

Institution: University of Exeter		
Unit of Assessment: UoA 29 Classics		
Title of case study: Delivering Transformational Relationships and Sex Education: The Sex & History Method		
Period when the underpinning research was undertaken: 2004-2017		
Details of staff conducting the underpinning research from the submitting unit:		
Name(s):	Role(s) (e.g. job title):	Period(s) employed by submitting HEI:
Rebecca Langlands	Professor	1998-ongoing
Period when the claimed impact occurred: 1 January 2014 - 31 st December 2020		
Is this case study continued from a case study submitted in 2014? Y		
<p>1. Summary of the impact</p> <p>For decades, relationship and sex education (RSE) has been deemed to be unhelpfully negative, focused on disease or pregnancy prevention, with an over-emphasis on basic biological information. The 2013 Ofsted Report noted that inadequacies in RSE can leave young people 'vulnerable to inappropriate sexual behaviours and sexual exploitation'. Langlands' pioneering research into the history of sex has informed the development of an award-winning approach to RSE, based on a curated, dialogic discussion of historical material/objects to inspire reflection and provoke discussion about vital topics such as consent, body image and pornography. The Sex & History method has been adopted across the UK and beyond as an effective means of delivering RSE in schools, museums, pupil referral units and youth clubs. Impacts include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Empowering thousands of young people, teachers, youth workers and charities with innovative RSE resources. • Informing the development and delivery of curricula and new statutory requirements for comprehensive RSE provision in the UK. • Generating new ways for museums to enhance health and wellbeing outcomes. 		
<p>2. Underpinning research</p> <p>Underpinning the Sex & History method is a framework for delivering sex education through discussion of values, stereotypes, cultural expectations and codes of femininity/masculinity, which also draws attention to their cultural and historical specificity. This framework is informed by Langlands' research into sexual morality [3.1] which demonstrated how sexual identities and choices in ancient Rome were shaped by the engagement of individuals with shared cultural products such as literature, law and education, and that sexual ethics was not a separate sphere of operation but was embedded in wider structures of power and status. Her research also articulated the benefits of this detailed study of ancient Rome for modern awareness of human diversity; its description of a culture with a different way of thinking about sex and ethics, and with different preoccupations, highlighted the culturally contingent nature of some of our current dominant controversies around sex. A belief in the value of such a dialogue between past and present lies at the heart of the Sex & History method.</p> <p>The method is also informed by a body of interdisciplinary research on the history of sexuality and sexual knowledge undertaken by Langlands in collaboration with Kate Fisher (History), Jen Grove (History, Classics and Museum Studies) and Jana Funke (English) as part of the <i>Sexual Knowledge, Sexual History</i> project 2008-2015 and from 2015 within the Sexual Knowledge Unit at the University of Exeter. This research has shown that claims about the past have been crucial in articulating sexual morals, in driving political, legal and social change, in shaping individual identities, and in constructing and grounding knowledge about sex. A key and original finding is that material from past cultures has functioned perennially as a stimulus for exploration of sexual questions. The research also asks how we can channel this fascination with history with a view to promoting healthy sexual development in the modern world, and it continues to evolve in dialogue with non-academic partners [3.2, 3.3, 3.4, 3.5, 3.6].</p>		

As a case study, Langlands and Fisher researched the impact of sexually themed material found at the archaeological sites of Pompeii and Herculaneum on understandings of sex, showing that visual material such as pictures and artefacts are a particularly effective medium, providing an immediate and arresting point of engagement with the past [3.2, 3.3]. Research into collecting practices, including Grove's PhD, supervised by Fisher and Langlands, revealed how collections of classical objects were fundamental to developing ideas about sex and sexuality in the 19th and 20th centuries [3.2, 3.3, 3.5, 3.6]. The research also explored the history of museums, changing display practices and the challenges museums face in engaging with their varied audiences [3.2, 3.5].

Further collaborative research undertaken, following the establishment of the Sexual Knowledge Unit (directed by Fisher, Langlands, Funke and Grove), has focused on the emergence of sexology and new scientific approaches to sex in the 19th and 20th centuries. This demonstrated that the increasingly medicalised understandings of sexuality developed towards the end of the 19th century, which continue to shape contemporary understanding, drew on anthropological, historical and material evidence, especially from past cultures, further demonstrating their enduring value, appeal and utility in shaping sexual knowledge. At the same time, it has found that classical material can be used to challenge and nuance the sexological categories which emerged in the 19th and 20th centuries and which have subsequently dominated both scientific and popular understanding [3.3, 3.4, 3.6]. This research has shown how and why historical material can enable critical reflection on cultural norms and assumptions, while providing distance and authority that mitigates embarrassment – findings that have been implemented within the developing Sex & History method.

3. References to the research

- 3.1 Rebecca **Langlands**, *Sexual Morality in Ancient Rome* (Cambridge University Press, 2006)
- 3.2 Kate Fisher and Rebecca **Langlands** 'The Censorship Myth and the Secret Museum' in S. Hales and J. Paul (eds.), *Pompeii in the Popular Imagination from its Rediscovery to Today*, (OUP Classical Presences Series, 2011): 301-315
- 3.3 Kate Fisher and Rebecca **Langlands** (eds.) *Sex, Knowledge, and Receptions of the Past* (Classical Presences series, OUP 2015, including co-authored chapter Kate Fisher and Rebecca **Langlands** 'Bestiality on the Bay of Naples: the Herculaneum Pan and Goat' (pp. 86-110)
- 3.4 Jana Funke and Rebecca **Langlands** 'The Reception of Rome in English Sexology' in Jennifer Ingleheart (ed.) *Ancient Rome and the Construction of Modern Homosexual Identities* (2015, Classical Presences series OUP): 109-125
- 3.5 Rebecca **Langlands**, Kate Fisher and Jen Grove (2016) 'Sex and History': talking sex with objects from the past' in Mary Lou Rasmussen and Louisa Allen (eds.) *Handbook of Sexuality Education*, (Palgrave, London): 29-51.
- 3.6 Kate Fisher, Jana Funke, Jen Grove, Rebecca **Langlands** 'Illustrating Phallic Worship: Uses of Material Objects in Antiquarianism and Sexual Science' in special issue of *Word & Image* 33 "Mediating the Materiality of the Past, 1720-1930" (2017): 324-337

4. Details of the impact

This case study is related to a 2014 one, where a teaching resource piloted in Cornwall revealed the potential of object-based learning in sex education, and preliminary collaborations with museums in Plymouth, Truro and Exeter demonstrated the value of engaging young people with sexually themed museum collections. However, this new case study relies on a substantial corpus of new research (in addition to that which informed the previous case study) and reflects an entirely new body of impact. Since 2014, the Sex & History teaching resource piloted in Cornwall has been replaced by an entirely new suite of resources using new objects, and in collaboration with leading sex educationalists, a more robust method has been established and disseminated.

Empowering young people, teachers, youth workers and charities with innovative RSE resources

In 2014, Langlands, Fisher and Grove, in collaboration with two professional sex educators, devised an educational method based on historical objects embedded in a series of RSE resources for Key Stages 4 and 5. Now with an additional set of dedicated LGBT resources, produced in 2017 in collaboration with national educational charity *Schools Out*, these have been available in the UK and globally online since 2014 [5.1].

Teachers report that the resources 'work incredibly well' [5.2] and leading sex educationalists highlight their value in promoting cross-curricular approaches and giving teachers confidence by incorporating the ways they are used to teaching into the delivery of sex education [5.3]. They emphasise the benefits of 'distancing the discussion' around topics like pornography, making them easier to approach [5.3]. This encourages students who would otherwise be too embarrassed to talk [5.3] leading to a 'much better and safer discussion than an open debate' [5.3]. They add that the resources are unusual in providing 'interesting and challenging resources that extend learning' for pupils in KS5, making RSE more 'than just a pastoral intervention, but actually an intellectual and interesting part of the curriculum' [5.3]. This is supported by feedback from teachers and pupils: 'It is fascinating to see historical objects used to discuss modern-day issues with clear links for students to follow. This will allow students to develop critical thinking and analysis skills.' (Beck, secondary history teacher) [5.2]. 'I overheard a boy telling his mum about it at the end of the day. He was really fired up about it. Sounds like an awesome session.' (teacher, Bath) [5.2]. 'Really, really great. Inspired a good discussion.' (pupil) [5.2]

Sex & History has also proved effective in specialist educational settings. In 2016, a pupil referral unit in Exeter used the method in a week-long drama project with three pupils who had experienced forms of sexual exploitation. Reported outcomes include increase in confidence, 'bonding' and 'promoting relationships between staff and students...so vital in the units' [5.2]. In Cornwall, sexual health charity Brook used the method with a group of young fathers, reporting increased confidence in discussing sexual issues [5.2]. In Plymouth, as part of the 'HOLD project', pioneering social enterprise Effervescent Arts used the method from 2016-2020 with small groups of young people with experiences of severe childhood trauma, including domestic violence, substance abuse and sexual exploitation, resulting in six exhibitions/ installations at Radiant Gallery for periods of two to four months. The impact on the 39 children involved was substantial. Data collected six months after the end of the project showed significant increases in all attainment, wellbeing and behavioural measures [5.4], while the resulting exhibitions also had an impact on those who work with at-risk young people. Representatives from the NSPCC recommended that the 'Poison' exhibition (2017) be incorporated into the charity's programme for continuing professional development, with a youth worker commenting: 'This will help and further my understanding of hidden harm. I work with children who suffer from developmental trauma in schools. I think you could achieve a shift in educational understanding if you presented this in schools. It would beat the PowerPoint presentations I deliver on the subject.' [5.4]

Since 2014, the teaching resources have been freely accessible worldwide via the TES website, from which they have been downloaded 1,318 times (as of December 2020), with a 4.8/5 star rating. The LGBT resources hosted by the University of Exeter have been downloaded 2,467 times (as of December 2020) [5.1]. The resource has been downloaded worldwide (e.g., in September-December 2020 alone, in Ireland, France, Iceland, Hong Kong and New Zealand). In France, the resources are being used in the creation of an association for the promotion of inclusive sex education [5.2].

The team has worked directly with more than 50 schools (2014-20) to deliver both training to teachers and RSE lessons to pupils [5.2]. However, the Sex & History method has been more widely disseminated across the country through its enthusiastic take-up by highly regarded external agencies. The Sex Education Forum (SEF) is the foremost umbrella network for RSE in the UK, dedicated to quality and equitable RSE, delivering lessons in

schools as well as in-depth training to teachers. For example, one member of staff estimated she had delivered lessons to over 400 children and trained over 200 teachers in the past two years [5.3]. In addition, since 2015 SEF have integrated Sex & History resources into various training programmes, including: the government-funded anti-homophobic, -biphobic and -transphobic bullying programme delivered to over 800 schools through face-to-face training (2015-9); the core training package in all 38 secondary schools in East Sussex over a two-year period; and SEF's national training portfolio, including approximately 20 one-day training sessions per year (each attended by about 30 people), reaching roughly 600 teachers annually, and 1000s over the past five years [5.3].

Another key organisation, School of Sexuality Education (formerly Sexplain), developed its programme in consultation with Sex & History, using the resources as part of its portfolio to deliver intersectional, feminist and sex-positive workshops since its inception in 2016. It is now a leading sex-education provider in the UK, working with 33,000+ young people in 200+ schools, delivering training for 250+ teachers, and featuring Sex & History in a PGCE short course at UCL Institute of Education [5.3]. The organisation's co-founder and CEO notes that the 'materials are cleverly crafted to allow young people to objectively discuss relevant social issues such as bodily autonomy, gender and sexual pleasure in a way that is removed from their personal lives and experiences... We have found Sex & History particularly useful in addressing anxieties around discussing porn... [it has] influenced our own practice in delivering sex education' [5.3]. These organisations also highlight the uniqueness of Sex & History in its allowing teachers to integrate it into the broader curriculum, and helping them deliver LGBTQ-inclusive RSE, 'a challenge for many teachers, particularly those who have not received training or who do not have support of senior leadership. The Sex and History resource filled a gap in that it looked more broadly at the social and historical context.'

In 2020, Langlands delivered teacher training via webinars, reaching an international audience: 20 members of the National Youth Agency (UK), 90+ teachers through National Education Union, 40 teachers in Hong Kong via the English Schools Foundation and 31 members of the UK Army Welfare Services (working in Cyprus, Kenya and Belize). [5.2]

Informing the development and delivery of curricula and new statutory requirements for comprehensive RSE provision

The impact of the Sex & History method on the delivery of RSE across the UK is widely acclaimed. In December 2017, it was commended by national charity the Family Planning Association for innovation and good practice in RSE [5.5]. In 2018 it was endorsed by Public Health England [5.6]. It is one of the featured resources on the PSHE Association website, and Sex & History lesson plans also feature in the Department for Education-recommended handbook *Great Relationships and Sex Education* (Hoyle and McGeeney 2019) [5.7].

As part of the development of a new statutory RSE policy in Wales, the team were invited to provide evidence at a Welsh Assembly expert panel in June 2017. The policy document informing the development of the new Welsh curriculum, including detailed guidance for schools, includes Sex & History as a case study of innovative and inclusive RSE [5.8]. The team also attended a UK parliament event in November 2017 that informed new guidelines on statutory RSE issued in 2019. Langlands and Fisher are regularly invited to contribute to policy and curriculum-building events for teachers, third-sector practitioners and government officials. These include the Healthy Sexual Development event for practitioners and teachers (Westminster, June 2017); Delivering Outstanding Sex and Relationships Education by Inside Government (provider of CPD for effective policy implementation to public and third sector – December 2018); Countdown to Statutory RSE with Sir Antony Seldon (Kingston, March 2019); PSHCE 200 Secondary Subject Leader Network (Hackney, July 2019) [5.9].

Generating new ways for museums to enhance health and wellbeing outcomes

In 2014, the Sex & History team curated the Intimate Worlds exhibition at the Royal Albert Memorial Museum (RAMM) in Exeter (April 5-June 29). With over 63,000 visitors, it was an important and innovative exhibition for RAMM [5.9] whose collections and content lead

testifies that 'Intimate Worlds provided an opportunity for RAMM to demonstrate to audiences and stakeholders the value and appeal of this type of subject matter, and its relevance... [it] helped to establish the status of the museum as a place for debate within Exeter.' [5.10]

The exhibition and its potential to inform sex education attracted national and international media attention. It was the most-read story in BBC Education news for a week in April 2014 and showcased with vox-pop reactions on BBC Devon's flagship breakfast show [5.10]. Its success shaped subsequent activities and policies at RAMM, including the sector-leading LGBT Rainbow Trail and the Queering the Museum project. [5.10] Following the exhibition, Langlands and the team were contacted by people across the museum sector, nationally and internationally, for advice on the display of sexually themed material, modes of youth engagement and the relationship between museums and RSE: curators at the Wellcome Collection sought their assistance in the development of the Institute of Sexology exhibition (London, 2014-15, 200,000 visitors); they were approached on an education programme regarding sexual health at the Women's Museum of Denmark in Aarhus in 2015; and they collaborated on the 'Sex in Six Objects' project in Cambridge in 2016 [5.11].

Since 2018 the Sex & History method's applicability to museums has featured on the Museum Studies MA programme at University of Leicester [5.11]. Stuart Frost, of the British Museum, evaluated the Intimate Worlds exhibition in a study exploring the potential for attitudes to sex and sexuality to be explored in UK museums [5.11]. The British Museum subsequently developed its own Let's Talk about Sex programme, and has since collaborated with Langlands and the team in advising a group of museums in Berlin (2015 to present). This has resulted in a permanent activity for visiting schools at the Bode Museum; a major exhibition, *The Eroticism of Things: Collections on the History of Sexuality*, at the Werkbundarchiv in Berlin in 2018 and subsequently at the Erotic Art Museum (WEAM) in Miami Beach, Florida in 2019; and the introduction of object-based learning about sexuality at the WEAM, including indexing, researching, curating and exhibiting many objects from the Naomi Wilzig collection that have never previously been displayed [5.11]. The 2018 *Museums as Spaces of Wellbeing* report, produced by the UK's Culture, Health and Wellbeing Alliance, features Sex & History as an example of best practice – further evidence of its wide-ranging impact on the museum sector [5.6].

5. Sources to corroborate the impact

- 5.1 Teachers' resource (TES) and LGBT+ resources; download data.
- 5.2 Teacher and pupil feedback to RSE sessions and teacher trainings (emails, evaluation documents from webinars; webinar video screenshot; written feedback from school-based sessions; feedback from Brook session; feedback from Pupil Referral Unit).
- 5.3 Testimonials from leading sex educationalists (Sex Education Forum, School of Sexuality Education, Dr Eleanor Draeger, Dec 2020).
- 5.4 HOLD project report (Jun 2020). Letter from Eloïse Malone, Effervescent Chief Executive (Dec 2020).
- 5.5 Family Planning Association's Pamela Sheridan Award for innovative relationships and sex education, Dec 2017.
- 5.6 *Museums as Spaces of Wellbeing* report 2018; Public Health England endorsement
- 5.7 PSHE Association features S&H screenshot; *Great Relationships and Sex Education* (Hoyle and McGeeney 2019).
- 5.8 Welsh Assembly Report December 2017 *Informing the Future of the Sex and Relationships Education Curriculum in Wales*.
- 5.9 Details of conference attendances and invitations.
- 5.10 Intimate Worlds evidence (RAMM testimonial; exhibition impact report – internal); RAMM email on visitor figures; media coverage).
- 5.11 Evidence of impact on the museum sector (emails from curators; testimonial from Andreas Kraß, Berlin, Jan 2021; Stuart Frost article).