de Castell (1993) say these are not easy tasks: “in trying to make a difference we seem only to entrench essentialist boundaries which continue to define and divide us.”

Through radical teaching and learning practices, transformative and queer pedagogies both challenge the status quo, taken-for-grantedness, and reproduction of oppressive power relations. This is what GLBTQ conscientisation and activism aim at, and can be viewed as the development of a queer consciousness, that is, a
critical awareness of the ways in which heteronormativity is reinforced and may be interrupted.

Transformative pedagogy has been developed based on certain values, aims and assumptions about human worth, learning, change, knowledge, and ideal society. However, as these aspects are dynamic and subject to re-examination, transformative pedagogy is subject to change. Gosse (2004, p. 38) argues that change is also an inevitable part of conceptualising queer pedagogy which “lies in its constant flux, resistance to definition, and perpetual (re)questioning.” Furthermore, he argues that even though queer curriculum models may vary, and that they are likely to reflect three core elements that are characteristics of the transformative pedagogy of the Leadership Training Course: asking questions and creating dialogue; education and space for all; and consideration of heteronormative discourse and symbolic violence.

Despite the important insights of queer theorists, according to Steinberg (2000) the ways in which queer theory translates into the classroom is mostly untested. This is echoed by Sears (2005) who warns:

Theory uninformed or untested on the anvil of experience leads us into an intellectual cul-de-sac – just as professional performance uninformed by scholarship and unsubstantiated by research is merely back alley practice (p. 3).

Szalacha (2004) also warns about GLBTQ interventions (introduced in chapter 2) with a heavy emphasis on postmodern and critical social theory. She says that such an approach “does not easily lend itself to the development of practical skills necessary for classroom teachers and teacher educators” (p. 69). Also, due to their excessive use of jargon, queer approaches may also be alienating to teachers. Furthermore, if queer pedagogy is equated with teacher-centred lectures on queer theory this would neglect the importance of dialogical teaching methods. As Freire (1970, p. 47) comments, “to substitute monologue, slogans, communiqués for dialogue is to attempt to liberate the oppressed with the instruments of domestication.” Transformative pedagogy within the GLEE Project aims to be far more than the delivery of queer content. It is a pedagogical approach that aims to develop critical understanding of heteronormativity and sexual diversity that empowers individuals to act and challenge GLBTQ inequity. As the development of transformative pedagogy draws on ideas from critical pedagogy they share some similar criticisms which I now discuss.


7.2.4 Criticisms of critical pedagogy

From the previous discussions it can be seen that there are possibilities for teacher empowerment through pedagogical actions. However, there are also limitations to critical pedagogy and where there are strong societal structures, liberatory education alone cannot transform society. Furthermore critical pedagogy has faced various forms of criticism.

Berger (1979) has criticised Freire’s principle of conscientisation. He argues that there can be no such thing as consciousness-raising, which he describes as “a project of higher-class individuals directed at lower-class population” (p. 98). For Berger this is a form of “cognitive imperialism” resting on the assumption that lower-class people do not understand their own situation, that they are in need of enlightenment on the matter, and that this service can be provided by selected higher-class individuals (p. 98).

Berger describes Freire’s work as more akin to the conversion efforts of missionaries. It is about the replacement of one worldview with a superior one. I do not think that this criticism of Freire is valid, because with critical pedagogy participants’ generative themes, on-going input, and shared ethical stance are paramount. What McTaggart (1989) says of participatory action research could easily be said of the pedagogy developed on the basis of the GLEE Project. Participatory action research establishes self-critical communities of people participating and collaborating in the research processes of planning, acting, observing and reflecting. It aims to build communities of people committed to enlightening themselves about the relationship between circumstance, action and consequence, and to emancipating themselves from the institutional and personal constraints which limit their power to live by their legitimate, and freely chosen social values. (p. 79.)

Furthermore, I agree with Udas (1998, pp. 605-606) who says that “it is through action-oriented learning, not indoctrination, that liberation can occur and students can gain control of their education.” Therefore I would argue that this criticism of Berger is not valid for the GLEE Project, especially as the participants freely chose to come to the course.

The efficacy of the dialogical pedagogical principle has been criticised especially for its lack of attention to power issues. Ellsworth (1989) argues that
“strategies such as student empowerment and dialogue give the illusion of equality while in fact leaving the authoritarian nature of the teacher/student relationship intact” (p. 306). She goes on to say that dialogue is impossible because “power relations between raced, classed, and gendered students and teachers are unjust” (p. 316), and these injustices distort communication. Butler (1990) points out that “dialogue is culturally specific and historically bound, and while one speaker may feel secure that a conversation is happening, another may be sure it is not” (p. 15). She argues that power relations need to be continually interrogated, that agents cannot be assumed to occupy equal positions of power. This involves focusing on the processes of inclusion and exclusion and the silences in communication in order to reveal power inequalities. Flores (2004) questions whether dialogue is a critical and reflective process, and suggests that it is more about the “validation of our existence – selfish, indulgent reification of our selves as centres of an egocentric universe of our own design.” She maintains that dialogue does not transcend the limitations of our own truths.

Reflecting on the Pilot Leadership Training Course I would say that it was evident that power relations interfered with dialogue. Language was a major source of inclusion and exclusion and the classroom interactions were dominated by native speakers of English. The training team learnt from that experience and there were less visible signs of exclusion in the Leadership Training Course. Having said that, there was not a major probing or interrogation of dialogue for inclusion and exclusion, or attentiveness towards silence and silencing. I would say that the spirit of each individual in a group is an important factor for dialogue. Is each member really interested in a dialogue, or are some members there to domineer? To what extent are participants attentive to possible processes of inclusion and exclusion? I think that based on my participation during the Leadership Training Course and afterwards in GLEENET, and reflecting on participants’ responses, that dialogue did go beyond a mutual validation exercise to being a critical exercise where individuals were reflective, expressed disagreements, and gave constructive criticism. Working together in this way contributed to learning and drive to engage in actions, and as such the coEmpowerment of the GLEEk.

There have also been criticisms of the utopian vision of some critical pedagogies. Gur-Ze’ev (1998) criticises what she sees as the positive utopia of critical pedagogy being part of a normalising education. Ellsworth (1989) tries to define critical pedagogy in such a way that
it did not need utopian moments of “democracy”, “equality”, “justice”, or “emancipated” teachers – moments that are unattainable (and ultimately undesirable, because they are always predicated on the interests of those who are in the position of defining utopian projects) (p. 308).

Some may gain from actions carried out in the pursuit of someone’s utopia whilst others lose out. Therefore praxis as ethically informed action to achieve some “good” requires phronesis – practical reasoning to decide what would constitute an expression of “good.” Besides, all pedagogy is value-laden. Why should equity not be a shared utopia?

Despite some postmodernist views that empowerment and emancipation have no theoretical credibility, there is still a point to struggle against injustice (Carr & Kemmis 2005). That is why the ethical assumptions of transformative pedagogy are important, as well as its focus on uncovering and challenging inequitable structures and processes. It does have a vision of eliminating homophobia and heterosexism, which may be described by some as a utopia. However, the vision is more a focus for action than a utopia. Each participant in the project articulated their own vision to suit their own context. Having said that, a pedagogy that aims to instil hope of overcoming oppression can become a pedagogy of despair, if awareness-raising makes the task seem increasingly insurmountable. There therefore needs to be a focus on the possible, however small it is in relation to the bigger picture.

7.2.5 Further developing web-assisted transformative pedagogy

In chapter 6 I identified some criticisms of the Leadership Training Course. Along with other ideas that have emerged throughout the project I now discuss how the pedagogy could be further developed.

Firstly, there could be more attention paid to the affective dimension of learning. Affective is one of the principles of Shor’s (1992) empowering pedagogy, and he argues that it can have positive effects on motivation and drive to act. A participatory pedagogy in which there is trust, care, and support can foster a positive relationship between feeling and thought, and provide a space for channelling both negative and positive emotions that enhance learning. In contrast, a banking pedagogy arouses and bottles up negative emotions in students that interfere with learning. The subject matter of the Leadership Training Course not only affects participants on a professional level, but also on a personal level.
Therefore I would argue that even more attention needs to be paid to the affective dimension of learning, and to both individual and group needs.

Secondly, the pedagogical approach needs to respond more to what transpired in the participants’ schools after the course. In particular, there could be more focus on how to deal with personal, institutional, and structural barriers to engage in activism. The results showed that whilst the participants had drive and skills to act, they sometimes lacked opportunity due to opposition from headteachers, colleagues, parents, and community members. More research is therefore needed on overcoming barriers, and this could begin with engaging course participants prior to action planning with relevant literature on educational change. For example, Fullan (2007) discusses factors affecting the initiation (pp. 69-83), implementation (pp. 86-100) and continuation (pp. 100-104) of change projects, as well as ten “do” and “don’t” assumptions as basic to a successful approach to educational change (pp. 122-125). Elliott’s (2006) reflections on his 40 years of experience of action research provide further concrete examples of educational change. Although there would be a need to contextualise the literature, such knowledge could increase the likelihood of success of teachers’ interventions, However it is not likely that individual teachers would have control over all the factors.

Other ways I would suggest to overcome barriers are: (1) Stressing that homophobia and heterosexism can affect everybody could increase the collective necessity to address the problem. (2) Devoting more time devoted in the Leadership Training Course to developing a workshop that participants would give to their school community after the course. The aim of the workshop would be to try to reduce opposition, dispel the culture of fear, and at the same time create a core group to work further on the issues. This overall aim is therefore to strengthen political empowerment and create an opportunity to move forward. An evaluation of this approach through research could then be used to further develop it and create other approaches. (3) Putting more emphasis on post-course reflective practice (including research), providing a systematic way to monitor and develop activism. (4) Increasing political empowerment by having two people from each school at the Leadership Training Course, which would from the outset provide mutual on the spot support and a stronger base for activism. One of the participants could also be from the school administration. However, their participation could be double-edged. On the one hand it is important to educate administrators, but if they participated alongside a teacher from the school, issues of power might inhibit participation. (5) Further empowering
participants by arranging for them to physically meet again, as did the TIS participants.

Thirdly, there needs to be more consideration given to the merits of horizontal versus single-issue approach to discrimination and diversity work. The horizontal multi-discrimination approach may increase the interest of other teachers as they can see that it is more broadly applicable to the school and also relevant to themselves. This may increase the political empowerment of participants. However, stressing that also homophobia and heterosexism affect everyone could be beneficial to gain allies using the single-issue approach. This research so far does not give a definite answer on which alternative would be better and I would argue it depends on the context. For example, if a school participates in the GLEE Project because homophobic bullying has become a big issue, then there can be a strong case for the single-issue approach. However, even in addressing homophobic bullying the school may want to consider gendered, racialised and other forms of bullying, as well as broad diversity issues. On the other hand, there is the problem that GLBTQ issues can get lost in horizontal approaches. As previously mentioned the first transnational EI Project (see Appendix 4) took a horizontal approach and argued that this made it easier to sell. However, the second transnational TIS Project (discussed in chapter 6) successfully stuck with a single GLBTQ issue approach.

Fourthly, given that the project was both multicultural and international, more consideration could be given to critical multicultural education theories. Whilst the diverse GLEE community worked well together, issues of exclusion need to be addressed, such as those of some non-native English speakers. In terms of GLEENET, participants have created materials in different languages. In addition, the TIS Project participants produced their booklets in each of the project languages.

Fifthly, based on the comments of participants there could be even more emphasis on a participatory and active pedagogy. In this respect, I think the work on experiential learning would be useful. Kolb’s (1984) cyclical learning process through which a learner constructs knowledge and gains skills from direct experiences would provide a framework for integrating more of the active learning components (dance, simulations, drama, etc.) into the main workshops, rather than as separate entities. This would also make the pedagogy more responsive to diversities in learning styles that the work of Kolb has identified.

Sixthly, GLEENET could be further developed and its role in the learning and transformative process enhanced. The interaction in GLEENET was unstructured.
However, consideration could be given to having a facilitator and a more focused and structured learning experience. According to the phases of web-assisted transformative pedagogy, the post-course activities of the GLEEks are cycles of activism, evaluation, reflection, action planning, activism, etc. GLEENET could further support this action research praxis. Indeed, those GLEEks who received EU funding were obliged to follow a similar cycle as it was a requirement for continued financial support.

Seventhly, although the participants in the Leadership Training Course expressed that they were conversant with queer theory, there could be more exploration of how queer theory and queer pedagogy could inform web-assisted transformative pedagogy and school activism.

Lastly, the transformative potential of socially engaged Buddhism (e.g., Hattam 2004) could also be explored, along with insights Buddhist philosophy can bring to the action research process (e.g., Chuaprapaisilp 1997; Winter 2003).

7.3 Evaluation of web-assisted transformative action research as a counter-heteronormative praxis

In the end, it is worth reflecting on the methodological approach used in this research and its efficacy to develop a transformative teacher education intervention to counter heteronormativity in schools. As a part of the evaluation the sub-question A is discussed:

Question A: In what ways were the training team empowered to develop and teach the Leadership Training Course to foster teacher empowerment to promote GLBTQ educational equity?

The GLEE educational intervention to construct an empowering pedagogy began with some initial ideas from extant critical pedagogies. Critical action research approaches were the basis for the research methods to develop the intervention and web-assisted transformative pedagogy. There are many types of action research and the GLEE research process resembled the empowering type in Hart and Bond’s (1995) typology. It is a learning and research process that is educative with a focus on conscientisation for grassroots activism and social transformation. It is also situated in addressing a problem of concern to participants and is participatory and experiential. As such, its principles resemble those of transformative pedagogy that was developed on the basis of the theoretical starting points and data in this research.
Two macro-cycles of web-assisted transformative action research (described in chapter 3) were completed, each containing five phases: Preparatory, Planning, Action, Observation/Evaluation, and Reflection. In the evaluation stages the key questions were concerned with (1) the empowerment of course participants including their experiences during and after the course, (2) the pedagogical principles of the course and GLEENET and their empowering aspects, and (3) the efficacy of the methodological approach, including the empowerment of the training team and validity of the research.

Reflection on this evaluation stage, including a consideration of extant literature, provided the basis for revising the theoretical framework and principles of web-assisted transformative pedagogy and the methodological approach. Figure 11 combines the theoretical framework and methodological approach and shows the cyclical path of the research.
PROBLEM: GLBTQ educational inequity

GOAL: GLBTQ educational equity (GLEE)

EDUCATIONAL RESEARCH
Web-Assisted Transformative Action Research (WATAR)

1.1 PREPARATORY
Begin research

1.2 PLANNING

1.3 ACTION

1.4 OBSERVATION

1.5 REFLECTION

THEORY: WATP

PRACTICE: WATP

WATAR CYCLE 1

WATAR CYCLE 2

2.1 PREPARATORY
Revise theoretical framework & methodological approach.

2.2

2.3

2.4

2.5

Fig. 11. The theoretical and methodological framework for the development of the web-assisted transformative pedagogy (WATP).
The main innovation in the methodological approach was the web-assisted dimension, and GLEENET provided: (1) a means of communication between the geographically distributed participants to enable the project cycle to continue after the face-to-face meetings, (2) a means for systematically collecting data such as project evaluations or reports on the actions of teachers in their schools, (3) a management system to plan and guide project actions, (4) a means for collaboratively producing documents, (5) on-going feedback loops into the project, for example, with feedback from school teachers, (6) a project archive, and (7) a systematic way of introducing theory into the Leadership Training Course construction process using materials in the resource centre. The evaluations of GLEENET were positive and its important roles were acknowledged. Furthermore, data collected from the training team indicated that the web-assisted transformative action research process had been empowering. From my researcher point of view, the web-assisted process had crucially made comprehensive and systematic data collection possible, as well as the integration of research, teaching, and learning.

Despite the training team’s expressions of empowerment and overall positive evaluation of the research approach and GLEENET, the process uncovered some problems and limitations that mainly related to how egalitarian the research group was. Webb has highlighted some problems of unequal power relationships in the dialogue between people as they strive for mutual understanding. Some of these relate to action research guided by an outsider. However, even with only insiders, as with the GLEE research, similar problems can arise. Webb argues:

It has always been a fiction that those with common interests start with common abilities or a common desire to contribute to the project. “Equality” as a starting point is a myth despite any number of declarations of intent, and attempts to set ground rules. The ground rules are there because inequality exists in the opportunities for all to contribute to the group. It is important for group members to talk about their hopes and expectations concerning levels of participation and for the development of the group process to be monitored. (1996, p. 148.)

I have highlighted the issues related to participation in the GLEE Project and pointed out the disproportionately high workload of “non-research” duties that I had. This situation persisted despite my efforts to discuss project roles that would have created a greater balance. I think I learnt the myth of equality the hard way, and think there is some truth in Gibson’s (1985) words that action research is
naïve about group processes, that is, they can be completely egalitarian, fair, and
democratic. It is difficult for people to have time to teach and write reports and
also be an activist, that is, there is a lack of economic empowerment. Nonetheless,
I would argue that an awareness and acknowledgement of inequalities is
important, as well as striving for greater equality. To totally ignore unfairness can
be de-motivating and hence disempowering. On the other hand, an equal sharing
of tasks is not necessarily desirable or important, what is important is that
individuals carry out their commitments. Zuber-Skerrit (1996, p. 4) distinguishes
between three different facilitator’s roles in action research: outside expert,
process moderator, and Socratic. My facilitator role in the project can best be
described as the latter, encouraging participation and reflection. This is in contrast
to a process moderator where responsibility is equally shared by participants, and
typifies the idealised role in participatory action research.

Another important aspect for the success of action research approaches is the
personal chemistry and climate within collaborative research groups. This has
been highlighted by Mitchell-Williams, Wilkins, McLean, Nevin, Wastell and
Wheat (2004) who found that personal growth was facilitated by the climate
within their research group. Furthermore, the sharing of thoughts and experiences,
both collectively and individually gave a feeling of empowerment. It took 1 year
for a cohesive GLEE training team to form, after which I believe the climate
started to contribute towards empowerment. The GLEE experience demonstrated
to me the importance of group dynamics for the success of the project, including
paying attention to language issues in international groups. This now seems
obvious to me but group dynamics in action research is a factor that I feel is still
played down in the extant literature.

Despite some problems, the goal of empowering the training team was
achieved and they successfully developed and taught the Leadership Training
Course. Furthermore, GLEENET proved to be an innovative feature that
successfully supported an international research project in terms of project
management and the collection of data. Despite the geographical distribution of
the training team they were able, with the help of GLEENET, to engage in project
activities beyond the face-to-face project meetings. I would also argue that the
internationality of the training team strengthened the project by incorporating
more diverse perspectives. The EU structures for supporting transnational
education projects lend themselves to an action research approach with on-going
cycles of planning, action, observation, and evaluation. There is therefore
potential for more projects like GLEE that build on the ideas of GLEENET.
However, I have not come across any other EU Comenius projects that have been formal action research projects. The EU also actively supports the creation of networks of projects, which can build into social movements and become a voice in the political processes, for example, the European Network Against Racism (www.enar-eu.org).

Filax (2006) expresses her optimism about the role of political action research to counter social injustices such as homophobia and heterosexism:

Action research informed by queer theory can provide opportunities for teachers, students, administrators, counsellors, parents, and researchers to explore how they are implicated in homophobic and heterosexist social hierarchies that devalue those whose sexual practices differ from the norm. This, in turn, opens up the possibility for everyone, not just sexual minorities, to notice how their identities have been shaped by social forces. (p. 140.)

The action research process described in this dissertation has demonstrated the possibility to construct an educational intervention to challenge heteronormativity that is grounded in empirical data and supported by extant critical pedagogical theory. Were there another macro-cycle of research, the process of constructing web-assisted transformative pedagogy would continue with the current theory as the starting point for further developing the practice, that is, another Leadership Training Course, followed by further evaluation, reflection, and a revision of the theory. The methodological approach to constructing web-assisted transformative pedagogy was therefore a counter-heteronormative praxis. It involved reflection and action directed at transforming social structures and practices that normalise and privilege heterosexuality. Furthermore, the praxis is a dialectic, unifying theory and practice, which can lead to both rejection in academia for delving into practice, and shunning by practitioners for intellectualism – rather like the marginalisation of bisexuals in straight and gay communities alike. I would argue that action researchers are the “third-sex” Berdache of research, building the bridge between theory and research and breaking down the theory/practice dichotomy. Indeed, I am not alone in viewing action research as having a key role to play in transforming the behaviours engaged in by social scientists, and addressing the disconnection between social sciences and society at large (e.g., Greenwood & Levin 2000, 2005).

The evaluation of the methodological approach continues in the next section where I discuss the validity of the research.
7.4 Research validity

Particularly in evaluating quantitative research, validity and reliability are important. Validity is concerned with the accuracy of measurements of concepts and reliability with repeatability. However, for evaluating qualitative research other criteria such as credibility and transferability are more relevant. Golafshani, (2003, p. 600) points out that “although reliability and validity are treated separately in quantitative studies, these terms are not viewed separately in qualitative research. Instead, terminology that encompasses both, such as credibility, transferability, and trustworthiness are used.” Furthermore, Guba and Lincoln (1985, p. 316) state that “since there can be no validity without reliability, a demonstration of the former is sufficient to establish the latter.”

My evaluation of the validity of the research is based mostly on Lather’s (1986b) conceptualisation of data credibility checks, and to a lesser extent Hall and Stevens’ (1991) standards of rigour in feminist research, and Guba and Lincoln’s (1985) transferability criteria. Lather’s approach is the most relevant as it was developed for issues of validity in openly ideological research, and also because it has been applied to Freirean empowering research with an activist and transformative agenda:

Feminist research, neo-Marxist critical ethnography, and Freirean “empowering” research all stand in opposition to prevailing scientific norms through their “transformative agendas” and their concern with research as praxis (Rose 1979). Each argues that scientific “neutrality” and “objectivity” serve to mystify the inherently ideological nature of research in the human sciences and to legitimate privilege based on class, race and gender. Within this frame of reference, research which is openly value-based is neither more nor less ideological than in mainstream positivist research. Rather, those committed to the development of research approaches that challenge the status quo and contribute to a more egalitarian social order have made an “epistemological break” from the positivist insistence upon researcher neutrality and objectivity (Hesse 1980, p. 196). (Lather 1986a, p. 64.)

Hall and Stevens also make a break from conventional empirical studies which they see as reflecting the “reductionism and objectivism embraced by positivist-empiricism” (1991, p. 16). They point out that validity is important as it affects not only how the research is evaluated but also how research is done. This means that operating in a non-positivist paradigm generally requires a different approach.
Hall and Steven’s main concern is with the adequacy of research, by which they mean that “research processes and outcomes are well grounded, cogent, justifiable, relevant, and meaningful” (p. 20). They propose ten criteria by which researchers could evaluate the rigour of their efforts. Some of these criteria overlap with those of Lather, and I have incorporated them into the evaluation of the GLEE research. I have also included Guba and Lincoln’s transferability criteria as I am interested in considering the extent to which the research findings might be useful for other educational interventions in schools.

Lather proposes four aspects of validity: triangulation; construct validity; face validity; and catalytic validity. I shall now consider each of these aspects of validity which are also related to the principles and starting points of the GLEE Project research.

*Triangulation* refers to the use of multiple methods, data sources, investigators, and theories to seek counterpatterns as well convergences in the data. In the GLEE Project research the types of triangulation were:

- Investigator triangulation – each member of the training team was involved in carrying out evaluations of project activities and workshops. These evaluations were extensively discussed in the ten project meetings, and recorded in the minutes.
- Data triangulation – GLEEks as well as the training team provided research data.
- Time triangulation – data was collected at different times on the experiences of GLEEks during and after the course.
- Theory triangulation – different theories were used in the construction of the *Leadership Training Course* and the theoretical framework of the whole research.
- Methods triangulation – various on-line and off-line data collection techniques were used such as questionnaires and archiving of mail exchanges.

*Construct validity*, according to Lather (1986a), involves a systematised reflexivity, which gives an indication of how a priori theory and assumptions of the researcher have been changed by the logic of the data. She views this as important to contributing to the growth of illuminating and change-enhancing social theory. Without reflexivity “one is left viewing the role of theory as

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41 Reflexivity; Credibility; Rapport; Coherence; Complexity; Consensus; Relevance; Honesty and Mutuality; Naming; Relationality.
nondialectical, unidirectional, and a priori imposition that subsumes counter-patterns.” (p. 72.)

Hall and Stevens (1991) also stress the importance of reflexivity in making the researcher’s participation in the generation of knowledge explicit. They argue that this adds to the accuracy and relevance of results. This reflexivity involves addressing one’s “own values, assumptions, characteristics and motivations to see how they affect theoretic [sic] framework, review of the literature, design, tool construction, data collection, sampling, and interpretation of findings.” (p. 21.)

I have attempted to write this dissertation in a transparent way that shows not only what decisions were made, but also explains why they were made. In chapter 3 I have given my assumptions of knowledge, theory, and truth and their implications for the research, and discussed the main conceptions and theories. I have also indicated how my ideas have changed during the research process due to the empirical data (e.g., the development of pedagogical principles and different empowerment concepts), and the influence of new theories. The creation and adherence to the analytical procedures based on framework analysis have increased the trustworthiness and validity of the study (Hsieh & Shannon 2005, p. 1286).

One of the central theoretical concepts and analysis tools, empowerment, was formulated after collecting the data. This had the advantage that it was more suited to the research context and was not prescriptive in the data collection phase. On the other hand, it meant that my data collection was less focused than if I had decided on a definition prior to collection. In open questionnaires I relied on participants’ understandings of empowerment. Furthermore, I relied on them to tell the truth about their empowerment. Whilst I believe that the definition of empowerment and the conceptual tool that I used in data analysis were effective, no definition can ever capture its complexity.

The creation of theoretical constructs and definitions was sometimes a collective process involving the training team and course participants. For example, in chapter 6 I discussed one of the Leadership Training Course workshops called Definitions and the Language of Diversities. In this workshop all participants shared their understandings of key terms such as heterosexism, gender, and discrimination, with the aim of coming to a common understanding. This process has influenced my own understandings of key terms used in the research and brought construct validity to the forefront. Whilst I have not necessarily adopted the common definitions, the process has sharpened my thinking and as such strengthened face validity.
Looking back at the process of knowledge construction in my research, I would have saved a lot of work if the research questions had been more focused from the beginning. I would have had less to analyse. But on the other hand, this is an inevitable outcome of a research approach where “we make the road while walking”, and knowledge emerges as one proceeds (Freire & Horton 1990). That is the nature of action research. Furthermore, the walking was made more difficult by the demands of simultaneously running a project and doing doctoral research along with a full-time teaching job. Data had to be collected for various purposes – training team’s practical purposes, EU evaluations, and research purposes. This created a lot of data of which a significant proportion was not relevant for the final report. Nonetheless, I had to sift through it all before my analysis could proceed. Furthermore, the analysis required the creation of tools, and for such a large amount of data this was not easy. The process of interpretation faced the challenge of closing the hermeneutic circle, shifting between the whole and the various parts of research, whilst knowledge production in action research more resembles a spiral.

Face validity is concerned with the researcher’s recycling of the emerging analysis and conclusions back through some of the participants in the research project. After this process the researcher refines the results in the light of the reactions. Guba and Lincoln (1981) say that these “member checks” increase the confirmability of the research. Hall and Stevens (1991) address the issue of face validity by suggesting that researchers should ask other researchers to verify the adequacy of literature reviewed, the effectiveness of data collection techniques, the logic of political arguments, the comprehensibility of descriptions, and the inclusivity of samples. However, the collaborative nature of action research and active involvement of project participants can sometimes be viewed as problematic. As Anderson and Herr (2005) comment:

The issue of collaboration and participation creates important tensions in the case of action research dissertations, because the culture of dissertations discourages collaborative work (p. 4).

Face validity is related to the participatory nature of the methodological approach. It is concerned with the degree of involvement of participants in the research and whether it makes sense to them. Each of the ten face-to-face project meetings that the training team had involved feedback and evaluation on what had transpired since the previous meeting. There was therefore an on-going sharing of perspectives on the data collected, and the EU reports which were based on this
data. Also, in between meetings there was on-going communication in GLEENET that provided immediate access to project documents. The detailed mid-term and annual project reports were sent to training team members for suggestions for changes prior to being sent off to the EU.

In the dissertation writing phase I have often worked in isolation though the work has been recycled through my university research group. One of the members was a part of the GLEE Project training team and has read and commented on the report at different stages. With more time and funding, I would have hoped to include even more persons. However, member checks can also lead to a watering down of what is said to avoid conflict. Still, I found the involvement of others positive and constructive. Furthermore, the involvement of participants in developing definitions and concepts challenged my own definitions and strengthened construct validity.

Catalytic validity is described by Lather (1986a) as “the degree to which the research process re-orientates, focuses and energises participants in what Freire (1973) terms conscientisation, knowing reality in order to better transform it” (p. 67). It is about the extent to which the research leads to the empowerment of participants, activism, and social transformation, whereby those involved gain self-understanding and self-determination.

As a project explicitly geared towards generating teacher activism in schools, the catalytic validity is about actions speaking louder than words. As such, I think the research is strongest in terms of catalytic validity. All participants felt empowered by the Leadership Training Course and GLEENET. The GLEEks all engaged in activism in their own schools (see Table 9). Some felt empowered to take the step of coming out in their school community.

Furthermore, two transnational projects were created. These were the first ever EU-funded Comenius projects on GLBTQ educational issues. The EI Project created after the Pilot Leadership Training Course received EU funding from 2001 to 2002 and involved Portugal, the U.K., and Ireland. Details of the project activities are in Appendix 4. The TIS project involved five GLEEks in four countries (France, Germany, Austria, and Italy) for 3 years beginning August 2003. As well as a web site and an anti-homophobia guide, assessment surveys for teachers and students on GLBTQ equity were conducted. This involved questionnaires concerning the presence of discrimination and perceptions of homophobia. The project also produced a didactic documentary film titled *Free to be* about the experiences of gays and lesbians at school. In each of the project schools there have been training courses for teachers on GLBTQ issues, and
didactic interventions directed at the students. Furthermore, the results of the project were disseminated widely through press conferences, meetings with GLBTQ organisations, syndicates, institutions, and meetings with trade unions and local school authorities.

It can therefore be seen that the action research process together with the transformative pedagogy provided a catalyst for teacher activism in schools to promote educational equity. Evaluating these actions is a prolonged process as the effects may not show up immediately.

Transferability. In looking at the criteria of transferability, the extent to which the results can be applied in other contexts is important. I am hesitant to make generalisations but the pedagogy developed from certain assumptions, which means it should be relevant as long as one agrees with the assumptions. The creation of the two transnational EIA and TIS projects are an indication of the transferability of the course.

Other projects I have been involved in also give some indications of transferability (see Appendix 1). Transformative pedagogy was used in the development of the Altering Attitudes training course to address multiple forms of discrimination. The EARCOS and Tokyo Club teacher in-service projects on multicultural and international education were similar to the GLEE Project in that they included a Leadership Training Course based on the ideas of intercultural critical pedagogy. After the course, teachers went back to their schools and established monthly seminars on multiculturalism with other teachers, rather like study circles (Blid 1990). In these projects there was however no internet-based network, but a report was compiled on the post-course work of teachers that included teaching ideas and resources.

I do consider the web-assisted transformative pedagogy developed within the GLEE Project as transferable to other areas involving conscientisation and activism for equity and social justice. However, the GLEE Project research should not be taken strictly as a “how to” model. A good starting point for other projects would be first to analyse if they agree on the aims and basic assumptions, and then continue the work through testing and reconstructing the pedagogical principles. As for improving and transforming schools and structures, the evidence about the barriers for equity is supported by my earlier work. In applying the ideas from this research, addressing personal, cultural, and structural aspects of transformation would need to be taken into account. The question of how to cross the gap to political empowerment and break the cultural and structural barriers is of paramount importance.
Further developing the GLEE research

The GLEE Project funding ended in 2002 and since then completing this dissertation has been my priority rather than seeking funding for more Leadership Training Courses. However, in order to further develop this research there is a need for more resources. The EU gave funding for the maximum 3 years but given the difficulties of finding other financial sources from governments and foundations, there is a problem of sustainability. At EU conferences I have noticed that this is a problem shared by many other projects. Furthermore, critical research is in a difficult position to get mainstream funding, given it is about questioning dominant, oppressive social structures. However, EU legislation has led to the mainstreaming of anti-discrimination, and with it more financial support for initiatives to promote diversity.

More cycles of action research are needed to further test and develop the theory and practice of transformative pedagogy and to further look at the relationship between the pedagogical approaches and empowerment. This includes the consideration of ideas from recent scholarship from critical and queer pedagogies. More attention needs be given to the role of web-assisted approaches, as well as a consideration of international versus local virtual research communities. This could include further integration of insights from research on critical virtual learning environments for the development of on-line communities such as GLEENET. This is especially important for transnational projects which are characteristic of those supported by the EU.

Drawing further on the literature of educational change (e.g. Elliott 2006; Ellsworth 2000; Fullan 2007), new ideas for initiating, implementing and continuing change projects could be developed and tested. Furthermore the literature could provide the basis for an evaluative framework for school interventions. Certainly more research is needed on how to politically empower participants to engage stakeholders in their school communities. This could include a consideration on how school regulations and ethical codes regarding diversity, as well as trade union guidelines, work in practice and how they can be used to mobilise action. Ethnographic research in a GLEEk school and collection of more data on participants’ interventions would be useful for this purpose. This would provide a clearer picture of the societal contexts and school communities in which efforts to promote GLBTQ equity take place. As such, it would add to the understanding of the barriers to activism and the conditions for successfully transforming schools. The conceptualisation of empowerment could be further
developed with thicker descriptions of the components and dimensions of empowerment. Further development of the GLBTQ educational equity tools, to inform and benchmark interventions, would enable the analysis of the processes of transformation and empowerment, and the assessment of transformative empowerment on a school level. In addition, more thorough benchmarking of teacher empowerment at the beginning of the course would strengthen empowerment claims. However, this may be difficult – relying instead on teachers’ perceptions of empowerment is certainly easier and arguably just as valid. Furthermore, recognising the importance of reflective practice, participants in the Leadership Training Course could be encouraged more to use an action research approach in their interventions.

In future I would aim to make the action research even more collaborative, as this could enhance the process for developing the pedagogy on the basis of research results. This would mean greater involvement of the training team in the evaluation process, but would require a greater time commitment.

### 7.6 General recommendations to promote GLBTQ equity

I have argued that one of the main priorities for creating more equitable schools is pre-service and in-service training of teachers on GLBTQ issues. Furthermore, as the experience of the GLEEks shows, the power of an individual teacher is limited, therefore this would suggest that all pre-service teachers must be trained to change inequitable school cultures. I would also include the training of school managers with a focus on school policy changes and diversity. School leaders need to create a culture that challenges discrimination and promotes acceptance of diversity by making both formal and hidden curriculum changes. There also needs to be a revision of school anti-discrimination and diversity policies to include sexual orientation. These changes will need resources with release time for teachers and funding for initiatives, including research.

As the research results show, more than transformative teacher education is needed to counter discrimination and heteronormativity. Anti-discrimination legislation is also very important for economic, political, legal, and socio-cultural empowerment by increasing the opportunity to promote diversity. In July 2008 the European Commission adopted a proposal for a new Council directive which would broaden the areas of discrimination to include education, social protection,
health care, housing, and access to goods and services.\textsuperscript{42} The extension of EU
discrimination legislation to include schools is vital to promoting GLBTQ equity,
and would contribute towards changing the school culture, and provide resources
to create projects and alliances for action to challenge discrimination, for example,
through funding to NGOs. However, the proposal excludes issues such as the
organisation and content of education,\textsuperscript{43} and therefore may be limited in scope.
Furthermore, if the laws and guidelines are to be implemented it still requires
training and awareness raising and action. More guidance from educational
authorities is also needed such as the U.K. Government publication in 2007 to
help schools tackle homophobic bullying.\textsuperscript{44}

As mentioned in chapter 2, research in many areas related to this dissertation
is limited. Whilst research by social scientists on manifestations, effects and
causes of homophobia and heterosexism is quite common, research on teacher
education interventions to challenge homophobia and heterosexism is rare. More
research is therefore needed in five main areas:

1. The structures and processes of normalisation and marginalisation in schools,
   and how to overcome cultural and structural barriers to equity.
2. Interventions in schools to develop examples of effective practice to
   challenge homophobia and heterosexism, including the conditions for the
   effective initiation, implementation and continuation of change projects.
3. Developing pedagogy as an intervention to counter heteronormativity.
4. Fostering the development of teachers as transformative intellectuals.
5. Implementation of anti-discrimination legislation and school diversity
   policies to promote educational equity.

\textbf{7.7 Contributions to knowledge}

This action research GLEE Project created an educational intervention to
challenge homophobia and heterosexism in schools. The research focused on the
possibilities and limitations for an educational intervention to empower teachers

\textsuperscript{42} See the European Commission website for employment, social affairs and equal opportunities:
http://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?langId=en&catId=89&newsId=373&furtherNe
\textsuperscript{43} Proposal for a Council Directive on implementing the principle of equal treatment between persons
irrespective of religion or belief, disability, age or sexual orientation (presented by the Commission)
2.7.2008:
\textsuperscript{44} http://www.teachernet.gov.uk/wholeschool/behaviour/tacklingbullying/homophobicbullying/
and promote GLBTQ educational equity. Given that such interventions are rare and furthermore research on those interventions even rarer, it was in many ways groundbreaking. The GLEE Project was recognised by the EU as an example of good practice, and I was invited along with some other project coordinators to Brussels, to present it to EU officials. The theme of the conference was the new role of the teacher and in my presentation I focused on the role of the teacher as an activist. I have subsequently been invited to other EU conferences on anti-discrimination and diversity training. The EU support stands in contrast to some of the backlash faced. However, had there been no opposition, it is likely that the work we were doing was not having any impact. As Schon (1971, cited in Holly, 1987) says, “social systems resist change with an energy roughly proportional to the radicalness of the change that is threatened” (p. 80).

The GLEE Project achieved the goals of action research identified by Anderson and Herr (2005): the generation of new knowledge; the achievement of action-oriented outcomes; the education of both researcher and participants; results that are relevant to the local setting; and a sound and appropriate research methodology. Furthermore, the research has constructed a theoretically justified web-assisted transformative pedagogy, and as Dick (2003, p. 6) points out “there are relatively few descriptions in the action research literature which reveal exactly how a theory is developed.” In terms of the contribution to knowledge that the research has made, there are seven main areas:

1. The GLEE Project’s web-assisted transformative action research can be used as a case study by others. The methodological approach is a counter-heteronormative praxis that integrates research, teaching, and learning for personal and social transformation.
2. A theoretically and empirically justified web-assisted transformative pedagogy was constructed to empower teachers to challenge homophobia and heterosexism, as well as an approach to further develop the pedagogy.
3. The potential of new information and communications technology (ICT) has been put to the test. GLEENET has provided an example of how it is possible to successfully carry out a transnational, geographically distributed action research project. The project illustrates how new web-based technologies could be tools for liberatory research and social transformation.
4. A tool was developed by Simo for assessing GLBTQ equity in schools that can be used to design, guide, and benchmark interventions. The tool could be further developed and used for comparative research on GLBTQ equity in
schools, for which there is currently a distinct lack of data. It has already been translated and used in four countries to date. According to the tool, schools can be divided into four types: hostile, resistant, open, and inclusive.

5. Empowerment was defined as a process that increases the drive, ability, and possibility of an individual or group to act on a problem of concern. Further conceptual tools for analysing the phenomenon of empowerment and its processes were developed. These are latent, active, and transformative empowerment. In addition, cognitive, psychological, economic, political, legal, and socio-cultural dimensions were considered.

6. The intervention created two transnational projects. The dissemination of these projects through articles and conferences has provided both knowledge and inspiration for others.

7. Whilst the project has been a catalyst for activism, the research has also revealed personal, cultural, and structural barriers. This demonstrates the need to study such barriers more and how they can be overcome. Knowledge already gained from this research is important for the further development of interventions, and developing an understanding of the conditions for school transformation.

7.8 Concluding comment

This last chapter has focused on: (1) the empowerment of course participants, (2) web-assisted transformative pedagogy, and (3) the methodological approach – web-assisted transformative action research. Together, the discussions addressed the main question of this research regarding the possibilities and limitations within the GLEE Project to foster teacher empowerment and promote GLBTQ educational equity.

The starting point in this research to construct web-assisted transformative pedagogy was the theoretical framework shown in Figure 3. This framework shows that the pedagogy is grounded in educational ethics, critical pedagogy, and sexual diversity. Using the action research methodological approach described in chapters 3 and 4, it was possible to collect data to develop both the theoretical foundations and practice of the pedagogy. The resulting pedagogy had seven principles that were grounded in the empirical data, and resembled many of the characteristics of extant critical pedagogy theories: (1) Ethical, (2) Conscientising, (3) Activist, (4) Situated, (5) Diversity-affirming, (6) Affective, and (7) Participatory.
At the end of the Leadership Training Course there was evidence of the latent empowerment of participants. Furthermore, after the course all participants engaged in some forms of activism such as workshops, articles, presentations at conferences, teacher training and curriculum development, and there was also the formation of the TIS transnational project. This is evidence of active empowerment.

Whilst all participants were cognitively and psychologically empowered, for some there was a lack of political empowerment, due to an inability to mobilise support of colleagues and headteachers. There was also a lack of economic empowerment due to limited time to devote to projects. This suggests that no matter how strong the feeling of empowerment that stemmed from the course, the ability to exercise it was limited by institutional, cultural and structural barriers. Furthermore, breaking down these barriers is more than the work of one teacher, though a start has to be made by someone, and a few GLEEks managed to overcome barriers through persistence and persuasion. What is therefore important is not just the question of empowerment, but rather an increase in power that is sufficient to lead to activism and school change. Lack of data on the impact of teachers’ actions both in and out of their schools meant there was limited evidence of transformative empowerment. Nonetheless, one must not undervalue the steps teachers made in their schools, although at the moment the transformations do not seem huge. The work of individual teachers in the classroom, in the long run, builds slow transformations through students’ changed attitudes.

The teachers were supported in their activism by the GLEENET learning environment which provided ideas, knowledge, and support for the activism of teachers in their respective schools. It provided a means of connecting individuals who often work in isolation on GLBTQ education issues. The international nature of the GLEE Project enabled ideas to be shared and expanded. However, the physical distance between participants could not totally be bridged by GLEENET. Whilst there was a need for a common language, sometimes this discriminated against non-native speakers. Despite the Leadership Training Course and the support which GLEENET gave, it was not always sufficient to overcome cultural and structural barriers in schools. Overcoming such barriers requires changes in educational and school policies and research, in addition to training teachers and empowering individuals. Furthermore, as education does not only take place in schools but also through mass culture, desocialisation from regressive values such
as homophobia is broader and complex. The legal framework therefore has an important role to play, and that requires political lobbying.

Following this research I remain optimistic about the transformative potential of teachers and their importance in the school change process. The latest conference\textsuperscript{45} I attended to disseminate this research was in Turin, Italy in 2007. There I shared a panel discussion with two teachers from the TIS Project who were addressing a large audience on their accomplishments. I was struck by the multiplier effect of the GLEE Project and the ways in which knowledge of transformative efforts had been widely disseminated.

I agree with Hollingsworth and Sockett (1994) who say that the positioning of “teacher” in research and the potential for transformative educational reform are intimately and profoundly related (p. 3). And as Fullan (2007) maintains, “Every teacher learning, every day, individually and collectively, is the sine qua non of transforming schools for educating all and for sustaining society” (p. 297). However, the empowerment of teachers is just one important part of efforts to transform schools. The research also showed the importance of including more stakeholders and especially headteachers. Therefore, further research is needed on how to engage more people in challenging homophobia and heterosexism, as well as what kinds of intervention are effective. In this regard, it is important to stress that everyone can be a victim of heteronormativity, which not only privileges heterosexuality and marginalises non-heterosexuality but also maintains a straight/gay binarism. As the Kinsey scale (Kinsey et al 1948) and Klein sexual orientation grid (Klein 1993) show, human sexuality falls along a spectrum from exclusively heterosexual to exclusively homosexual. It can therefore be said that discrimination based on sexual orientation directly affects a large percentage of the population. Furthermore, as Nelson Mandela (1994) points out, oppressive structures can hurt both the oppressor and oppressed:

\begin{quote}
I knew as well as I knew anything that the oppressor must be liberated just as surely as the oppressed. A man who takes away another man’s freedom is a prisoner of hatred, he is locked behind the bars of prejudice and narrow mindedness. I am not truly free if I am taking away someone else’s freedom, just as surely as I am not free when my freedom is taken away from me. The oppressed and the oppressor alike are robbed of their humanity. (p. 544.)
\end{quote}

\textsuperscript{45} Educating for Diversity: Formative Experiences on Sexual Orientation. Centro Lingotto, Torino, Italy. 22-23 October 2007. The conference was supported by the EU as well as the Piedmont regional government.
Civil rights gains in the past have never been handed to marginalised communities, there has always been a long concerted struggle and resistance. However, I agree with Sears (2006) that resistance “is futile unless there is a strategic analytic framework and a tactical vehicle for action” (p. 1). The GLEE Project has both a theoretical intervention framework and a methodological approach for reflective action and transformation. On a small scale this action research has been one of empowerment and liberation by developing “the capacity to surpass the given and look at things as if they could be otherwise” (Greene 1988, p. 3). It has shown that a grassroots initiative was able to empower teachers to become transformative agents working in their schools to counter heteronormativity. However, although schools can play a role in the development of critical consciousness, it takes more than education to transform society. Therefore, there is a need to persist and to gather more support in all areas of society. Hostile and resistant schools are all too prevalent. Cultural and structural barriers to educational equity are still strong.
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## Appendices

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Appendix 1 Other Diversity Training Projects

This Appendix details four other multicultural/diversity/anti-discrimination training projects that I have been involved in. Each of the projects had some similarities to the GLEE Project.

**EARCOS Internationalizing the Curriculum Project**

**Date**


**Coordination and participants**

The project was coordinated by Taipei American School, Taiwan with teachers participating from eight other international schools in Japan, Singapore, Indonesia, Malaysia and Philippines.

**Objectives**

- to expand the global perspectives and intercultural competencies of students by providing them with a more inclusive international K-12 curriculum;
- to increase the exposure of non-host country teachers in international schools to multicultural and intercultural education by providing training and resources;
- to develop cross-cultural curricula by establishing a network to share methods and materials.

**Project ideas and assumptions**

- the most important step in developing an international curriculum is raising teacher awareness of the need for it;
- opportunities need to be created for teachers to discuss cross-cultural ideas and concerns in an open and trusting environment;
- unless teachers look anew at how they were schooled to deal with diversity, they will be unable to create school cultures which equip students to do so;
- intellectual and personal teacher development is needed to enable teachers and students to develop self-esteem and respect for other cultures;
- teachers are the authority on their own experience and need to be at the centre of growth and development;
– without systemic understanding of race, class and gender relations, teachers who try to transform the curriculum will lack creative flexibility and coherence when dealing with multi-cultural issues.

_Training approach_

– a 1 week leadership workshop (July 1991 in California, U.S.A.) to prepare teachers to hold year-long monthly study circles/seminars with other teachers to create a more multicultural and gender fair curriculum;
– the themes, approaches and materials were selected according to the specific needs and interests of each school’s population with cross grade and discipline application.

_Outcomes_

Through the EARCOS Project the nine participating schools established 11 teacher development seminars. The main themes of the seminars were:

– Focus on host country and region
– Cultural backgrounds of students
– Multicultural readings
– Theoretical frameworks for curricular revision
– Methods to connect theory and personal practice

Each school contributed towards the production of a manual on Internationalising the Curriculum distributed to international schools.

_My role_

I was a participant in the California workshop and subsequent seminar leader in International School of the Sacred Heart, Tokyo, Japan and contributor to the Internationalising the Curriculum publication.
The Tokyo Club Internationalizing the Curriculum Project

Date

October 1991 – April 1993

Coordination and participants

The project was coordinated by Nishimachi International School, Japan and International School of the Sacred Heart, Japan with teachers participating from 13 other international schools in Japan.

Objectives

– to create a working definition of the process of internationalizing the curriculum
– to expand the global perspectives and intercultural competencies of students by providing them with a more inclusive international K-12 curriculum
– to increase the exposure of non-host country teachers in international schools to multicultural and intercultural education by providing training and resources
– to develop cross-cultural curricula by establishing a network to share methods and materials

Training approach

A leadership seminar (May 1992 in Tanazawa, Japan) with the main objectives for participants to:

– analyse current curricula and teaching methods in the light of recent international research on cultural diversity, global awareness, cultural thinking, cooperative learning, and plural ways of knowing, teaching and learning
– prepare teachers to hold year-long monthly study circles/seminars with other teachers to create a more multicultural and gender fair curriculum
– exchange ideas and plans for classroom and teacher seminar use by (1) meeting teachers engaged in similar projects to gain insights and successful strategies, (2) engaging in group exercises and discussions which serve as classroom and seminar examples, and (3) view materials such as articles, books, and videos
The themes, approaches, and materials were selected according to the specific needs and interests of each school’s population with cross grade and discipline application.

**Outcomes**

- Ten schools formed teacher development seminars each with between 10-35 participants, and discussed a variety of themes depending on their school’s needs
- A survey on teacher’s conceptions of internationalization
- Emerging definitions of the process of internationalization
- Recommendations of further actions
- Each school contributed towards the production of a manual on “Internationalising the Curriculum” distributed to international schools.

**My Role**

I was co-director of the leader’s seminar and co-editor of the Internationalising the Curriculum publication.
EARCOS Teacher-as-Researcher Multicultural Curriculum Project

Date
September 1994 – June 1996

Coordination and participants
The project was coordinated by Nishimachi International School, Japan and
International School of the Sacred Heart, Japan with teachers participating
from other international schools in Thailand and Japan.

Objectives
– to share experiences of creating multicultural and international K-12
  curriculum
– to research, write, and disseminate those experiences

Training approach
– a seminar (January 1995, Tokyo, Japan) was held to:
  – introduce the basic principles of teacher action research
  – initiate an action research project on their own practice to internationalize the
    curriculum
  – the key ideas and assumptions behind the project were that:
    – given internationalisation is a process, the trickle-down view of
      educational theory leading to changes in practice is not particularly
      relevant. The knowing-in-action relationship of theory to practice with
      teacher as reflective practitioner is more appropriate
    – a collaborative method is needed when challenging structures, practices
      and curricula
    – teachers need time to reflect in order to act and transform

Outcomes
– a document was produced with the writings of the teacher participants

My role
I was the co-director of the project
Altering Attitudes Project

Date

December 2000 – November 2001

Coordination and participants

The project (funded by the EU) was coordinated by Scottish Human Services Trust, Scotland with project partners from Wales, Finland, Italy, and the Netherlands. All the partners were involved in training methods to challenge one or more types of discrimination.

Objectives

The project looked at a range of training methods and approaches used by equality trainers to tackle discrimination based on race, age, sexual orientation, and disability with the aim of developing a new training programme which addressed several types of discrimination. The specific objectives were:

- To develop and deliver “equality training” to challenge discrimination in order to create a fair and inclusive society for all.
- To use a “horizontal approach” to addressing discrimination addressing multiple forms of discrimination, including ageism, heterosexism, racism, and ableism.

Training approach

- A training cycle was developed with the following workshops:
  - Checking out people’s understanding and raising awareness of discrimination
  - Challenging myths and stereotypes
  - Offering an alternative view
  - Encouraging personal reflection and action

Outcomes

- A training pack was produced and training delivered to adults in a variety of organisations.
My role

I was a partner in the project and introduced the training cycle concept based on the GLEE Project transformative pedagogy.
Appendix 2 GLEE Project Activities and Events

Here are the project activities and events from where the research data was collected in the two macro-cycles of action research.

Macrocycle 1

1.1 Preparatory Phase: May 1998-August 1999
- May 1998: Search for project partners.
- August 1998: Funding application sent to the EU for a grant writing meeting.
- January 1999: Meeting 1: Training team in Oulu, Finland to write the EU grant application.

1.2 Planning Phase: September 1999-July 2000
- September 1999: EU funding began.
- October 1999: GLEENET first version completed for training team use.
- December 1999: Meeting 2: Training team in Copenhagen.
- January 2000: WWW pages first version completed.
- February 2000: First summative and formative project report and evaluation sent to EU.
- May 2000: First draft for Leadership Training Course completed. GLEENET and WWW pages second versions completed.

1.3 Action Phase: August 2000
- August 2000: Meeting 4: Four day Pilot Leadership Training Course in Oulu Finland with 19 participants and four trainers from nine countries. Outcomes: (1) establishment of a network of schools to test GLEENET, (2) development
of action plans in participant schools, and (3) the creation of a EuropeanSchool Development Project (SDP) called *Inequality in School* (EI).

1.4 Observation Phase: August 2000-July 2001

- *Pilot Leadership Training Course* teacher participants carried out actions in their schools.
- *Pilot Leadership Training Course* participants used GLEENET (Pilot GLEENET network).
- EI School Development Project prepared EU SDP grant application.

1.5 Reflection Phase: September 2000-December 2000

- September 2000: Second summative and formative project report and evaluation sent to EU.
- Reflection on prior phases (on-going).

Macrocycle 2

2.1 Preparatory Phase: January 2001-February 2001

- Reconsideration of the problem of GLBTQ inequity in schools, the project goals, the methodology and theoretical framework for discussion at next training team meeting.

2.2 Planning Phase: February 2001-July 2002

- **Meetings 5 to 9:** Training team in: Lisbon (February 2001); Bologna (May 2001); Oulu (February 2002); Lisbon (February 2002); Brighton (May 2002).
– May 2001: Third summative and formative project report and evaluation, sent to the EU.
– Monitoring of individual actions in schools of course participants.
– Monitoring of GLEENET.
– Monitoring of EI Project.

2.3 Action Phase: July 2002

– **Meeting 10**: Eight day *Leadership Training Course* with 11 participants and five trainers from eight countries. Outcomes: the creation of individual action plans and a transnational project *Towards an Inclusive School* (TIS).

2.4 Observation Phase July 2002-September 2006

– *Leadership Training Course* teacher participants carry out actions in their schools.
– *Leadership Training Course* participants use GLEENET.
– *Towards an Inclusive School* (TIS) School Development Project prepares EU grant application (received EU funding from September 2003-August 2006).

2.5 Reflection Phase August 2002-December 2008

– October 2002: Fourth and final summative and formative project report and evaluation sent to the EU. This marked the end of EU funding (3 year maximum).
– Reflection on prior cycles, dissertation preparation and writing.
Appendix 3 Pilot Leadership Training Course and GLEENET network

In August 2000, 1 year after the start of the GLEE Project, the Pilot Leadership Training Course took place in Oulu, Finland. The course was attended by 19 participants and four trainers from nine countries. Participants had been recruited through conferences and targeted emails to NGOs and teacher organisations. Half of the participants were teachers from primary or secondary school, and half were from university or an NGO. There were four main aims to the course:

- For participants to give input and feedback on the first draft of the 1 week Leadership Training Course.
- To establish a Pilot network of schools and give training in the use of GLEENET.
- For teachers to develop an “Action Plan” for their own schools from August 2000 to August 2001
- For teachers to develop an EU grant application for a European project to begin in August 2001.

The Pilot Leadership Training Course had some similarities with the first draft of the Leadership Training Course completed in May 2000. They both shared (1) the development of awareness of GLBTQ issues in schools, (2) examples of transforming schools, and (3) action and network planning (including GLEENET training). However, the Pilot Leadership Training Course (for funding reasons) only lasted 4 days compared to 8 days for the Leadership Training Course. Furthermore, a large amount of the Pilot Leadership Training Course consisted of presentations by participants on examples of addressing GLBTQ issues and transforming schools. This time was allocated due to the depth of experience of many of the participants and because it provided ideas for the Leadership Training Course. The course outline was as follows:

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46 Finland, England, Portugal, Italy, U.S.A., Norway, Germany, Canada, Eire.


**Pilot Leadership Training Course outline**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Day</th>
<th>Activities</th>
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| 1   | Morning: Introductions & Project Background  
     Afternoon: Situation of GLBTQ inequity in each country and What are we aiming for? |
| 2   | Morning: Examples of Transforming Schools  
     Afternoon: GLEENET Training & Examples of Transforming Schools (continued) |
| 3   | All day: Examples of Transforming Schools (continued) |
| 4   | All day: Action Planning & Network Planning |

During the first day participants learnt about the GLEE Project and reported about the situation of homophobia and heterosexism in their respective schools. Each teacher also developed an idea of the transformation they wanted to see in their own schools. Days two and three consisted mostly of the following eleven presentations on Examples of Transforming Schools:

1. The work of GLSEN (Gay, Lesbian and Straight Education Network) organisation, U.S.A.
2. The Terrence Higgins Trust anti-homophobia education poster campaign, U.K.
3. Addressing GLBT-bullying in schools, Italy.
4. Creating web pages for children that address GLBT realities, Finland.
5. Creating a mission statement for the GLBT-Caucus of TESOL, Germany.
6. National Union of Teachers and GLBT issues, U.K.
7. The work of JAAHB (Joint Action Against Homophobic Bullying), U.K.
8. Addressing GLBT issues in education, U.K.
9. Dance as a medium for exploring sexuality, Portugal.
10. Video “It’s Elementary” & Lesbian and Gay Pride Week In An Elementary Classroom, Canada.
11. The GLSEN lunchbox collection of classroom activities to address GLBT issues in education, U.S.A.

Day two also included GLEENET training. The final day involved individual action planning, and also planning by the teacher participants for an EU transnational project. This resulted in a proposal for the *Inequality in School* (EI) project with four of the nine school teachers participating. Four of the remaining five teachers were ineligible for EU funding and one decided not to participate even though he would have been eligible. By the end of the course it was anticipated the development of the EI Project would continue through GLEENET.

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Also, those not participating in the EI Project could also keep in contact and support each other in their actions through GLEENET. At the same time I could evaluate GLEENET and get ideas for further developing it.

Due to time constraints the final session to discuss the GLEE Leadership Training Course first draft did not happen. Instead, participants took away a copy of the draft and were invited to give more feedback before the next training team meeting.

After the Pilot Leadership Training Course the GLEE Project was put on hold due to EU administrative delays. This affected all projects funded from the same Socrates programme as ours. It was not until 6 months later that we got the green light to continue. However, this came too late to hold the planned Leadership Training Course in August 2001 and the next opportunity to do this was in August 2002.

Lessons learnt from the Pilot Leadership Training Course

I collected the following data related to the Pilot Leadership Training Course:

- Participants’ applications
- Teaching materials
- Participants’ workshop writings
- Participants’ course evaluation
- Participants’ Leadership Training Course first draft feedback
- One participant evaluation report
- Training team evaluations
- EU report
- Training team meeting minutes.

On the basis of this data I made some recommendations for the further development of the Leadership Training Course at the first training team meeting after the Pilot Leadership Training Course. This meeting was held in Lisbon, Portugal in February 2001 and was also attended by six invited participants from the Pilot Leadership Training Course, to give additional input for creating the second draft of the Leadership Training Course. The main lessons that were learnt from the Pilot Leadership Training Course for the Leadership Training Course were to: (1) give more time to process ideas, (2) include energizers and teambuilding exercises, (3) develop understandings of key terms – especially given diverse language groups, (4) address domination of discussion by native
English speakers, (5) invite only teachers eligible for EU funding to avoid exclusion during the course of those who are ineligible to participate in an EU project, (6) give more GLEENET training, and (7) develop more comprehensive evaluations of individual workshops and the whole course.

Responding to the lessons learnt from the *Pilot Leadership Training Course* the training team meeting met in Bologna, Italy in May 2001 to discuss the second draft of the *Leadership Training Course*. We also decided to include two of the participants from *Pilot Leadership Training Course* in the training team. One participant was from the Gay, Lesbian and Straight Education Network (GLSEN), and the other was coordinator of the *Inequality in School* EU project. The former person had a lot of experience with GLBTQ education issues and we thought it would be good for the latter person to facilitate the planning for EU project workshops (having just done it herself).

**GLEENET and post-course activities**

Following the *Pilot Leadership Training Course* the following data was collected on GLEENET and the post-course activities:

- GLEENET and regular email of *Pilot Leadership Training Course* participants
- GLEENET training team usage statistics
- GLEENET usage statistics of *Pilot Leadership Training Course* participants
- *Pilot Leadership Training Course* participants’ evaluations of GLEENET
- *Pilot Leadership Training Course* participants’ reports on post-course actions
- EI SDP project evaluation of grant application procedure
- Training team evaluation of GLEENET
- EU report
- Training team meeting minutes

At the meeting in Bologna meeting we discussed the responses by *Pilot Leadership Training Course* participants on their activities after the course and their evaluations of GLEENET. Only six activity reports were received each of which showed that respondents had undertaken some GLBT work in their educational settings such as workshops, awareness campaign, articles, meetings with youth workers, curriculum development, and work with NGOs. The reports were not very detailed and they showed little evidence of whether participants
were any more active than they would have been without participating in the GLEE Project, except for the creation of the *Inequality in School* (EI) Project.

The use of GLEENET by participants up to 10 months after the *Pilot Leadership Training Course* was very variable. On average each GLEENET member had 56 sessions, the average time of use was 8 hours and documents produced averaged 10. The average number of messages sent was 31 and messages read averaged 227. Only four GLEENET evaluations were received and three respondents spoke of technical difficulties and frustrations with the technology, and the need for more training. GLEENET was used as a resource, a central support mechanism, and as an energiser for their individual growth. It was also used by the *Inequality in School* (EI) Project to discuss ideas and complete the EU grant application.

The first year of the pilot phase for GLEENET ended in July 2001. Those that had used it the most were involved in the transnational EI Project, which bound them together as a sub-community. I would surmise that for the others, the desire or need to work together as a community was not present. The implications of this for the *Leadership Training Course* were that more emphasis needed to be placed on building community and also inviting only those who would be eligible for funding in a transnational EU Project. The completion of activity reports and GLEENET evaluations was a condition for continuing in GLEENET. Therefore from July 2001 the *Inequality in School* Project participants and a couple of others were the only ones remaining.
Appendix 4 The *Inequality in School* (EI) Project

Following the *Pilot Leadership Training Course* in 2000, the *Inequality in School* (EI) transnational project was created by participants from schools in Portugal, U.K., and Ireland. The project successfully obtained EU funding from October 2001 to August 2002. The aims of the project were:

- to combat and prevent inequalities in all forms (heterosexism, racism, homophobia, social exclusion, etc.);
- to assist educators in schools in the creation of a safe and affirming environment for all.

The first project meeting took place in February 2002 in Dublin, Ireland:

- to talk about project activities in their respective schools – what they had done, how they introduced the Project in school, feedback from students and teachers;
- to prepare the next activities, in a general way and in their own subject areas and dance sessions;
- to find strategies to create the Web Page and choose materials for the EI Pack for training teachers.

There were two subsequent meetings in April 2002 in Leicester, U.K., and in June 2002 in Lisbon, Portugal. The project activities in Portugal included (1) the development of school curricula with the integration of GLBTQ content into dance classes, (2) workshops for teachers to raise awareness of GLBTQ issues, (3) presentations at conferences including viewings of a video of the dance lessons and discussion of strategies to integrate GLBT issues, (4) a teachers’ survey to gauge awareness and understanding about homophobia, and (5) school projects such as art and photo exhibitions to raise awareness about racism and homophobia.

The activities of the project partner in England included (1) presentations at conferences of the National Union of Teachers, (2) workshops with the school community about heterosexism and homophobia, (3) integrating GLBTQ content into school curricula such as children’s story books, and (4) exhibitions in the school community to raise awareness of GLBTQ issues. The activities of the Irish partner focused on giving workshops and conferences to train teachers about GLBTQ issues.
One product of the project is the “EI Pack” for training teachers to deal with discrimination in their classrooms. It includes lesson suggestions along with resources such as photographs and games. Another product is a video about “How to prevent homophobia in schools” with guidelines for implementing a school-based project. The video contains interviews conducted during dance classes with students aged from 7 to 12 years old, as well as interviews with teachers about issues of homophobia. It has been a means to begin a dialogue in schools and to change some prejudiced mentalities and behaviours by breaking the silence on GLBTQ issues.

The work of the EI Project raised the expectations of the training team that the Leadership Training Course in 2002 would lead to the creation of more such transnational projects. However, the EI Project came to an abrupt end in August 2002 when one of the national agencies responsible for the funding refused further financial support. This was despite the fact that the two other national agencies approved continuing funding. One of the EI Project members believes it was homophobia within the U.K. national agency which had led to the ending of financial support, especially as Section 28 of the Local Government Act 1988 was still in effect. It has not been possible to substantiate this claim.
Appendix 5 Project Partners’ Roles and Responsibilities

A six-person training team/steering committee from the four participating institutions collectively had responsibility for implementing the project work plan.

**Partners’ joint responsibilities:**

- course curriculum design;
- production of course materials;
- team teaching the course;
- monitoring, evaluation, report writing and dissemination;
- project development;
- WWW production;
- publicising the course;
- participating application process;
- updating GLEENET.

**Steering Committee Roles**

- EU Coordinator – Tim:
  - EU liaison (interim & final report & course renewal);
  - Financial aspects;
  - Course site liaison (Oulu);
  - Action Researcher;
  - Project management file of GLEENET;
  - Liaison with partners, support staff, consultants and other organisations.

- Course Coordinator – Charles:
  - Coordination of Curriculum Design;
  - Coordination of Course Materials;
  - Production of Course document containing all workshops;
  - Leadership Course folder in GLEENET;
  - Leadership Course link in WWW;
  - Coordinate trainers prior & during course.
- **Applications & Publicity Coordinator – Melanie:**
  - WWW content (including on-line application);
  - Development of publicity material;
  - Development of Application Procedure;
  - Responding to applicants;
  - Identifying potential participants & Updating a Mailing List.

- **Technical Coordinator – Tony:**
  - Monitoring of Tasks;
  - Technical Aspects of Sites;
  - Contents Pages;
  - Training Manual;
  - GLEENET information folder.

- **School Development Project Coordinator – Mira:**
  - GLEENET support to GLEE participants and partnership projects;
  - School Partnership folder in GLEENET including uploading copies of the pilot grant proposal in the three languages;
  - Training Course Unit on Action Plans including formation of partnerships and grant writing.

- **Resources Coordinator – Simo:**
  - Developing resource centre A in GLEENET;
  - Coordinating resource centre B in GLEENET;
  - Developing multilingual site.
Appendix 6 Example of framework analysis

To illustrate the use of framework analysis (Ritchie and Spencer 1994), I firstly show the master chart for analysing data from the participants on their backgrounds, activities and empowerment (Table 10). This chart has six main themes (A-F), each with multiple categories.

To further illustrate the use of framework analysis I take the example of theme A, the pre-course participant profile. I firstly selected the relevant data for analysis, which in this case is the course applications submitted in January 2002. I then familiarized myself with the data and picked out seven emergent categories that covered the diversity of the data. These categories are related to the questions in the application.

Next I coded these categories from A1 to A7, along with their subcategories, and began to chart the results for each of the 9 respondents. This is shown in Table 11. The notes at the bottom of the chart refer to data that I, at the time of analysis, thought I might use/quote when writing the research paper. The codes in the row for category A2/A3 refer to the original data. For example, for the code 61a-4-3 the first part (61a) is the code for the document type (in this case course application), the second part (4) corresponds to a respondent and the final part (3) refers to the page of the document. The letters x and y in the chart indicate that data has been found on a particular category.
Table 10. The master data analysis chart.

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<th>Theme</th>
<th>Participant 1</th>
<th>Participant 2</th>
<th>Participant 3</th>
<th>Participant 4</th>
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<td>A2/A3: Why Apply (x) / Hopes and Expectations (y)</td>
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<td>A4: Support of Colleagues/Head</td>
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<td>A5: Background GLBTQ activism</td>
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<td>A6: School hopes to gain</td>
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<td>A7: Post course actions individual/EU</td>
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<td>B2: Actions in/out school</td>
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<td>B4: What needed to overcome barriers</td>
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<td>C1: GLBTQ School Climate Survey at LTC</td>
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<td>D1: Activity Descriptions/Evaluations out and in school</td>
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<td>E3: What planned but did not do</td>
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<td>E4: Barriers/How overcame/Too big?</td>
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<td>F1: GLEENET and Empowerment</td>
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Table 11. Pre-course participant profile.

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<td>1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9</td>
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<tr>
<td>A1 School/Country</td>
<td>Hun/It/Port/Aus/GER/Fra/Sco/It/Swe</td>
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<tr>
<td>A2/A3: Why Apply (x) /</td>
<td>61a-1-1 61a-2-2 61a-3-1 61a-4-3 61a-5-1 61a-6-2 61a-7-2 61a-8-2 61a-9-2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hopes &amp; Expectations (y)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Develop GLBTQ program</td>
<td>x</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Get more teachers involved</td>
<td>x y</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coordinate teacher training</td>
<td>x x,y</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Develop skills</td>
<td>x x x,y</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Improve school atmosphere</td>
<td>x x</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Increase GLBTQ respect</td>
<td>x x</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Learn effective actions</td>
<td>y x y</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Raise awareness of others</td>
<td>y y</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Integrate GLBTQ content into teaching</td>
<td>y x</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exchange ideas &amp; get knowledge &amp; support</td>
<td>y y y y y y x,y</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A4: Support of Colleagues/Head</td>
<td>?/no yes/yes yes/yes yes/yes yes/no yes/yes no/yes no/? yes/yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A5: Background GLBTQ activism</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>GLBTQ Organisation (x)</td>
<td>xy x x x x x x</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School Project (y)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GLBTQ Teachers’ Organisation</td>
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<tr>
<td>Teacher Training Course</td>
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<tr>
<td>Publications</td>
<td>x x</td>
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<td>Presentations/ Debates</td>
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<td>Trade Union</td>
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<tr>
<td>Religion</td>
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254
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<th>Summary</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
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<th>6</th>
<th>7</th>
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<tr>
<td>Improve</td>
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<tr>
<td>GLBTQ/Other relations</td>
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<td>x</td>
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<tr>
<td>Non-discrimination</td>
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<tr>
<td>culture/diversity</td>
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<td>Debates</td>
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<td>Raise awareness</td>
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<td>Don’t know</td>
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<td>x</td>
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<tr>
<td>Teacher Training Course</td>
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<td>x</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

A6: School Hopes to Gain

A7: Post Course Actions

Individual/EU

Consult GLBTQ colleagues being gay | x |
Anti GLBTQ harassment | x | x |
Safe space GLBTQ youth – coming out | x |
Teacher training | x |   | x |
GLBTQ in curriculum Health education & sexuality | x | x | x | x |
School library | x |
School policy – sex orientation add | x |
Meetings other schools/community | x |
None – too anxious Discussions students and teachers | x | x | x |
Persona dolls |   | x |
EU Coming out group/GSA |   | x |

Notes:
A3f A7e A2b A2a A4g A6h A4c A6d A5d
From Table 11 I pull together the key characteristics and make a summary of each of the categories as shown below.

**Total applications**

Approximately 120 persons expressed and interest in doing the course and 47 of these completed an application to be pre-registered. 32 of these applicants were accepted and pre-registered. Of these 32, 16 subsequently applied for an EU grant. From these 16, 13 got a promise of a grant, and from these 13, 11 attended the course.

**Summary A2/A3**

The following are the reasons why the teachers applied and their hopes and expectations.

- Exchange ideas, gain knowledge and develop confidence and skills to counter homophobia and heterosexism.
- Improve school environment and increase respect for GLBTQ persons.
- To increase awareness of GLBTQ issues and increase teacher involvement through training.

**Summary A4**

Five participants said that some colleagues and their head teacher were supportive of their participation in the course. Only one participant (6) expressed strong support with the possibility of colleagues helping with post-course actions. Two of the remaining four participants said that their headteacher was not supportive and two indicated that other colleagues would not be supportive. Given the lack of in-school support two of the participants (1 and 7) focused on the support they have for their out of school activities e.g. GLBTQ organization or trade union work. (See notes below).

**Summary A5**

Six out of nine of the participants had been involved in a GLBTQ organization but only one of these had been involved in a school project on homophobia. 3
participants had been involved in GLBTQ teacher organisations (2 exist within a trade union) and another within the GLBTQ Christian movement. In terms of activities 2 persons had written publications, 2 had given presentations, and 2 had given teacher training courses on GLBTQ issues in schools. Only one teacher (6) mentioned being involved in activities in their own school and gave no details. There is one teacher (4) that mentioned no activities at all. I have given them each a ranking based on the information in the application on the strength of their background on GLBTQ issues and activism. Later I will see if there is any relationship between prior background and activism after the Leadership Training Course.

Summary A6

Responses were very general and only one specifically mentioned the development of teacher education training course on GLBTQ issues. Reducing GLBTQ discrimination and creating a good school climate was the response of 3 participants. Raising awareness and debates on issues of sexuality were each mentioned once. There is no evidence that the responses are other than what the participants hoped the school will gain. This may indicate a lack of involvement of other colleagues at this stage. One participant stated they do not know what the school hoped to gain. The applications seem to be more of an individual initiative.

Summary A7

The most popular individual idea for activities after the course was curriculum development to include GLBTQ experience. This was mentioned by 4 persons. Teacher training or teacher discussion sessions on GLBTQ issues were mentioned by 3 persons and an anti-gay harassment campaign mentioned by 2. Other ideas not mentioned by more than one person were safe spaces for GLBTQ youth, school non-discrimination policy to include sexual orientation, and a project using dolls to address diversity issues. The ideas were not specific. One person (4) also expressed anxiety at starting initiatives. A specific idea for an EU project was mentioned by only one person to do with coming out and forming GSAs.
Notes from top of chart

These notes include quotes from participants. In brackets is the participant number.

A2a (7): “I do not want to work on these issues in my own school. I feel more confident and less vulnerable to work to train others/inspire them or be shipped in as the “expert” to talk with/teach children in someone else’s school.”

A2b (6): “As a gay teacher, I have never been bullied either by the pupils or by my colleagues but I have soon noticed that pupils/students have not been educated by their parents to think about and respect lesbian or gay mates. I know that they tend to show acceptance when they realise that their teacher(s) can be gay or lesbian and most of all when they take part in a formation course which enables them to overcome taboos and learn about what is unknown to them and sounds weird.

I have also realised that too many pupils had to hide and could not be themselves and express their feelings: I have met some of them a few months after they had left the school who could then be openly gay. School has not been a “gay friendly” place: things can change only if some teachers have the courage to get involved and be role models.” (Comments on school climate)

A3f (1): “I expect that I will be able to use a wide range of methodology in the following projects of my team [Labrisz Lesbian Association organising a tolerance programme in schools].” (Focus on out of own school activities)

A4c (7): “My colleagues within the E.I.S L&G Network are supportive.” (Does not say that colleagues are supportive)

A4g (4): “I have told a great number of colleagues about my applying for this course (as everybody knows I am gay, it was not difficult at all). They all encouraged me to do so and I can count on at least 10 of them to help me work on the project. They are all concerned with fighting against discrimination. They all teach different subjects in different sections of the school: so they could all talk to pupils I never meet and be a kind of link to inform and be informed.” (Strong support from colleagues)

A6d (7): “With the backing of my union, the EIS, I will contribute to the development of the curriculum for all schools. Through my union, I will be
able to influence the educational inclusion agenda throughout Scotland.” *(Did not say anything about what school hopes to gain from her participation)*

*A6h (6): “Our school… has always been involved in projects to help our students behave as real citizens, respectful of others (whatever religion or social background) and of laws, but has never tackled this [GLBTQ] topic. One of our aims, as part of the community, is to show pupils/students respect of one’s fellows is one of the keys to success in life.”*(Extending principles to GLBTQ issues, positive climate on respect)

*A7e (4): “I fear I will not start any big activities as I am too anxious.”*

The analysis for each of the other themes in the master chart proceeded in a similar way. The completed chart enabled between and within-case analysis, i.e. comparisons between participants and associations within each participant.
Appendix 7 Training Team Project and Course Evaluation Questionnaire

This evaluation is divided into three main sections. Section 1 includes the parts of the project process; Section 2 the activities, products, and results of the project and Section 3 includes any other aspects of the project you consider important to mention.

The first two sections are divided into subsections. For each subsection write a comment using some or all of the elements and questions contained in the boxes as guidance.

Section 1: Parts of the Project Process

• Management & Structure of the Project

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Some elements to consider in evaluating the management and structure of the project</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>- the work plan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- schedule of the project</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- planning of the separate steps</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- feasibility, effectiveness, and efficiency</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- dissemination of information</td>
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<tr>
<td>- division of responsibilities</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Your Comment:

• Project aims

1. To develop a Leadership Training Course which empowers teachers to establish education initiatives within their own school communities to
   • Raise awareness of the extent and destructive effects of homophobia and heterosexism on all members of the school community
   • Combat heterosexism and homophobia in school policies, practices and curricula and create a safe learning environment for all
2. Create an internet based support network to provide a resource centre and facilities for on-going communication between course participant schools to share ideas and collectively develop materials for their own local initiatives. This would have chat and mailing facilities, along with an environment for distance learning and collaborative work.
3. For course participants to create projects on an international level and form EU funded Comenius 1 School Development Project Partnerships.

Some questions to consider:
- Do you consider the aims to be good ones?
- Do you consider the aims to be realistic?
- Were the project aims formulated in the proposal sufficiently clear for determining the work to be carried out?
- Was there a general commitment to the aims?
- Was it possible to achieve the aims?

Your Comment:

- Ways to achieve the aims

Some questions to consider:
- Were the steps planned adequate and sufficient for achieving the project aims?
- If not, why not and what modifications had to be made (additional steps or alternative ones)?
- What would you do differently if you were to carry out the project again?
- Were you able to carry out your tasks?
- If not what was the main reason?
- Were you satisfied with your contribution?
- How was the atmosphere in the project group?
- Did communication between the group members work?
- If not, why not?
- Did language difficulties influence the communication in the project group?
- Which solutions for language difficulties did the group come up with?
- How could operating in the project group have been improved to such an extent that one could speak of an ideal situation
- Did evaluation and feedback during the project clearly lead to improvements in the processes and the products of the project?

Your Comment:
Section 2: Project Activities Products and Results

- Pilots of course, materials, and network

Guiding questions for evaluating the pilots of course, materials, and network
- What was the opinion of the participants with regard to the pilot (training contents, training materials, training process, didactical approaches, teacher contribution, the course group, pilot network)?
- What was your opinion with regard to the pilot (training contents, training process, didactical approaches, teacher contribution, the course group pilot network)?

Your Comment:

- Final Products (*Leadership Training Course* Curriculum and Materials, WWW pages and GLEENET Network)

Guiding questions for evaluating the *Leadership Training Course*, materials, WWW pages and GLEENET network
- What was the opinion of the participants with regard to the *Leadership Training Course* (training contents, training materials, training process, didactical approaches, teacher contribution, the course group)?
- What was your opinion with regard to the *Leadership Training Course* (training contents, training materials, training process, didactical approaches, teacher contribution, the course group)?
- What was the opinion of the participants with regard to the GLEENET Network and formation of School Partnerships?
- What was your opinion with regard to the GLEENET Network and the formation of School Partnerships?
- To what extent did you feel participants were empowered by the course?
- To what extent have you felt the course empowering?
- How useful are the web pages?

Your Comment:
### Project’s impact

**Questions for evaluating the project’s impact, to be further specified and adapted to the project**

- How effective do you think the project dissemination has been?
- What were the effects of dissemination (think of changes that have been realised and numbers of persons addressed)?
- What are, in your opinion, the main barriers to disseminating the project?
- Has the impact of the project been influenced by language difficulties?
- If yes, which difficulties and were they solved?
- Has the project really had a clear impact on school(s) and if yes, what kind of impact?
- Has the project affected or improved the functioning of the teachers involved?
- If yes, in which way?
- Have the project results been adopted by organisations who were not involved as a partner in the project?
- Has the project had any influence on the national, regional or local education system?
- If so, what and if not, why not?
- What measures might be taken to increase the project’s impact?
- What other positive or negative spin-offs has the project had?
- What has been the impact of the project on yourself? What have been the positive and negative aspects?

**Your Comment:**

_________________________________________________________

---

### Section 3 Other Aspects

Use this section to make any further comments on any other aspects of the project not covered in section one and section two.

**Your Further Comments:**

_________________________________________________________
Appendix 8 GLEE Leadership Training Course
Participant Evaluation Sheet

1. How did you feel about the course and the organisation BEFORE you arrived?
2. How well do you think the course met its stated objectives?*
3. Which sessions did you find most useful and why?
4. Which sessions did you find least useful and why?
5. What were some of the key learning points for you?
6. What would you say overall were the 3 best things about the course?
7. What 3 things you think could have been done differently?
8. How empowered do you feel to begin working on challenging homophobia back in your school?
9. What future needs have you identified to enable you to progress this work?
10. Please use this space to make any further comments/suggestions

*Course objectives:

For participants to develop an action plan to establish education initiatives within their own school communities to:

– Raise awareness of the extent and destructive effects of homophobia and heterosexism on all members of the school community.
– Develop strategies to combat heterosexism and homophobia in school policies, practices and curricula and create a safe learning environment for all.
Appendix 9 GLSEN Assessment Survey – From A-Z: Schools and LGBT Issues

Use the Assessment Survey and Scoring Guide below to learn about your school’s climate with regard to LGBT issues in the areas of policy, programming, and practice.

For each item, choose the phrase that best completes the statement for your school. Write the corresponding number on the line to the left of each item. When scoring each survey item, bear in mind that the answers are meant to reflect a continuum, not absolutes. This means that you may see aspects of your school embodied in different responses to the same question, or your school may fit between two answers. Try to select the answer that, in each case, most closely corresponds to the point along the continuum at which you see your school. You may use half scores (1.5, 2.5, etc.) if this helps you to represent your school most accurately.

A. The school’s non-discrimination and anti-harassment policies

1. Do not include sexual orientation or gender identity
2. Include sexual orientation, but with no reporting or disciplinary procedures in place
3. Include sexual orientation and gender identity, are visibly posted, and reporting/disciplinary procedures are in place
4. Include sexual orientation and gender identity, are visibly posted and discussed, and both reporting/disciplinary procedures and preventative education are in place

B. A multicultural/diversity statement or policy

1. Does not exist and, in any case, would not include sexual orientation or gender identity
2. Exists and may include sexual orientation, but school programming does not reflect this inclusion
3. Exists and includes sexual orientation and gender identity, with some inclusive programming taking place
4. Exists and includes sexual orientation and gender identity with regular inclusive programming in place

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C. Curricular inclusion of LGBT themes

1. Is barred by a policy that prohibits positive inclusion of LGBT issues
2. Is unofficially considered inappropriate and does not occur
3. Is not disallowed, but permission from parents/supervisors may be required due to the “sensitive” or “controversial” nature of the subject
4. Is encouraged and mandated with no parent notification requirements

D. The formation of gay-straight alliances (GSAs) and other LGBT-themed student clubs

1. Is strongly discouraged
2. Is neither supported nor discouraged in any school statement or policy
3. Is unofficially accepted with no formal statement of support
4. Is formally supported in a statement that regards such clubs as a necessary component of an inclusive extracurricular atmosphere

E. LGBT staff members

1. Are not formally acknowledged and receive no formal protections or benefits
2. Are protected by an employment non-discrimination policy, but do not receive domestic partnership benefits
3. Are included in non-discrimination policies, receive domestic partnership benefits and can be open and honest to peers with few repercussions
4. Receive domestic partnership benefits, are included in outreach/hiring practices, and benefit from an official statement protecting and affirming their right to be open and honest to colleagues and students.

F. With regard to LGBT curricular inclusion, the adult community

1. Is strongly opposed and believes that exposure to LGBT people/issues poses a danger to children
2. Conveys discomfort and may believe that inclusion of LGBT content can negatively “influence” students
3. Sees value in the concept and is willing to work toward greater inclusion, but has done little to date
4. Has prioritized inclusion as part of a larger commitment to social justice, and is willing to commit staff and classroom time to it
G. Books and curricular materials that include positive images of LGBT people

1. Are deliberately kept from classrooms and libraries
2. Are not present in classrooms or libraries, though those with incidental references or sub-plots are neither banned nor encouraged
3. Can be found in classrooms and libraries in moderate quantity and variety
4. Are sought out, prominently displayed and made available to all staff and students

H. With regard to LGBT-themed books and resources, school librarians

1. Do not solicit resources and offer no assistance to requests for related materials
2. May have some resources in reference sections, but limit access to materials
3. Make materials accessible and comfortably direct students/staff upon request
4. Prominently display materials, provide open and confidential access to students of all ages, and actively engage colleagues by referring appropriate materials to them

I. Within the curriculum, LGBT topics can be found

1. Only in the areas of health and sexuality, where they are characterized as “sickness or sin.”
2. Only in the areas of health and sexuality, where mention is cursory, neutral and clinical.
3. In History and English as well as health and sexuality classes, where the message is one of respect and equal treatment for all people.
4. Integrated into all subject areas and across all grade levels as part of a consistent commitment to social justice issues, including race and gender
J. Efforts to include LGBT themes in school curricula

1. Never occur and would be met with open hostility and opposition
2. Infrequently occur, are met with caution, and teachers are encouraged to stick to the standard curriculum
3. Are consistently undertaken by a small group of teachers, and received with tolerance by the larger staff, though they may not see how “it fits in”
4. Are expected and undertaken by the whole staff, who openly share materials/ideas

K. With regard to staff development and training, LGBT issues

1. Are never discussed and are considered an inappropriate topic
2. May come up occasionally, with mixed reactions of support and hesitancy
3. Are incorporated periodically or in optional sessions, where staff members are generally receptive
4. Appear as a regular theme, are interwoven with explorations of race, class, gender, etc., and openly received by staff who integrate new learning into daily practice

L. By the time students graduate from the school

1. They have had no positive curricular exposure to LGBT people, history or issues.
2. They have had sporadic and inconsistent curricular exposure to LGBT people, history or issues.
3. They have had considerable curricular exposure to LGBT topics and understand the importance of respecting all people regardless of sexual orientation/gender identity
4. They have a depth of understanding and appreciation for LGBT people and history, and feel a sense of responsibility to combat all forms of oppression in their communities, including anti-gay bias.
M. Athletic teams and programs

1. Are not safe spaces for LGBT students/staff to be open about their sexual orientation/gender identity; anti-gay epithets are frequently used by athletes and coaches alike.
2. Are not spaces where LGBT students/staff feel comfortable being open; anti-gay epithets are commonly used – adults will occasionally interrupt name-calling, but generally have a “boys will be boys” attitude.
3. Are generally safe spaces for LGBT students/staff, though few are open; anti-gay epithets are sometimes used – adults do not just interrupt name-calling, but educate students around the destructive effects of bias.
4. Are safe spaces in which LGBT students/staff are visible and where status of an individual or team is unrelated to gender or sexual orientation; anti-gay epithets are infrequently heard – adults follow with swift and decisive action, and fellow students rally supportively around their LGBT schoolmates.

N. Gay-straight alliances and other LGBT themed clubs

1. Are strongly discouraged and non-existent.
2. Are not “outlawed”, but appear infrequently due to the discomfort staff and students feel sponsoring and attending them.
3. Are accepted by the school community and are usually attended by a small, but core group of students/staff.
4. Are considered as valid and valuable as any other club and are consistently attended by both LGBT and straight students/staff.

O. School-wide assemblies/programming around multicultural/diversity themes

1. Tend to be superficial celebrations and are completely exclusive of LGBT people and issues.
2. Focus on racial/ethnic heritage; LGBT themes are seen as irrelevant/inappropriate.
3. Occasionally include LGBT themes, which are regarded as relevant and important.
4. Consistently include LGBT themes in integrated ways that move beyond simple acknowledgments of events such as LGBT History and Pride months.
P. With regard to sexual orientation/gender identity, health and guidance professionals

1. offer no information or support, and are disapproving and/or ill equipped to respond to questions/problems that arise.
2. may have general information/literature (which may not be accessible), and respond to questions/problems with a mixture of compassion and discomfort.
3. have received related training, make information available, and offer compassionate and confidential support to students/families.
4. receive regular training, make information visible/accessible, provide ongoing educational programs, and offer competent and judgment-free support.

Q. College and career counsellors

1. Consider LGBT issues irrelevant or inappropriate to their work and offer no related information to students.
2. Do not take into account the needs of LGBT students, but may seek related information/literature in response to individual requests.
3. Regularly include information about LGBT friendly workplaces/schools in resource materials, and can competently address the needs of LGBT students.
4. Regularly include LGBT information in resource materials and invite representatives in to conduct informational and networking sessions for LGBT youth.

R. School dances, proms and other social functions

1. Reinforce traditional heterosexual coupling as the societal norm; non-traditional relationships amongst students, staff or other adult chaperones are invisible.
2. Reinforce heterosexual coupling; there is an awareness that LGBT people and relationships may exist, but they are whispered about and not visibly reflected.
3. Visibly include non-heterosexual relationships (though not every day or without a few raised eyebrows); students and staff accept the existence of same-sex couples.
4. Visibly include same-sex couples, who are viewed as equal to others; students feel comfortable socializing with the full spectrum of groups/couples at such events.
S. Parent/family education around sexual orientation and gender identity

1. is non-existent and there is no outreach to external agencies that provide information or support around these issues.
2. is limited to health related pamphlets and referrals to outside agencies when crises arise.
3. includes accessible literature and occasional programs/workshops delivered by staff who feel comfortable offering support and referrals.
4. is regularly provided by trained staff members as well as outside specialists; a staff member exists who is responsible for ensuring that LGBT issues are addressed through school programming.

T. The general attitude of adults in the school community toward LGBT people

1. is one of hate or pity – LGBT people are generally understood to be sick or deviant.
2. is one of discomfort – LGBT people are perceived as unhappy and unhealthy.
3. is one of respect for the differences they embody and sympathy for the challenges that they face.
4. is one of acceptance and appreciation for the perspectives and contributions they make to society

U. The general attitude of students in the school community toward LGBT people

1. is one of hate or pity – LGBT people are generally understood to be sick or deviant.
2. is one of discomfort – LGBT people are perceived as unhappy and unhealthy.
3. is one of respect for the differences they embody and sympathy for the challenges that they face.
4. is one of acceptance and appreciation for the perspectives and contributions they make to society.
V. Within the school community, it is generally believed that LGBT people

1. do not exist within the school community and that upholding “traditional moral standards” will protect students from the “undue influences of homosexuals.”
2. may exist within the school community and that their presence is tolerable as long as they remain invisible and do not interfere with “traditional family values.”
3. exist in the world and must therefore be proportionately reflected in the school community and treated with the same respect as all others.
4. are essential members of a diverse community who deserve an equal voice and presence within the school.

W. LGBT students and staff and LGBT-headed families are

1. completely invisible, feel unsafe being open about their sexual orientation/gender identity, and have no support resources available to them within the school community.
2. virtually invisible and exist within a “don’t ask, don’t tell” environment in which they feel uncomfortable discussing their sexual orientation/gender identity.
3. moderately visible, feel safe being open, and have some support resources within the school community.
4. visible and fully integrated into school life, feel safe and affirmed, and have ample human and material resources within the school.

X. Heterosexist and anti-gay language and behavior by staff and/or students is

1. rampant throughout the school both in and out of the classroom.
2. common in settings such as locker rooms, hallways, and the schoolyard, but generally understood to be unacceptable in the classroom or within earshot of adults.
3. sometimes heard in the hallways and schoolyard, but there are few instances of intentional harassment against LGBT or gender nonconforming students.
4. uncommon; respectful, inclusive language is consistently heard in classroom instruction and discussions.
Y. When anti-gay harassment occurs,

1. interventions by staff are inconsistent, there are few consequences for offenders, and victims may be told that nothing can be done or that they need to change.
2. staff will intervene to stop verbal and physical abuse, but handle anti-gay harassment like any other type of generic misconduct (as opposed to the serious treatment afforded sexual or racial harassment)
3. adults will intervene decisively to discipline/counsel offenders and provide support to the victims.
4. students rally around their LGBT peers and adults are quick to intervene with consequences, victim support, and proactive education to prevent future incidents.

Z. With regard to the larger LGBT community external to the school,

1. there is no relationship on any level and LGBT organizations and service agencies are unwelcome to participate in school activities.
2. a general concern for traditional moral values prevents relationships, though meetings with local groups or agencies may occur when crises arise.
3. there is an openness to working with organizations and service providers toward staff trainings and practices that will result in a safer school climate for LGBT youth.
4. ongoing relationships exist that bring support services, educational trainings, new staff/students, and cultural enrichment to the school community.
Appendix 10 School types

*The Hostile School*
- School policies do not protect the rights of LGBT people.
- Curricula/materials are devoid of LGBT themes.
- Organized and vocal opposition to any LGBT inclusion exists; homosexuality is characterized as “sickness and sin.”
- LGBT-themed clubs are non-existent and strongly discouraged.
- Athletic programs are unwelcome spaces for LGBT or gender-nonconforming students.
- Health and guidance support for LGBT students/families is non-existent
- Anti-gay language/harassment is rampant.
- LGBT people are invisible and feel unsafe being open about their sexual orientation/gender identity.

*The Resistant School*
- Non-discrimination policies may include sexual orientation.
- Curricular inclusion of LGBT issues is limited to clinical references in Health/Sex Ed classes.
- Access to books/materials with LGBT content is limited.
- Adults feel discomfort – may feel there is “danger” in exposure to LGBT people/issues.
- LGBT-themed clubs appear infrequently; students feel unsafe attending
- Athletic programs are moving toward gender equity, but anti-gay attitudes remain an issue.
- Health/guidance staff show compassion, but information/support is not generally accessible.
- Anti-gay language is common in hallways, locker rooms, school yard, etc., though not in classrooms.
- A “don’t ask, don’t tell” atmosphere exists for LGBT people.
The Open School

- Non-discrimination policies are inclusive of sexual orientation and students are made aware of this.
- LGBT themes are occasionally included in English, history and health classes.
- A variety of books/materials with LGBT content are available.
- Adult community is open to LGBT inclusion, but may not be sure how to achieve it.
- LGBT-themed clubs are tolerated and attended by a core group of people
- Coaches interrupt anti-gay behaviour; LGBT athletes are relatively safe, though not very visible.
- Health/guidance staff have had training on LGBT issues and offer information/capable support.
- There are few instances of intentional harassment against LGBT students.
- LGBT people are moderately visible; they may be seen as “different,” but a safe and respectful atmosphere exists.

The Inclusive School

- School policy both protects and affirms LGBT people; proactive education about such policies exists
- LGBT themes are fully integrated into curricula across a variety of subject areas and grade levels
- Books/materials with LGBT content are visible and available to all students/staff
- Adult community has prioritized LGBT inclusion as a part of a larger commitment to social justice
- LGBT-themed clubs are visible, regularly attended, and considered as valid as other clubs
- Education around anti-gay bias is a part of athletic programming; LGBT athletes are treated as equals on the playing field
- Health/guidance staff work with outside agencies to provide outreach, support and education to LGBT people
- Anti-gay language/behaviour is rare and is dealt with swiftly and decisively; anti-bias education that embraces respectful, inclusive language is common in classrooms
- LGBT people are visible and fully integrated into school life; there is a high degree of comfort and acceptance regarding LGBT people
Appendix 11 LTC Summary of Phases Sections and Workshops

There are six sequential and interrelated phases of web-assisted transformative pedagogy, that make up a learning cycle. The first four phases take place during the Leadership Training Course (LTC). The focus of Phases 1 to 3 is conscientising and Phase 4 is activist. After the LTC, GLEENET becomes the learning environment and Phase 4 continues. This is followed by Phases 5 and 6 which also have an activist focus, and then further repetitions of Phases 4 to 6, as can be seen below.

CONSCIENTISING PHASES

Phase 1   Raising awareness of the manifestations, effects and root causes of homophobia and heterosexism (heteronormativity)
Phase 2   Developing strategies and skills to challenge homophobia and heterosexism
Phase 3   Examples of promoting GLBTQ equity and transforming schools

ACTIVIST PHASES

Phase 4   Reflection and post-course action planning
Phase 5   Carrying out actions
Phase 6   Evaluation of actions
Then repeat Phases 4 to 6.

Each workshop from each phase of the LTC is listed below. In the training manual these workshops were organised into eight sections, and the section which each workshop belongs to is also given. Then the post-LTC phases are listed.
A. Leadership Training Course Phases

### Phase 1: Raising awareness of the manifestations, effects and root causes and of homophobia and heterosexism (heteronormativity)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section 1</th>
<th>Introduction</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Workshop 1.1</td>
<td>Introductions</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section 2</th>
<th>Cultural Diversity &amp; Identities</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Workshop 2.1</td>
<td>Definitions and Language of Diversities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Workshop 2.2</td>
<td>Multiple Identities and the Identity Wheel</td>
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<tr>
<td>Workshop 2.3</td>
<td>Power and Privilege</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section 3</th>
<th>Sexualities &amp; Gender</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Workshop 3.1</td>
<td>Transgender and Bisexual Youth</td>
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<tr>
<td>Workshop 3.2</td>
<td>Queering Sexualities &amp; Gender</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section 4</th>
<th>Homophobia &amp; Heterosexism</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Workshop 4.1</td>
<td>How Homophobia Hurts Us All</td>
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<tr>
<td>Workshop 4.2</td>
<td>A Model for Assessing and Describing the School Culture for LGBT Persons</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

### Phase 2: Developing strategies and skills to challenge homophobia and heterosexism

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section 4</th>
<th>Homophobia &amp; Heterosexism</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Workshop 4.3</td>
<td>Strategies to Combat Homophobia in Schools</td>
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<tr>
<td>Workshop 4.4</td>
<td>Challenging Stereotypes and Myths</td>
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### Phase 3: Examples of promoting GLBTQ equity and transforming schools

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section 5</th>
<th>Transforming Schools</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Workshop 5.1</td>
<td>Inclusive School Policies and Curricular Transformation</td>
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<tr>
<td>Workshop 5.2</td>
<td>Examples of Transformation</td>
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<tr>
<td>Workshop 5.3</td>
<td>Conducting Effective Anti-Discrimination Training</td>
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<td>Workshop 5.4</td>
<td>Transformation in a Dance Class</td>
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### Phase 4: Reflection and post-course action planning

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section 6</th>
<th>Action Planning</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Workshop 6.1</td>
<td>Organising for School Change</td>
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<tr>
<td>Workshop 6.2</td>
<td>School Development Projects</td>
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<tr>
<td>Workshop 6.3</td>
<td>School Development Projects and GLEENET</td>
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<tr>
<td>Workshop 6.4</td>
<td>School Development Project Planning</td>
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<tr>
<td>Workshop 6.5</td>
<td>Looking Ahead: Sharing Individual Action Plans &amp; the Next Steps</td>
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<td>Workshop 6.6</td>
<td>An SDP Example – The EI Project</td>
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<tr>
<th>Section 7</th>
<th>GLEENET Support Network</th>
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<tr>
<td>Workshop 7.1</td>
<td>The Uses of GLEENET</td>
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<tr>
<th>Section 8</th>
<th>Evaluation &amp; Closure</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Workshop 8.1</td>
<td>Evaluation &amp; Closure</td>
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Other Training Components (OTC) that were used in various phases of the course

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>OTC 9.1</th>
<th>Pre-Course Preparation</th>
<th>OTC 9.2</th>
<th>Icebreakers/Energisers/Teambuilding</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>OTC 9.3</td>
<td>Special Interest Groups (SIG)</td>
<td>OTC 9.4</td>
<td>GLEENET Practice</td>
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<tr>
<td>OTC 9.5</td>
<td>Resources Viewing</td>
<td>OTC 9.6</td>
<td>Presentations by Participants</td>
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<tr>
<td>OTC 9.7</td>
<td>Language &amp; Culture Class</td>
<td>OTC 9.8</td>
<td>Videos</td>
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<tr>
<td>OTC 9.9</td>
<td>Social Activities</td>
<td>OTC 9.10</td>
<td>Post-course</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

B. Post-Leadership Training Course Phases with GLEENET

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Phase 4: Reflection and action planning (continued from LTC with GLEENET)</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Phase 5: Carrying out actions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Phase 6: Evaluation of actions (then repeat Phases 4 to 6)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


93. Leinonen, Piritta (2007) Interpersonal evaluation of knowledge in distributed team collaboration


96. Heikkikäinen, Eija (2007) Täydennyskoulutus painumaisen opettajien käsitysten valossa


102. Länsi, Anna-Liisa (2009) Tuhat tarinaa lasten ja nuorten syrjäytymisestä. Lasten ja nuorten syrjäytyminen sosiaalihuollon asiakirjojen valossa
Timothy Bedford

PROMOTING EDUCATIONAL EQUITY THROUGH TEACHER EMPOWERMENT

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