STRATEGIES OF LEGITIMATION IN SEX EDUCATION TEXTS

by

LEE JOHN OAKLEY

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Department of English

School of English, Drama and American & Canadian Studies

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Abstract

This study seeks to investigate strategies of legitimation within the politically sensitive subject of sex education. Sex and Relationships Education (SRE) is one of the few areas of the present UK school curriculum which is not compulsory, and which contains a parental right to withdrawal of their child. The thesis looks at how arguments are marshalled in a small set of sex education manuals for British teenagers for the purpose of legitimating the subject to a potentially ambivalent readership. Legitimation strategies are identified within the texts and then broken down into their composite parts using the recently-developed argumentation framework created by Fairclough and Fairclough (2012). It is argued that the framework can be extended for use beyond their own remit of political texts, and that this can provide analysts of educational texts with a useful tool for investigating latent discourses.

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(1) Introduction

(1.1) Introduction

Sex education is perhaps one of the most controversial topics in the contemporary British school system. While many other subjects have had their own public debates as to exactly what should be taught, it is almost unthinkable now to question whether subjects like history, religion or science should be taught at all. One finds a very different picture with sex education, or to give its full title in the UK school curriculum, Sex and Relationships Education (SRE). At present SRE is neither a compulsory part of the UK school curriculum, nor a universally accepted subject in its own right: at present it comprises an appendage to the compulsory PSHE (Physical, Social and Health Education) and Citizenship classes in secondary schools (see Blake 2002). Even where it is included there are mandatory opt-out clauses for parents who are concerned that the subject matter is inappropriate for their child. Given such concerns, then, sex education practitioners and authors of SRE texts often find themselves justifying the very existence of the subject they are charged with teaching.

This study looks at such justifications within a relatively small set of sex education self-help advice textbooks. The aim is to show how these authors construct their legitimation strategies, and on which understandings (i.e. on which premises) they are invoked. The overall goal is to test the claim made by researchers in the field of sex education that this subject relies upon a negative discourse of 'damage limitation' which constructs teenagers as potential problems to be regulated and advised (e.g. Hall 2009).

(1.2) Research Questions

This study takes a Critical Discourse Analysis approach to the investigation of argumentation patterns as laid out by Fairclough and Fairclough (2012).

It addresses the following three research questions:

RQ1) How are discursive legitimation strategies achieved linguistically within the self-help advice textbooks, in order to validate sex education?

RQ2) What premises are these strategies based upon?

RQ3) What wider discourses are indicated by the analysis of legitimation strategies in the texts?

(1.3) Outline of the thesis

The thesis comprises 7 sections, which are summarised as follows:

Following this first introductory section, Section 2 reviews the existing body of research undertaken within the field of Critical Discourse Analysis and sex education, including sections on organizational discourse, political discourse and educational discourse. It also addresses the multidisciplinary roots of this topic by addressing both the linguistic and sociological traditions of legitimation.

Section 3 encompasses the theoretical components of legitimation, including its main properties and two primary manifestations. This section also discusses the significance of the work of Martin Rojo and van Dijk (1997) who published one of the first studies to relate legitimation to the notion of discursively constructed strategies. Their ten original legitimation strategies (Legality, Legal Procedures, Authorization, Normality, Consensus, Comparison, Special Circumstances, Carefulness, Negative Other-Presentation and Positive

Self-Presentation, and Concession) are introduced and discussed in turn, in order to establish a benchmark against which other strategies can be identified.

Section 4 outlines the data and methodology used in this study. Possibilities for data selection are discussed briefly, before the actual data selection parameters are identified. Finally I introduce the method which comprises investigations of premises, set within the practical argumentation analysis as recently developed by Fairclough and Fairclough (2012).

Section 5 comprises the analysis of the data. Each of the five legitimation strategies identified within the sex education texts (Special Circumstances, Normality, Facilitation, Necessity, Recontextualization) are defined and analysed within their own respective sections. Each strategy is broken down into its component premises in order to question critically the relations between them (Fairclough and Fairclough 2012: 16). Salient linguistic, syntactic and discursive features of each strategy are also commented upon.

Section 6 discusses all of the findings from the previous section in relation to their social, historical and political context. Patterns in both the use of legitimation strategies and the deployment of particular premises are interpreted, and the uses and limitations of Fairclough and Fairclough's (2012) practical argumentation approach are also considered. Findings are also summarised, with the strengths and limitations of the research identified, and implications for future research within this field discussed. This section then concludes with several brief comments on the study as a whole.

(2) Literature Review

(2.1) Introduction

The study of the concept of legitimacy has an extensive history, one which spans several closely related, yet distinct, disciplinary areas. Traditionally the preserve of philosophers and sociologists, questions regarding the nature of legitimacy have provoked discussion among scholars as to exactly how individuals are able to justify their actions. These questions have served to shape and guide the various traditions of legitimation study that exist today. The term 'legitimation' can be defined as the 'means' by which the 'goal' of legitimacy is achieved. In other words it is the process of invoking a state of legitimacy. Various disciplines have fielded different answers as to how legitimacy is invoked, the two most important of which (for this study) will be outlined below. In addition, there has been an increased interest among scholars in recent years in moving away from the traditional philosophical and social interpretations, to a more linguistic analysis of legitimation. These studies are borne out of, and grounded within, the tradition of Critical Discourse Analysis which developed in Britain and Europe in the latter half of the twentieth century. This body of legitimation research tends to investigate one of three categories of discourse, namely political, organizational, and educational (see below). In order to outline the recent history of legitimation research, the remainder of this section will discuss the key works and concepts from the fields of sociology and linguistics which have directly contributed to, and influenced, the field of legitimation studies.

(2.2) Sociological traditions of legitimation

The study of legitimation has traditionally been grounded within sociological studies of power in society. Following the neo-Marxist conflict approach to social interaction, legitimation is seen as a tool used by dominant members of society in the suppression of non-elites. While an argument predicated on class divisions would now be difficult to maintain in its original form, given the breakdown in the traditional boundaries of class upon which it was first based, the notion of legitimation discourse emanating from national institutions ('ideological state apparatuses', Althusser 1971) to encourage a sense of their own validity remains a central tenet of legitimation theory. Such state apparatuses include institutions such as the army, police, schools, the church, and so on, and Althusser (*Ibid.*) argues that they are the driving force behind relations of inequality. The maintenance of such inequality may be enforced overtly (e.g. the former racial segregation of Apartheid in South Africa) by the army or police, or covertly through the reproduction of ideologies in the mass media and educational system. These latter institutions have been variously called 'ideological apparatus' (as opposed to the 'repressive apparatus' of the army and police) or sites of 'hegemony' (Gramsci 1971), wherein the exercise of power is legitimated by the unquestioning consent of the ruled. Seen within the context of power relations, legitimation is a tool for the realization of power, whether it is used to maintain the status quo or to usher in social and political change (Habermas 1976). While it has been established that traditional sociological approaches to legitimation have explored it as an instrument for the enactment of power, I shall now look at what constitutes 'legitimation' itself.

Perhaps one of the most well-known definitions of legitimacy (in any academic field) is derived from the writings of the sociologist Max Weber. Weber defines legitimacy as comprising 'three pure types of legitimate authority', in which its validity is based on either

rational grounds, traditional grounds or charismatic grounds (Weber 1947/1964: 328). Following his typology, political and social leaders may counter accusations of impropriety by justifying their actions as being within the legal framework of the day. Such an example would constitute rational grounds, as the 'base of authority' on which power is legitimated is the law. Weber's second type operates on the grounds that the action has been performed either many times before (as in rituals and traditions) or that the agent performing the action has previous experience of doing it: ritualized behaviour such as attending church on Sundays falls into this category. Thirdly, a leader may legitimate their actions purely through charisma or displaying an attribute widely considered to be socially desirable, such as honesty, piety or being hard-working. This final category differs from the others in that power is seen to be emanating from the individual, rather than the institution(s) to which that individual belongs.

Criticisms of the typology have focussed on Weber's claimed causal relationship between *belief* and legitimacy (Ibid.: 130). For him, we may confirm the legitimacy of a situation by *believing* that it has always been the case. He goes on to argue that 'the legitimacy of a system of authority may be treated sociologically only as the probability that to a relevant degree the appropriate attitudes will exist, and the corresponding practical conduct ensue' (Ibid.: 326). The role of language in the cultivation and maintenance of legitimacy (i.e. through legitimation) is thus very much muted in favour of belief patterns (cf. Bourricaud 1987). Contrary to Weber's definition of legitimate power however, the political and social scientist David Beetham argues that 'a given power relationship is not legitimate because people believe in its legitimacy, but because it can be *justified in terms* of their beliefs' (1991: 11, emphasis in original. cf. Luckmann 1987). Indeed it is convincing to argue that legitimacy is not an ontological phenomenon, something which exists outside of human experience, but rather something which is brought into being through language. Beetham's emphasis on the role of justification in the legitimation process highlights the centrality of discourse within

societal power relations (see below). Similarly for Berger and Luckmann, 'legitimation is the process of 'explaining' and 'justifying'' (1966: 111), a process by which we can normalize particular versions or 'scopes' of reality. Their own model of legitimation is based on the subjectivity of legitimacy, whereby 'the function of legitimation is to make objectively available and subjectively plausible the 'first order' objectivations [shared human activities] that have been institutionalized' (Ibid.: 110).

Beetham's work on the legitimation of power highlights an important point about the potential problems one may encounter when using the term 'legitimation'. For example the term has different meanings depending on the academic field in which it is used. For legal scholars, Beetham states, the term 'legitimation' concerns the way in which actions adhere to the rules within a given society, with 'legitimacy' being equated to 'legality'. For philosophers, on the other hand, the term is based on the notion of universal truths and can be equated with 'morality'. Finally, social scientists look at how legitimation is manifested in behaviour which may be construed as 'evidence for consent'. In other words social scientists focus on how what we do (or do not do) confers legitimacy on an institution or institutionalized practice (Beetham 1991: 4-34). If we are to follow Beetham's typology of priorities around the term 'legitimation', what then is the priority of critical discourse analysts? Here the emphasis is on revealing the use of legitimation strategies to create and perpetuate social, political and economic inequalities between groups of people.

Returning to Beetham's analysis, he states that the three dimensions of legitimacy are 'rules', 'justifications' and 'evidence for consent'. The moral and legal rules which govern each individual society are clearly the domain of the legal scholar and the philosopher, whilst the social scientist may concern herself with the behavioural act of legitimation in context. By contrast the critical discourse analyst is primarily interested in the way legal and moral 'rules' of lawyer and philosopher alike are invoked linguistically as a justification for the

maintenance of power inequalities. This is not to say that legality and morality are the only potential sources of justification available: rather there is a whole range of evaluative criteria which may be called upon to validate an institution, or a proxy role or action connected to that institution. Consider, for example, the possible responses to an accusation of illegitimacy which could include arguments on legal grounds (legality), moral grounds (morality), rational grounds (teleology), and so on. The critical discourse analyst thus treats 'legitimacy' as a linguistically construed state of affairs. So whereas for Weber legitimation is essentially an exercise in belief, for other sociologists such as Berger and Luckmann (1966), Beetham (1991) and Bourdieu (1991) it is firmly grounded in the recurrent and perpetual negotiation of justifications: that is, through language.

(2.3) Linguistic traditions of legitimation research

Legitimacy is built around the sharing of norms and values within and between group networks. Language provides the means to share and negotiate these norms and values with others, thus acting as a kind of "social cement" whereby obligations are conveyed to reinforce the power relations within a given society (Bourdieu 1991). This point is elaborated upon in a (now) classic study of the properties of legitimation, which states that 'since acts of legitimation are virtually always discursive, it is theoretically rather limited to talk about legitimation without considering its linguistic, discursive, communicative or interactional characteristics' (Martin-Rojo and van Dijk 1997: 527-8). The present study characterises legitimation as a process operating simultaneously at two levels. At the 'micro level', it is construed as 'a complex social act that is typically exercised by talk and text' (van Dijk 1998: 260). At the 'macro level' legitimation is 'a complex, ongoing discursive practice involving a set of interrelated discourses' (van Dijk 1998: 255). This is an important point, as it reminds us that each legitimation is a representative element of a much larger discourse and, even more broadly, of complex power relations within society. A legitimation, therefore, can never be *just* a linguistic act: it is also 'a social (and political) act' (Martin Rojo and van Dijk 1997: 531). Even so, while it may operate on both a linguistic and sociopolitical plane, it is realised as a linguistic process in the first instance. Without the means with which to convey the obligations and justifications (i.e. through the linguistic act of legitimating) to others, it is impossible to maintain a state of legitimacy.

There is a potential for confusion given that legitimation operates on more than one level (see Chapter 3 on Legitimation Theory). For example, 'legitimation discourse' may be explained in terms of Foucault's now-famous definition of discourse as 'practices which systematically

form the objects of which they speak' (1972: 49). Linguistic features such as representations and metaphors may function, and thus serve, as an act of legitimation in their own right.

Here I shall clarify my usage. The term *discourse* is notoriously polysemous, and may mean different things within the context of different disciplines. For example, Baker and Ellece (2011: 30-31) identify no fewer than seven possible meanings ranging from the broadest (all language in use) to the more specific (such as spoken language exclusively). My use of the term *discourse* in the phrase 'legitimation discourse' correlates with their fourth definition: that of 'discourse... be[ing] used to refer to particular contexts of language use' (*Ibid.:* 31). In this respect I am concerned with the features which contribute to the sociolinguistic act of legitimation, and more specifically, to the legitimation of a particular social practice.

Legitimation studies have almost invariably been situated within the tradition of Critical Discourse Analysis, something which this thesis continues to do. Some papers (such as Jaworski and Galasinski 2000) investigate legitimation strategies within a sociolinguistic framework, looking less at the presence or absence of inequality and more at its interactional and rhetorical functions.

I shall now turn to the tradition of Critical Discourse Analysis to explore the studies which take as their point of departure discursive constructions of legitimation.

(2.4) Critical Discourse Analysis and legitimation

Critical Discourse Analysis (henceforth CDA) emerged as a coherent field of linguistic inquiry in the early 1990s (Wodak and Meyer 2009: 3). Its stated goals are to investigate problem-oriented usages of language, deconstruct the ideologies of societal elites, and to 'focus on dominance relations by elite groups and institutions as they are being enacted, legitimated or otherwise reproduced by text and talk' (van Dijk 1993: 249). Critical discourse analysis is thus geared towards 'studying social phenomena which are necessarily complex and thus require a multi-disciplinary and multi-methodological approach' (Wodak and Meyer 2009: 2). Within this approach, ideologies are propagated primarily as a means to achieve legitimacy for the social actors/institutions involved, as well as their norms and values. These norms and values (the *cultural arbitrary* in Pierre Bourdieu's terms, see Bourdieu and Passeron 1990: 9) are at once defined by the elite institutions and their members, and continually reinforced by the educational systems which convey them to successive generations within society (*Ibid.*: 10). The point at which persuasion becomes hegemonic is obscured by the tendency of sociopolitical institutions to present their own self-interests in ways which appear disinterested to the rest of society (Swartz 1997: 90, Gramsci 1971). Bourdieu even goes as far as to state that the majority of sociopolitical actions require a degree of obfuscation in order to achieve the legitimation and reproduction of the social order (Bourdieu 1986: 242-3). Legitimation is therefore a means of getting others to accept and internalize the obligations set by institutions. In turn this facilitates people's willingness to participate in the maintenance of social inequalities (at the expense of their own social or political enfranchisement), and as such confirms the hegemony of the present elite (Gramsci 1971). Whilst this interpretation is usual within many critical discourse analyses of legitimatory discourse (e.g. Zelizer 1993, Chovanec 2010, Peled-Elhanan 2010, Oddo 2011, Breeze 2012), it is somewhat superficial to state that legitimation operates in only one

direction from an 'oppressor' to the 'oppressed'. As well as 'top-down' approaches, legitimation may operate from the 'bottom-up', which for example would involve the acceptance and condoning of institutional action by those in subordinate positions (van Dijk 1998: 257).

The studies cited above construe the main function of legitimation as the manipulation of interlocutors. This points not to some inherent negative quality within the act of legitimation (as any glance over the literature might lead one to surmise), but rather to the default preoccupation with power inequalities, which is itself an artefact of the CDA framework used. As a term, 'legitimation' is in danger of becoming habitually associated with acts of coercion and subordination. While I do not wish to decry the prodigious amount of work devoted to examining the many contexts where legitimation is used for selfish or narrow political ends (which are often at the expense of ethnic, sexual and other minorities, see for example Martin Rojo and van Dijk 1997, van Leeuwen and Wodak 1999, Peled-Elhanan 2010), it is important to remember that there can also be an approach which 'exemplifies a positive style of discourse analysis that focuses on hope and change, by way of complementing the deconstructive exposé associated with critical discourse analysis' (Martin 1999: 29). Martin calls this a 'Positive Discourse Analysis', stating that 'if discourse analysts are serious about wanting to use their work to enact social change, then they will have to broaden their coverage to include discourse of this kind – discourse that inspires, encourages, heartens' (*Ibid*.: 51-2). To characterise the legitimation of sex education within these texts solely as manifestations of power inequality and coercion would not do justice to the genuine efforts these authors make in helping adolescents negotiate often difficult and emotionally-charged sex-related issues. Legitimation is therefore not just a tool of domination and hegemony (though these are regarded as its prototypical functions), but also a means to help realize positive social change, something overlooked by the majority of literature in this field.

I argue that sex education advice texts, which form the data for this study, readily fit such a description of enacting positive social change. Their function is to inform teenagers and to alleviate their potential concerns about sex and growing up. This is not to say that these texts are universally accepted as legitimate components of a child's education: a fact represented by SRE's current non-compulsory status in the UK school curriculum. In addition, the texts' laudable purposes frequently belie a rigid delineation of what constitutes sex and sexual identity, often resulting in factive representations of complex emotional, physical and social phenomena. This is partly a result of the discourse domain of textbooks, which tends to condense information into artificially simplistic forms (Bondi 2012: 104). It is also the result of subtle regulatory discourses (in the Foucauldian sense) which position and police the bodies of teenage readers in order to discourage deviation from what is considered to be socially normative.

Questions may also be raised about the suitability of such texts at all, given the often fraught and sensitive topic of childhood sexuality. The very texts which describe themselves as useful and helpful guides to growing up and sex, could also be read as an unwelcome liberalising force on young people by familiarising them with concepts they may yet be too young to comprehend (see Bhattacharyya 2002 for this argument). To this end my own reading of these texts is inescapably coloured by my own upbringing as a middle-class male in his early twenties, and having not so long ago read such texts for myself in both my school and home environments. My subscription to the liberal values of choice and right to know position me as broadly favourable to these texts, though this does not necessarily translate to every aspect of the subject matter. While I am also sensitive to more conservative attitudes towards sexual knowledge and young people, I take the view that ignorance of social issues (such as teenage pregnancy, underage abortions, the consumption of pornography by children, etc.) is a poor basis on which to tackle them. Sex education texts are thus an important resource in this

democratisation of sexual knowledge, though one admittedly fraught with inconsistencies and discursive tensions which potentially hinder any critical engagement with current sexual debates.

While it is acknowledged that 'legitimation plays a necessary role in the exercise of material and political power' (Swartz 1997: 93), it can only fulfil this role by appealing to subjective value criteria through discourse. Volosinov's (1929/1973) work on the ideological nature of the sign as something laden with pre-conceived evaluations is therefore of particular relevance to the study of legitimation. For example when a particular action or policy is legitimated there is always some justification which is invoked to ensure the compliance of interlocutors. This justification may take the form of an authority source (e.g. an institution, precedent, role models, laws etc.), an appeal to logic and rational thought, or an appeal to some moralised quality which validates the action (e.g. because it is *helpful*, or *wise*, or *the right thing to do*). This is not to say that all cultures at all times share a preconceived notion of what is an appropriate justification to legitimate with. As the linguistic sign is open to different interpretations at different points in time or space, there is no guarantee that a legitimation in one culture will have the same semantic status as it will in another. This point is picked up by Widdowson (1995) and Blommaert (2005) as one of the deficiencies of performing any Critical Discourse Analysis. Legitimation, as with any aspect of language, is not a fixed and stable semantic entity waiting to be investigated by critical discourse analysts. Rather it must be analysed as a historical artefact within a particular sociohistorical context: something which recent work on the Discourse-Historical Approach seeks to rectify (Reisigl and Wodak 2009). Recognising legitimation as a context-specific process frees the critical discourse analyst from the Saussurean trap of socially neutral signs (de Saussure 1916/1983) and allows their analysis to accommodate different legitimation strategies over time, space, and perhaps even more linguistically-motivated categories such as register and genre.

As I have mentioned above, the identification and categorisation of legitimations is wholly context-dependent. This makes an isolated legitimation analysis impossible to perform. Instead,

> …evidence for the existence of discourses will inevitably have to come from texts… More specifically, it will have to come from the similarity between what is said and written about a given aspect of reality in *different* texts that circulate in the same context. It is on the basis of such similar statements, repeated or paraphrased in different texts, and dispersed among these texts in different ways, that we can puzzle back together and reconstruct the discourses texts draw upon.

> (van Leeuwen 2009: 145, emphasis added)

A more robust analysis of legitimatory discourse will therefore corroborate legitimations taken from a number of different texts. This is not to say that this has not occurred in previous research on legitimation, though the analyses have tended to focus on only two texts (e.g. Reyes 2011), or texts taken from just two speakers (e.g. Oddo 2011). Further limitations lie in the restricted scope (in these two cases, the legitimation strategies used by American presidents to justify war) of the analysis, so that their findings cannot be extrapolated beyond the linguistic idiosyncrasies of the presidents involved. In other words they are examples of legitimation strategies within presidential war discourse, as opposed to legitimation discourse in itself.

(2.4.1) Organizational discourse

Much work has also been done on legitimation within organizations. More specifically these studies have focused on how legitimation is used to maintain and reinforce cooperation

amongst and between employees/stakeholders and the organizations themselves (Breeze 2012, Salge and Barrett 2012), and to validate corporate actions such as restructurings, takeovers and mergers (Vaara *et al.* 2006, Vaara and Tienari 2008, Erkama and Vaara 2010). Erkama and Vaara (2010: 816) have investigated how rhetorical strategies of legitimation are used by organizations to legitimate decisions, particularly in times of rapid change. These may be corporate takeovers or shutdowns, for example, and are large enough to warrant the looming possibility of a legitimation crisis (Habermas 1976). The authors define legitimation as 'specific, though not always intentional or conscious, ways of employing rhetorical means to establish sense [sic] of legitimacy (or illegitimacy)' (Erkama and Vaara 2010: 816), of which they distinguish five types, namely: logos (rational arguments), pathos (emotional moral arguments), ethos (authority-based arguments), autopoiesis (autopoietic narratives) and cosmos (cosmological constructions) (Erkama and Vaara 2010: 813, 817). These studies of legitimation focus on the well-formedness of persuasive arguments as opposed to their actual social function of validating organizational processes. For example, Suchman's paper attempts to divide legitimacy into two broad, distinct categories: strategic and institutional (1995: 575). These categories are predicated on the notion that legitimacy is either 'an operational resource' or 'a constitutive set of beliefs' (Ibid.: 576), respectively. These strategies differ from the semantic-functional categories of, say, van Leeuwen (2007, 2008) by focusing on patterns of argumentation rather than on the representation of social actors and institutions. Studies such as Suchman's construe legitimation at a much more abstract level than those investigating other types of discourse. These conceptualizations pay much less attention to the role of language in the constant renewal and maintenance of legitimacy, by treating legitimation as a predominately sociological process, rather than a linguistic one. This is despite the important work undertaken by Norman Fairclough (among others) on the central role of language in organizational change (e.g. Fairclough and Thomas 2004,

Fairclough 2005, 2010). Starting from a position that treats organizational change not just as physical (e.g. the merger of two companies) but also linguistic, Fairclough and his associates argue that institutional change also heralds a change in the discourse used by members of the organization, of which a turn to legitimatory discourse is just one example. Contentious organizational decisions may require on-going justifications.

(2.4.2) Political discourse

Another type of discourse in which legitimation features prominently is political discourse. This encompasses the sociolinguistic practices used by politicians and political parties when talking about issues which are often of national concern. Political discourse analysis can also be defined more broadly as 'the analysis of political discourse from a critical perspective, a perspective which focuses on the reproduction and contestation of political *power* through political discourse' (Fairclough and Fairclough 2012: 17; see also Chilton 2004).

Legitimation studies have been regarded prototypically as investigations into the justifications used in political discourse (van Dijk 1998: 256). Critical discourse analysts have investigated how legitimation is often used to attain controversial political ends, such as the example cited by Fowler (1991: 51) whereby 'a vast range of devastating decisions and proposals for cutting public spending have been cynically legitimated [by the Thatcher government] by appealing to a small cluster of consensual values, principally *efficient use of resources, freedom of individual* choice, and *self-reliance*.' Legitimations are therefore seen to be an integral part of the power relations which maintain hierarchies of social inequality (van Dijk 1998: 5). Legitimatory political discourse has been analyzed from the point of view of several institutions in which public justifications serve to validate their continued existence (Fairclough and Fairclough 2012: 242). For example there is a strong body of research

investigating the (de)legitimation of immigration in parliamentary discourse (most notably in the work of Martin Rojo and van Dijk 1997, van Leeuwen and Wodak 1999). Other research includes the legitimation of domestic policy (Mulderrig 2007 on New Labour education policy discourse, Dunmire 2008 on "the future" as a legitimatory construct in policy speeches), foreign policy (Oddo 2011 on American presidential "pro-war" speeches) and media legitimation discourse on political events (Zelizer 1993, Chovanec 2010). Alternatively, from a discourse analytic perspective, legitimation also allows us insights into how certain discourse strategies function as legitimation strategies. Jaworksi and Galasinski, for instance, look at how 'strategic uses of forms of address by participants in political debates [were used] in order to gain legitimacy for their ideologies' (2000: 35). This study is almost unique in legitimation studies in that it attempts to correlate legitimation discourse functions with certain grammatical forms (I shall return to this point in Chapter 5).

Recent work on argumentation strategies for the purpose of legitimation has been conducted by both Fairclough and Fairclough (2012) and Reyes (2011), whose study of two American presidents' political discourse is framed within the broader remit of a Critical Discourse Analysis (2011: 785). His work focuses on the rhetorical strategies used in speeches by George W. Bush and Barack Obama to legitimate military intervention in Iraq and Afghanistan, respectively. Reyes identifies five 'legitimization strategies' which comprise (1) Appeal to Emotions, (2) Invoking a Hypothetical Future, (3) Claiming Rationality, (4) Resorting to Voices of Expertise, and (5) Claiming Altruistic motivations. Reyes elaborates on the original four lexicogrammatical categories of legitimation created by van Leeuwen (2007, 2008), though not all of the elaborated categories are strictly linguistically-grounded. For example the strategy of 'Emotion' construes both explicit and implicit appeals to emotions as a means of legitimation. Consider the following explanation, quoted at some length, discussing a legitimation strategy based on emotional manipulation:

(4) On **September 11 2001, 19 men hijacked four airplanes** and used them to

murder nearly **3,000 people.** (Obama, 1 December 2009).

What is the point of sentences like (4) in a political speech in 2009? There is no new

information for the audience; the audience members have not forgotten 9/11.

Nevertheless, this sentence triggers an emotional mode (fear, sadness, insecurity,

revenge) in the audience, ideal to later legitimize political actions based on the effects

of those emotions.

(Reyes 2011: 789, bold typeface in original)

The main issue facing linguists here is that there is little explicit evidence in the text to back up an argument of this kind. It must therefore be drawn from the social and political context in which the text was created, with consideration being given to how the text is meant to be received (van Dijk 2009). Reyes' framework takes context as the point of departure, with the result that any linguistic utterance may be construed as a legitimation provided it is corroborated with that context. The example quoted above is thus a *means* through which legitimation can be achieved. The example itself is not a legitimation, it functions merely as a facilitator. In other words Reyes' methodology is descriptive in that political texts are analyzed for language which legitimates within the context in which it was written. His Obama quote (given above) has the *function* of legitimation. When compared to the prescriptivism of van Leeuwen's (2007, 2008) categories, in which legitimation is *represented*, it becomes apparent that the two definitions are performing two different roles comparable with that of Halliday's ideational (van Leeuwen's approach) and interpersonal (Reyes' approach) metafunctions (Halliday 2004). Van Leeuwen outlines how legitimation is discursively constructed (2008: 105) and is semantically and grammatically internal to the text.

A further point to note is that the term 'legitimization strategy' may mean different things to different researchers. Reyes, for example, glosses it as 'the discursive strategies social actors employ in discourse to legitimize their ideological positionings and actions' (Reyes 2011: 788). By contrast pragmatists such as Dunmire (2008) and Cap (2008) use it to mean 'a linguistic enactment of the speaker's right to be obeyed' (Cap 2008: 22). Hart (2010: 90) also states that 'legitimising strategies…are manifested in text through grammatical cohesion and certain semantic categories, especially evidentiality and epistemic modality'. The terms 'legitimation' and 'legitimization' are also seemingly interchangeable, so that the former term will be used here unless referring to a study which explicitly uses the latter.

(2.4.3) Educational discourse

Instances of legitimation play a perhaps even more significant role in the formation of the child's world-view than in the justification of organizational goals and actions. Following Foucault's concept of "Power/Knowledge" (1980), whereby the texts and discourses we are exposed to early in life have the potential to exert a disproportionate amount of influence over our understanding of the world around us, it is argued here that educational texts are sites where legitimations are perhaps the most effective. Indeed as Habermas reminds us, 'simple compliance [is] engendered by the individual's perception of his own powerlessness and the lack of alternatives open to him (that is, by his own fettered imagination)' (1976: 96). Textbooks in particular may play a formative role in young people's views of the world. Indeed,

> The textbooks children have to work with, and the books that are available or allowed in public libraries, are 'standard' texts, approved and usually 'well-tried', published by respected, large, and commercially successful publishing houses. *As*

children grow up, they are exposed to an official language of legitimated meanings in newspapers, films, and television, all of these media the products of vastly powerful business and state enterprises. *The dominance of legitimated language continues throughout our life.*

(Fowler 1996: 43, emphases added)

Fowler's argument draws attention to the fact that 'the power to legitimate or to delegitimate is usually the prerogative of those who have preferential access to public discourse via the media, parliamentary debates, textbooks, TV shows etc.' (van Dijk 2006: 362). Several scholars have also argued that textbooks in particular often contain 'legitimation work that goes into making acceptable what could otherwise be condemned' (Verschueren 2012: 192). Both Verschueren's (2012) and Peled-Elhanan's (2010) research investigates the use of legitimation in school textbooks to validate morally contentious actions. For example, Verschueren analyzed a collection of late nineteenth-century / early twentieth century school history textbooks from Britain and France, dealing with aspects of British and French colonial history. In them he found several recurring strategies for legitimating British or French colonial occupation of several Asian countries, for example by invoking the murder and maltreatment of missionaries to validate military expeditions into those countries (2012: 193). Similarly Peled-Elhanan looks at contemporary history textbooks used in Israeli schools, and how they legitimate the massacre of Palestinian civilians as a means to achieve a secure Jewish state (2010: 377). The legitimations made by the authors of these textbooks are intended to convince the readers (in both cases older children) of the acceptability of the actions whilst normalising the premises on which this acceptability is based. Fowler goes on to argue that 'our private language is regarded as minimal and mundane and, in so far as it discourses on social, personal, and political topics, it is deeply ideological because of its dependence on legitimated concepts' (Fowler 1996: 43.). In other words how we talk about

the legitimacy of a particular action, for example, tends to be constrained by our limited experience (our own individual mental corpus) of the discourse around this action. This has the consequence that 'another's discourse performs here no longer as information, directions, rules, models and so forth – but strives rather to determine the very bases of our ideological interrelations with the world, the very basis of our behavior; it performs here as *authoritative* discourse, and an *internally persuasive discourse*' (Bakhtin 1981: 342, emphases in original). Our language, then, is very rarely our own. It is derived from, and adopts, the discourses of others and thus the cognitive embeddedness of legitimated concepts is a fundamental by-product of our reliance on social meaning-making. Many concepts or institutions may first be encountered by young people within the context of a classroom, and so their first means of talking about or experiencing these will be via the mediations and value-saturated language of the educators. This is essentially the crucial point made by both Fowler and van Dijk: that those who control access to discourse have the means and opportunity to present something as legitimate (or illegitimate), and that there is not always another immediate point of reference with which young people can counter such representations. Other research on legitimation in educational discourse has shown that educational institutions (e.g. compulsory schooling) are legitimated in a variety of ways.

Legitimation in educational discourse can take many forms and be theorized in a number of ways. Scholars have pointed out the pertinence of educational discourse in the formation of the young person's world view, and consequently their implicit acceptance of legitimation strategies. Some scholars take a prescriptive approach to the analysis of legitimations in educational contexts (e.g. van Leeuwen 2007, 2008; Peled-Elhanan) whilst others use predominately descriptivist methods (e.g. Verschueren 2012) to investigate the premises which authors use to validate their assertions. The next section focuses on a particular type of educational discourse and how legitimations are used there.

(2.4.4) The Discourse of Sex Education

Sex education in the early twentieth century was very much concerned with sexual health and bodily hygiene, and was intended not as part of a school-based education given its controversial nature (Weeks 1989; Porter and Hall 1995), but rather as guidance for parents to instruct their own children. Over the subsequent decades (1930s onwards) there developed 'a clear expression of the ideal that sex education must necessarily encourage the "sexual instinct" to be channelled into approved social contexts, of marriage and parenthood' and that 'this was an articulation of official concerns about the impact of conditions of war on the morality of the nation, evidenced in rising rates of extra-marital pregnancies and venereal diseases' (Pilcher 2005: 158). Seen in this light, the attempts to get young people to regulate their own conduct evolved out of changing discourses of health education in school policy documents, coupled with widespread reservations about any public discussion of the matter. Sex education itself was only formally recognised as a legitimate educational pursuit in the 1956 edition of the *Handbook of Health Education*. The Handbooks were written on behalf of the government by the Chief Medical Officer, and outlined current orthodoxy in the provision of health education to school pupils in Britain. They were published periodically, with the first three editions appearing in 1928, 1933, and 1939 respectively (Pilcher 2005: 156). In these handbooks, as with the advice books which covered the same sort of ground later, there was an emphasis on moral and physical restraint as a means to self-betterment (Hampshire 2005: 94). In addition to this there developed a belief in the 1970s that 'if sex education was placed in the hands of central government, it would be shaped, even censored, according to political rather than educational needs' (*Ibid.*: 103). Such concerns have endured, and provide one explanation as to why the responsibility to learn about sex and sexuality was given over to the adolescents themselves. Indeed most of the texts looked at in this study come with disclaimers explaining that they are meant to be read alone at home or in public libraries.

At present there is a dearth of studies concerned with the investigation of the language within sex education texts, and legitimation strategies in particular. This is not to say the subject material has not received much scholarly attention from discourse analysts. Indeed there is a large body of research devoted to the discourses found within various sex education curricula around the world and within policy debates on the subject (e.g. Fine 1988; Bhattacharyya 2002; Bay-Cheng 2003; Allen 2004, 2007; Fine and McClelland 2006). These studies focus on the *what* and the *why* of particular language choices, but rarely on the *how*. The goal of this section is to introduce recent debates and research around sex education and to discuss the sociohistorical context in which the texts analysed in this thesis were written.

There has been a gradual shift in recent years in terms of how sexuality is perceived. For example, one recent study has argued that sex and sexuality were once considered in terms of binary differences such as hetero/homosexuality or (un/)safe sex, but that now the dominant paradigm for these issues is one of diversity (Cameron 2005: 482). This may present problems for some of the traditional "gatekeepers" of sexual norms and values: sex education teachers. For example Bay-Cheng has analyzed how presuppositions of what is sexually "normal" in American sex education school classes contributes to a 'narrow definition of adolescent sexuality', which in turn serves to undermine the expression of diverse sexual predispositions and orientations within the classroom (2003: 71). Indeed,

> Sexuality and sexual behaviour are always and everywhere constrained (and at the same time, importantly, enabled) by the rules and conventions, the categories and definitions, the conflicting stories and the competing arguments, that circulate in discourse.

> (Cameron and Kulick 2003: 43).

Of course the physical act of copulation is ontologically grounded, but the meanings, attitudes and values we assign to that act are negotiated within discourse. Indeed for the purposes of this thesis it would be necessary to add *legitimations* to Cameron and Kulick's list of entities which constrain sexuality and sexual behaviour. Obligations over what one could (or should not) learn about play a vital role in the representation of sex. They serve as a filtering process in the discourse whereby discussions of sexually-related matters can be both policed and judged against the sexual norms and values of a given society. Indeed, then, 'the study of discourse on sexuality...can illuminate a range of politically important issues' (Ibid.: 154).

One of the main issues with the communication of sex education is the taboo nature of much of the subject matter. Much concern is often expressed about the effects of teaching young people about sex, mainly because of the assumption that they will want to act upon what they learn (Bhattacharyya 2002: 132). This assumption results in a paradoxical tension whereby childhood sexuality is conceded, yet denied and policed by sex education texts (Paechter 2004: 314). Paechter explains this underlying tension as a consequence of the schooling experience. She argues that 'schools discipline both children's bodies in general and their sexuality and sexual expression in particular' by training them 'in the proper control of the body, through a panoptic mechanism whereby they internalize adult mores' (2004: 309, 315). These anxieties necessitate a greater, and more frequent, reliance on legitimations to defend against accusations of impropriety on the part of the teacher and school as a whole. In cultures where sex education beyond the processes of the human reproductive cycle are not a compulsory part of the school curriculum (as is the case in contemporary Britain), and where open discussion of sex is widely considered taboo, it is perhaps unsurprising to find that justifications for educational discussions of sex tend to be grounded within the more socially acceptable area of health education (Allen 2004). Indeed, Epstein and Johnson concur that 'it

is within this framework that "public health pragmatism" finds its more general philosophical justifications' (1998: 69). The tendency to legitimate sex education based on the promotion of health benefits to its target audience has a long history, and has resulted in a number of negative themes developing in the choice of justification. This is exemplified by the following passage, which I have taken the liberty of quoting at length:

> Sex education has been cast from the outset almost entirely within the framework of a strategy of damage limitation: the focus has been on the dangers of disease, pregnancy, loss of reputation and moral character, rather than the possibilities of pleasure and empowered choice. It is about controlling and regulating, if not entirely preventing, sexual exploration and activity….This theme of fear and prohibition has long historical roots, reflected most vividly in the central role in the advocacy of sex education of concerns surrounding the pernicious effects of masturbation or so-called 'self-abuse'. Even today, current arguments and policy-making are still heavily influenced by what are perceived as unacceptably high levels of teenage pregnancy and STDs [sexually transmitted diseases], continuing a policy geared towards warning of the dangers of sexual activity among the young and towards damage limitation.

(Hall 2009: 20)

It is not difficult to comprehend why more socially acceptable justifications based on damage limitation were chosen by teachers instead of those based on sexual enlightenment. This could certainly account for the tendency to choose negative-based legitimations, and would provide an alternative interpretation and counterpoint to the traditional assumptions of coercion and power play found in most other legitimation studies. It is therefore important to bear in mind that the choice of legitimation may be constrained or influenced by many contextual factors, not least considerations of the most/least socially acceptable justifications.

Related to the concerns outlined above are desire and pleasure. On the one hand, sex education entails a recognition that adolescents' bodies are sexual(ized) (Allen 2004, Paechter 2004), but on the other 'there are few sex education programmes which embrace the idea that positive experiences of sexual desire and pleasure are integral to young people's sexual health and well-being' (Allen 2004: 151). Even with the current recognition of the plurality of sexual predispositions in sex education advice texts, there is still a default towards representing sex as a procreational, rather than a recreational activity. Studies by scholars such as Moore (2003: 278) even go as far as to argue that 'books about human reproduction, produced for English-speaking children, both construct and perpetuate processes of social reproduction' and that this reproduction 'takes place within the context of capitalist, patriarchal and heteronormative socio-cultural norms.' So in order for books about sex and reproduction to perpetuate these processes, they need to convince their readers that they are legitimate. This general championing of procreation over recreation has led some scholars to lament a 'missing discourse of desire' (Fine 1988, Gagnon and Simon 2005, Fine and McClelland 2006). Similarly to the expression of damage limitation as justification (above), sex for procreational purposes is certainly regarded as a more socially acceptable justification for the teaching of sex education than sex for recreation. This has not gone unnoticed or unchallenged by scholars in the field of sex education. The following quote from two American scholars in the field turns the concept of acceptable justifications around by arguing that '*the more viable assumption* behind an interest in sex education is that it should work to make sex a more rewarding part of people's lives – to make sex education impart competence and not necessarily constraint' (Gagnon and Simon 2005: 85, italics added). Indeed this is an example *par excellence* of what Martin (1999) calls 'Positive Discourse Analysis', and shows that legitimations do not necessarily have to be based on restraint and the evaluation of risks or danger.

A final, but important, caveat to note here is that sex education is often considered to be the most ineffective source of sexual knowledge for young people (Gagnon and Simon 2005: 87, Allen 2007: 163). This is an important point to be borne in mind if we wish to assess the significance, or impact, of the legitimations in the sex education texts analyzed here. As Cameron and Kulick have stated, 'what needs to change is not only the state of young people's knowledge about sex but also their norms for communicating about it...Language, therefore, is not just a medium for sex and health education but something that must be discussed explicitly as part of the process' (2003: 154). One must therefore pay attention not only to what is taught, but also how it is taught. Some teachers of sex education find that what is planned does not necessarily correlate with what is taught, as general embarrassment on the part of both teachers and students often precludes any real or meaningful discussions of sex (Epstein *et al.*: 2003: 50). This problem is not as pronounced in the commercially available textbooks which comprise the corpus for this study, which are usually designed to be read in private at home rather than in a formal classroom setting.

The following section discusses the theory and methodological concepts surrounding the study of legitimation.

(3) Legitimation Theory

(3.1) Definition

As I have shown in the literature review section, legitimation may be defined along various parameters depending on the subject discipline or theoretical school. In order to reduce potential confusion as to which version is being invoked in this study, I shall now outline a working definition of legitimation which takes into account definitions already given by pragmatists, semanticists and discourse analysts. Here, I shall define legitimation as

> the process by which a social practice or institution is justified using some form of socially shared evaluative criteria.

As previous studies have shown, these criteria tend to be norms, values or a shared moral order between the legitimator(s) and their audience (Martin Rojo and van Dijk 1997; van Dijk 1998; van Leeuwen and Wodak 1999; van Leeuwen 2007, 2008; Reyes 2011). The evaluative criteria are not restricted to norms and values, however, as they may also invoke particular forms of knowledge, such as rationalization whereby purpose or utility is given as sufficient justification.

Legitimation is also a fundamentally social process. In other words one cannot legitimate a practice or institution in isolation, as others must be convinced of, and accept, its validity. Also, it is not possible to legitimate practices which are not based on the social. This may seem a trivial point, but it has ramifications for a study such as this in which natural, non-institutional feelings and actions are given as justifications for the existence of sex education. For example, many of the texts analysed here contain formulations such as '*worrying about sex can cause stress and make life difficult for you and those around you* '. These claims often do not explicitly bridge the gap between the natural and the social, meaning that the

premise of such claims (i.e. that learning about sex education will allay your fears and worries, and will therefore make your life easier) is left unspoken and assumed. While there is much to corroborate these assumptions when one reads more of these texts, the interpretative jump from the claim to the premise is simply too great to incorporate into a Critical Discourse Analysis. Such a move would attract the (by now) familiar criticism that 'these assumptions are naturally and inevitably made on the basis of *your* conception of the world, *your* social and individual reality, *your* values, beliefs, prejudices' (Widdowson 2004: 13, emphases in original). While presupposition does play an important role in legitimation, and will be discussed on this basis in the analysis section, I refrain from using it to formulate arguments not explicitly made by the authors themselves. In practice this means having to discard whole swathes of justificatory discourse which do not meet the requirements for classification as legitimation discourse. Moving on from this point, Van Dijk argues that 'legitimating discourse is usually accomplished in institutional contexts... [and] although people may perhaps be said to "legitimate" their everyday actions in informal conversations, such usage would probably count as being derived from a more formal lexical register' (1998: 255). Legitimation is thus to be conceived of as 'institutional counterpart to such justifications' (*Ibid*.: 256).

As van Leeuwen (2008: 106) reminds us, the first step in identifying legitimations is to ask the question "Why should I do this (in this way)?" This acts as the basis of his analytical framework whereby the different answers to this question are grouped into different categories (see Table 1).

Table 1 van Leeuwen's Legitimation Categories

Category	Sub-Category	Why should I do this (in this way)?
Authorization	Personal Authority	* because I say so * because so-and-so says so
	Expert Authority	* because experts say so * because Professor X says so
	Role Model Authority	* because experienced people say so * because wise people say so
	Impersonal Authority	* because the law says so * because the guidelines say so
	The Authority of Tradition	* because this is what we have always done * because this is what we always do
	The Authority of Conformity	* because that's what everybody else does * because that's what most people do
Moral Evaluation	Evaluation	* because it is right * because it is natural * because it is perfectly normal
	Abstraction	* because it has X (moralized) desirable quality
	Analogies	* because it is like another activity which is associated with positive values
Rationalization	Instrumental Rationalization	* because it is a (moralized) **means** to an end
	Theoretical Rationalization	* because it is the way things are * because doing things this way is appropriate to the nature of these actors
Mythopoesis	Moral Tales	* because look at the reward(s) this person achieved for doing it

	Cautionary Tales	*because look at the consequences this person suffered for not doing it*

Table 1 outlines the criteria for identifying different types of legitimation in all types of discourse. Each of the four categories (Authorization, Evaluation, Rationalization, Mythopoesis) is represented as a systems network following the style of Systemic Functional Grammar. The framework comprises glosses of justifications grouped into like categories. Thus any legitimation which appeals to precedent, or law, or the actions of a role model or 'expert' are labelled as 'Authorization' legitimation. The categories are not mutually exclusive, meaning that any legitimation may incorporate one or more types of justification from the grid above. Fairclough (2003: 99) makes the observation that 'a somewhat misleading feature of this classification of legitimation strategies is that all of them involve "moral evaluation" in the sense of reference to value systems'. It is therefore questionable whether 'Moral Evaluation' should exist as a category in its own right, given its presence in all legitimations. Another point of contention lies in the unequal nature of the categories, even allowing for the exclusion of the 'Moral Evaluation' category. For example, 'Authorization', 'Moral Evaluation' and 'Rationalization' all convey legitimation via reference to authorities, value systems, and utility, respectively. The final category of 'Mythopoesis', on the other hand, manifests legitimation as it is conveyed *through* (and not via reference to) narratives. While it is not within the scope of this thesis to discuss legitimatory narratives (though see Oakley 2012), it is important to note that the category is perhaps better conceived of as a medium of legitimation, in the same sense that Reyes (2011) uses it in his study. In the event that elements of Authorization, Moral Evaluation and

Rationalization are not present within Mythopoetic narrative legitimations, it is logical to align this category with Reyes' context-bound strategies.

(3.2) Types of legitimating discourse

It is also of interest to note that legitimations may be 'internal' as well as 'external'. External legitimations project outwards from an interlocutor, so that one legitimates a social practice or institution to which one has no immediate affiliation. This type of legitimation is usually 'bottom-up', whereby dominated groups legitimate 'the dominant group or institution through various forms of more or less active agreement, acceptance, compliance or at least tacit consent' (Martin Rojo and van Dijk 1997: 528). Some scholars have suggested that bottom-up legitimation works because of the attitude taken by many ordinary people that "what we get is what we deserve", thus providing 'a normative ground for compliance' (*Ibid.* : 529; see also Beetham 1991: 150; Verschueren 2012: 19). It has also been argued that compliance with the prevalent sociocultural order is not always a matter of individual choice, but rather one's actions and beliefs are shaped by the physical, structural and cultural standards we often think of as given (Sealey 2012: 195). These standards are usually established and maintained by those with the power to legitimate, such as legislators, teachers and superiors (Martin Rojo and van Dijk 1997: 529).

By contrast, internal ('self') legitimations project inwards from the interlocutor, so that one legitimates a social practice or institution with which one is affiliated. This tends to be 'top-down' in that social, political or business elites justify their own practices. Government leaders or officials (Martin Rojo and van Dijk 1997; van Leeuwen and Wodak 1999; Mulderrig 2007, 2011a; Reyes 2011), and the executives of multinational corporations (Breeze 2012) all fall within this category. As Martin Rojo and van Dijk (1997: 550) note, there are three conditions that must be fulfilled if legitimation is to take place; the legitimacy of the speaker and/or institution must be established, the representation of the social practice

or institution must bear some resemblance to a discourse-external reality, and the linguistic forms must be socially appropriate.'

In both internal and external legitimation there must be some shared basis on which social practices and institutions can be validated. Fairclough and Fairclough (2012: 109, emphasis in original) argue that 'the justification involved in legitimations seems to have one peculiarity, namely to invoke *publicly shared* and *publicly justifiable…* institutional systems of beliefs, values and norms, in virtue of which the action proposed is considered legitimate.' The representatives of an institution must therefore demonstrate its legitimacy using these publicly shared and justifiable evaluative criteria. The use of internal or external legitimations does not have to be mutually exclusive, meaning it is possible to combine justifications for one's own practices whilst criticising the practices of others. This could be manifest in the use of both positive self-presentation and negative other-presentation, for example (Martin Rojo and van Dijk 1997: 541).

In summary, internal legitimation discourse seeks to justify one's own practices and/or institution, whilst external legitimation discourse seeks to justify the practices of institutions of others. The former generally takes a bottom-up approach which sees dominated groups 'passively accept or actively grant… hierarchy or authority to dominating groups or institutions' (Martin Rojo and van Dijk 1997: 560). The latter usually comprises a top-down approach which 'involves strategies that seek to establish, maintain or restore social position and acceptable authority of a group or institution' (*Ibid.*).

(3.3) Legitimation, discourse and society

Acts of legitimation can provide researchers with a window into the prevalent norms and values of a particular society by allowing them to discern which practices or institutions require explicit justification in order to function normally. Thus it is helpful to describe legitimation as a marker of how integrated into society a particular social practice or institution is. It is logical to assume that the more a practice is legitimated, the more opposition there is likely to be to it. And by the same token the less something is legitimated, the more common sense it appears, and thus less in need of continual justification. So in the case of critical textual analysis, which is the basis of the present study, the frequency with which legitimations appear can indicate how contentious the topic may be. As van Leeuwen (2008: 20) writes,

> The role of legitimation in texts may vary in importance. Some texts are almost entirely about legitimation or delegitimation, and make only rudimentary reference to the social practices they legitimize or delegitimize. In other texts, legitimation plays a minor role, or is absent altogether….This of course makes this kind of text all the more important to study. Commonsense practices are the most deeply ideological of all, and it often turns out that they were hotly debated when they first became institutionalized.

Following van Leeuwen's argument, it seems plausible to postulate that a correlation exists between the amount of legitimation and the degree to which a social practice or institution has become naturalised within a given society. Legitimation is therefore a process whose absence is as conspicuous and significant as when it is explicitly present. Of course not all genres are concerned with social practices and institutions (Bhatia 1993), making a blanket search for the presence or absence of legitimations in text a pointless exercise. One must also

consider both discourse-external factors such as the authority or legitimacy of an institution, and the rhetorical functions of such texts (e.g. persuasion) in order to ascertain whether a legitimation analysis may be applied (Bourdieu 1988; Martin Rojo and van Dijk 1997). Where it is established that a text is written for persuasive effect (which includes educational texts), and deals with institutionalized practices, only then does, say, a total absence of legitimation become significant and worthy of comment.

One final point to note here is the role of social tradition in legitimation. The naturalisation of social practices and institutions has been argued to comprise an important 'mechanism of legitimation' in its own right (van Leeuwen 2008: 21). Bourdieu (1977: 79) calls this 'genesis amnesia', explaining that 'grasping the product of history… can only invoke the mysteries of pre-established harmony'. In other words, the origin of many social practices and institutions that exist today are not recoverable from memory, given that they were established at an earlier point in history. As a result there is often the impression that things were always as they are now, which in turn bestows credibility on legitimation premises based on the importance of tradition. This is one way in which an ideological practice may metamorphose over time into a legitimate(/d) component of culture (Holland 2006).

(3.4) Properties of legitimation

The act of legitimation itself comprises several levels or 'dimensions' which coexist simultaneously to form a whole. These levels are partly discursive and partly extra-discursive, and have been labelled as the *pragmatic,* the *semantic*, and the *sociopolitical* (Martin Rojo and van Dijk 1997; though see Suchman 1995 for the argument that the framework should be extended to include moral and cognitive dimensions. I have omitted to include these as limited space precludes my ability to discuss the non-linguistic aspects of legitimation in any great depth, cf. van Dijk 2009).

The *pragmatic* level is concerned with what the speaker/writer is trying to achieve (Yule 1996: 3), which in the case of legitimation is the justification of a social practice or institution. Van Dijk (1998: 255) argues that 'pragmatically, legitimation is related to the speech act of defending oneself, in that one of its appropriateness conditions is often that the speaker is providing good reasons, grounds or acceptable motivations for past or present action that has been or could be criticized by others'. It is also represents a 'linguistic enactment of the speaker's right to be obeyed' (Cap 2008: 22). In the case of sex education textbooks there is a twofold function on the pragmatic level. The first was alluded to in the quote from van Dijk (1998) above, whereby the authors of these texts legitimate sex education in order to defend themselves against potential accusations of impropriety. Given the taboo nature of teaching sexual knowledge to children, it is necessary for sex education authors to outline on what grounds they are willing to break this taboo. Whereas the first function concerns justifications for the benefit of wider society, the second is aimed at the teenagers themselves. Having already established that sex education forms a legitimate body of knowledge in its own right, the second function seeks to persuade teenagers that they should learn it (see Martin Rojo and van Dijk 1997: 533; van Leeuwen 2008: 105, for this

particular function). Pragmatically, then, legitimation is a complex discursive speech act which allows the speaker or writer both to defend themselves against criticism, and to persuade others into compliance with the social practice being legitimated.

The *semantic* level is concerned with 'the subjective or partisan description or *representation* or *version* of that action and its actors as truthful and reliable' (Martin Rojo and van Dijk 1997: 524, emphases in original). At this level one looks at how truth and 'facts' are defined, and how they are brought to bear as justifications for the legitimacy claim. To take a political example, Mulderrig (2007: 138) found that changes in New Labour's education policy meant that the 'facts' became increasingly geared towards the economic utility of education, rather than any pedagogical value for students. This functioned as 'a necessary legitimatory tool in the concomitant structural changes that entailed funding cuts and new forms of organization and regimes of evaluation'. The invoked 'facts' in question were based on a discourse of globalization, so that economically competitive forms of education were justified as a means for 'participat[ing] successfully in the global economy', and allowing young people 'to fulfil their economic and social potential' (*Ibid.*: 144). Mulderrig's example highlights how one can legitimate almost any social practice merely by adjusting the metaphorical goal posts accordingly. The ways in which facts are manipulated to serve legitimatory ends may be grouped into like categories and defined as *legitimation strategies* (see below). In turn these can be incorporated into prevailing discourses of knowledge in order to reinforce the validity of the claims (Martin Rojo and van Dijk 1997: 561; see also van Dijk 1998: 260; Fairclough, Mulderrig and Wodak 2011: 365). In the case of sex education texts the concept of interdiscursivity is particularly relevant given that they are sites of multiple and (I argue) competing discourses. As Fairclough notes, 'this level of analysis mediates between linguistic analysis of a text and various forms of social analysis of social events and practices' (2003:

218), something which relates the linguistic form of the legitimation to the social practice of the legitimation strategy within these texts.

The *sociopolitical* level is concerned with the contextual factors, such as (socially) appropriate and authoritative discourse, which facilitate legitimation on the pragmatic and semantic levels (Martin Rojo and van Dijk 1997: 524). More specifically this means the power and authority of the speaker to represent a particular institution, as well as their trustworthiness to provide credible versions of events. Seen at this level then, 'when we speak about "legitimating discourse", this is short for sociopolitical legitimation accomplished by discourse' (*Ibid.*: 531). Sex education texts, like political texts, self-legitimate by adopting an authoritative tone which ignores or discredits alternative discourses (*Ibid.*: 523, 550). As will be shown later in the analyses, the authors of these texts often construe themselves as *the* authority on sex education, and thus represent themselves as being in a position to defend the legitimacy of sex education. This notion is usually further reinforced by the inclusion of the author(s)' credentials in the blurb, outlining their professional experience and, interestingly, how many children they have (a feature rarely included by the authors of textbooks in other subject disciplines). While it may at first seem surprising for an author to give out such personal information about their families, it serves to establish their experience of sexual intercourse, and thus their knowledge about sexual matters, without explicitly acknowledging that they have had sex (see Figure 1 below).

Fig. 1 Blurb of Text J.

(3.5) Legitimation strategies

As Mulderrig (2007: 138) comments, 'discourse analysis… can add a missing dimension to social research that accepts the role of legitimation strategies… and yet fails to attend to how those strategies are realized'. Few studies have explicitly outlined how such strategies are formed linguistically (notable exceptions include those works based on the categories developed by van Leeuwen 2007, 2008).

The following comprises an extensive list of semantic legitimation strategies identified by Martin Rojo and van Dijk (1997: 534-542) in their analysis of a political speech given by a prominent Spanish politician. The authors argue that these strategies are frequently used in many contexts where justificatory language is employed to validate a controversial social practice or institution. These strategies are reproduced here in abbreviated form:

(3.5.1) **Legality** – This legitimation strategy justifies an action on the grounds that it is within the law. Speakers invoking legal justifications will often manipulate the wording of specific acts passed by national parliaments in order to evidence the validity of the action. Alternatively, a speaker may argue that the action was legitimate because it is not *illegal*. This argument rests on the unspoken idea that the status quo for social practices is one of legality, until legislation is passed to the contrary. The latter argument is more tenuous as it is based on a legal loophole, thus making it vulnerable to challenges over its legitimacy. Such a move also has the potential to damage credibility, resulting in the discrediting of a legal framework which allows such ambiguities and omissions to exist (Habermas 1976).

(3.5.2) **Legal Procedures** – This strategy is linked to that of **legality**, though with the focus on the correct and efficient execution of legal procedures, as opposed to whether the action or practice is legal or not. Because legitimacy is based here on how well the practice was performed within the confines of the law, the speaker can shift attention away from whether the practice should have been performed at all. However, this is no guarantee that this strategy will be successful, given that 'a legally permitted action may be carried out in a way that does violate the law or other general norms' (Martin Rojo and van Dijk 1997: 536). In practice this means that it is often necessary to corroborate this with other legitimation strategies.

(3.5.3) **Authorization** – This strategy legitimates actions by drawing attention to other sources of authority which are not represented by the person of the speaker. Other authorities may include 'experts', role models, or more abstract sources such as the law or tradition (van Leeuwen 2008: 106-109). Martin Rojo and van Dijk (1997: 536) also point out that this strategy represents a higher order of legitimation, as it encompasses both **legality** and **legal procedures**, for example, as sources of authorization. This strategy allows the speaker both to share and devolve responsibility for the justification of a practice, thus deflecting potential criticism elsewhere.

(3.5.4) **Normality** - The premise of this legitimation strategy is that the practice in question is not new or out of the ordinary. Such arguments may describe the practice as 'traditional', thus implying pre-existing acceptance on the part of other members of society. Like the **authorization** strategy, normality is an argument also predicated on evasion. Any attempt to question a practice justified as 'normal' can be deflected, because 'the rules of tradition are

enforced by everyone, rather than by specific agents' (van Leeuwen 2008: 108). In practice this means culpability is represented as lying with society as a whole, rather than with the legitimator themselves.

(3.5.5) **Consensus** – This strategy seeks to undermine the arguments of opponents by 'claiming that there should be no difference of opinion at all' when it comes to a given social practice (Martin Rojo and van Dijk 1997: 537). Speakers can 'establish attitudinal hegemony' by monopolising the moral or rational high ground, thus discrediting alternative or competing views on a social practice. Consensus also presupposes group responsibility based on the notion of shared truth criteria (van Dijk 1998: 114), allowing the speaker to include potential critics within accusations of culpability. Such a strategy may be countered by distancing oneself from the truth criteria used in the legitimation, thus undermining the claims to consensus.

(3.5.6) **Comparison** – This strategy centres around 'the claim that (legitimate) others have engaged in similar actions' (Martin Rojo and van Dijk 1997: 537). This validates those actions or practices performed by the legitimator because 'the positive… values which, in the sociocultural context, are attached to that other activity are then transferred to the original activity' (van Leeuwen 2008: 112).

(3.5.7) **Special Circumstances** – This legitimation strategy is the opposite of the **normality** strategy outlined above. Instead of justifying a practice based on how frequently it is performed, or how normal it is, the invocation of special circumstances provides justification

on the grounds that an extraordinary situation has arisen. This argument has been used by politicians in particular to legitimate military intervention in foreign countries (e.g. Oddo 2011; Reyes 2011), based on an imminent threat of attack. National leaders or governments may also use this strategy to accumulate power or restrict the rights of the populations within their own countries, for example, by declaring a state of emergency. One special circumstance known to have been used in the legitimation of sex education comprises moral panics about an impending sexual revolution among the young (Gagnon and Simon 2005: 85).

(3.5.8) **Carefulness** – This strategy is differentiated from that of **legal procedures**, whereby the latter is specific to arguments in legal contexts. Carefulness, on the other hand, shifts attention away from whether a practice is legitimate to whether it was legitimately executed, *whatever the context*. Essentially, then, **legal procedures** is a sub-set of Carefulness, though Martin-Rojo and van Dijk (1997) do not make this distinction. The varying levels of delicacy (to borrow a term from Systemic Functional Linguistics) are not accounted for in their framework despite some of the strategies being genre or domain-specific and others not so. The subtle shift in focus away from whether a practice should exist allows the speaker to presuppose acceptance of the practice without drawing attention to it. Because of this, the strategy is a common means of manufacturing consent (e.g. Mulderrig 2011a) for otherwise ideologically contentious practices or institutions.

(3.5.9) **Negative Other-Presentation and Positive Self-Presentation** – This strategy draws upon 'the pervasive strategies of ingroup-outgroup discourse' found within many media and political texts (Martin Rojo and van Dijk 1997: 539). By polarizing groups into 'us' and

'them' one establishes a sense of mutual exclusivity, which in turn engenders a sense of competition for (natural, physical, social etc.) resources, leading to a sense of threat. For the purposes of legitimation this allows speakers to justify otherwise controversial practices based on a perceived need for protection or self-defence.

(3.5.10) **Concession** – This strategy uses 'a minor concession and admission of not being perfect' as a way of mitigating criticisms of an action or practice (Martin Rojo and van Dijk 1997: 540). The purpose of such concessions is to suggest that despite minor flaws or setbacks, the action is in fact legitimate 'in the grand scheme of things'. Also, the use of concessions can create a sense of compromise between the legitimator and real or hypothetical critics, which in turn suggests a degree of cooperation which may or may not be reflective of reality.

While not exhaustive, Martin Rojo and van Dijk's legitimation strategies provide a useful starting point when searching for legitimations within a text. As I show in the Analysis section, sex education texts draw upon some, but not all, of the strategies identified here. In addition there are several strategies not explicitly mentioned above, which is worthy of comment. In summary, legitimation strategies are heavily context-dependent, and therefore it is to be expected that justifications for social practices in one context will not necessarily cross over into another. The implications of this will be dealt with in the Discussion section.

(3.6) Analysing legitimation strategies

The typology in the previous section outlines legitimation strategies in terms of the arguments that they make. This section is concerned more with how these strategies are realised rhetorically. The following observations may therefore be applied to each of the strategies discussed above.

(3.6.1) Schematic properties

Schematic properties refer to the types of argumentative schema deployed in the legitimation of social practices. They are composed of 'premises that pertain to the nature of the action, and conclusions that pertain to its social, moral or political acceptability' (Martin Rojo and van Dijk 1997: 532). Analyses of argumentation schema allow researchers to unearth the underlying logic holding between the premise(s) and the conclusion(s) (e.g. van Eemeren, Jackson & Jacobs 2011). The logic of an argument may not always be open to introspection and thus Critical Discourse Analysis has an important role to play in elucidating it for the purposes of social critique.

(3.6.2) Stylistic and rhetorical properties

In terms of stylistics, 'legitimating discourse tends to describe the actions in neutral or positive terms or by rhetorical means that emphasize the acceptability or de-emphasize the problematic nature of the action' (Martin Rojo and van Dijk 1997: 532). This section also includes particular lexical and syntactic choices which form the premises and conclusions which comprise the argumentation schema.

This thesis is especially concerned with such argumentation schema and the form and function of its composite elements. Trends in the choice of lexis and syntax are mapped onto the various legitimation strategies in order to provide a more holistic view of how legitimation operates. This section has therefore outlined the theoretical foundations which I take into account when performing legitimation analyses. The following two sections on Data and Methodology will therefore complement this by outlining the more practical considerations.

(4) Data and Methodology

Given the realities of a project this size, it was decided at an early stage of the study that a qualitative analysis would provide the best fit with the data I wanted to investigate (see below). As such it was decided that a close qualitative linguistic analysis of legitimation discourse, on a relatively small but representative set of texts, would be the most practical solution.

Questions have been raised in the past about the reliability and replicability of critical discourse analyses (e.g. Stubbs 1997; Widdowson 1995, 1998, 2000, 2004; Jones 2007). For example, would other analysts identify the same discursive features, analyse them in a like fashion, and arrive at similar conclusions? In practice it is highly unlikely that two individual analysts would ever produce two perfectly identical sets of findings which draw exactly the same conclusions. While this is one of the greatest challenges facing any who undertake critical linguistic work, it does not necessarily invalidate the whole enterprise. Some CDA scholars have taken steps to mitigate these criticisms by triangulating their interpretations with complementary analyses and even entirely different methodologies (e.g. such as ethnographic work coupled with close textual analysis). Triangulation is itself a powerful approach, and one which is becoming increasingly necessary to rebut the persistent criticisms which have dogged CDA from the outset. While I take the view that, at present, triangulation is perhaps the best approach for analysing sociosemantic discursive practices, it 'is best realized in a big interdisciplinary project with enough resources of time, personnel and money… [but, in the absence of these,] it makes sense to be aware of the overall research design, and thus to make explicit choices when devising one's own project' (Reisigl and Wodak 2009: 96). The methodological restrictions of a study like this (descriptivist, linguistic / critical discursive analysis, set within a particular textual and social context) mean that it is

impractical to perform such analyses on too large a scale. It is therefore necessary to define a series of parameters which can be used to select a relatively representative sample of data (see section 4.1 below).

The semantic criteria required for qualification as legitimation are:

(1) Does a proposition contain reference to a social practice, social institution, or proxy activity affiliated with either or both?

> (This rules out propositions dealing with natural phenomena, and actions performed by people in their capacity as individuals as opposed to representatives of some social institution).

(2) Is the social practice or social institution evaluated? If so, is it evaluated positively?

> (Propositions without evaluations are merely bald statements of fact. A positive evaluation of a social practice indicates that it is being justified, and therefore legitimated. Conversely, a negative evaluation of a social practice is indicative of criticism, and therefore constitutes an example of delegitimation).

The variable element in legitimations is derived from the second of the two semantic criteria. Social practices may be justified using a whole range of different evaluative criteria: a practice may be legitimate because it is helpful, normal, useful, legal, moral etc. Legitimations may also contain more than one justification, which may invoke one or more sets of evaluative criteria.

This study aims to build on the approach of Fairclough and Fairclough (2012) by showing that the analysis of arguments does not necessarily have to result in calls for the cessation of a particular social action. Whereas they argue that 'we can criticize a claim by showing that the action will have negative consequences, that will undermine the goals and values that the

agent is committed to, hence the action should *not* be performed' (*Ibid*., emphasis in original), this study claims that this approach can be used to *support* an argument, albeit one with faulty or unhelpful premises. In other words, the focus of the critique does not have to be the social action / practice (which the analyst may themselves agree with), but rather on any premises which are somehow detrimental to the argument or advocacy of that social practice. The premises may be fallacious, or invoke realities which undermine the effectiveness of the argument, yet which do not seem to be open to immediate introspection because these realities are so prevalent. This modified approach is therefore tied in closely with the positive discourse analysis agenda espoused by Martin (1999), showing that critique can be used to forward positive social ends in addition to the more usual (in CDA) questioning of morally or legally questionable activities.

(4.1) Data selection

The aim of this study is to investigate the premises of legitimation strategies in sex education texts. This entailed having to define what is meant by this. For example it soon became apparent that there are ambiguities over the decision as to how 'text' could, or should, be defined. Traditional definitions of 'sex education texts include textbooks, advice books, governmental guidance booklets to schools (on SRE), and sexual health leaflets distributed both by the National Health Service (NHS) or sexual health charities such as Brook and the Family Planning Association. There are also other media for sex education, including television programmes such as The Sex Education Show and The Joy of Teen Sex (both aired on Channel 4 on British TV), advice CDs, online discussion fora, and the information given by sexual health charities on their respective websites. It was quickly decided that the textbooks / advice books would provide the most likely source of legitimatory discourse, after the governmental advice booklets. While the booklets themselves contain legitimations of sex education, their editions are too few, and they are published too sporadically to provide sufficient data for a project of this kind. By contrast the burgeoning self-help book market provides many examples of textbooks designed for consumption by teenagers (and sometimes their parents). The other options listed above (NHS leaflets, advice CDs, webpages etc.) were ruled out on the basis that many were either too short or contained no legitimatory discourse at all.

Sex education texts from other English-speaking countries (e.g. the USA, Australia, New Zealand) were also investigated during a preliminary round of data collection, but their style, and the fact that they had been produced within different sociopolitical contexts, meant that they had to be excluded from further analyses. For example many of the American advice books are written by evangelical Christian groups and charities, resulting in a discourse and

legitimation strategies which are wholly alien to those books published within the British context. This left the question of how many texts to choose. Taking into account the methodological constraints of the chosen analytical framework, it was decided that ten texts would provide a reasonable and manageable number of examples. As became clear in an earlier stage of data collection, the strategies employed were sufficiently recurring to render more novel legitimation strategies unlikely in any further texts.

Having established the type of data to be analysed, the next step was to define the parameters within which to collect them. Thus, in order to qualify for inclusion within the data set, a sex education text has to fulfil all of the following five criteria:

(i) it has to be contemporary (and here I define 'contemporary' as within the last ten years, so 2003-2012);

(ii) it must be published and available in the UK;

(iii) it must be published in English;

(iv) it must be aimed partially or wholly at a teenage audience;

(v) it has to cover more than the biological aspects of sex and reproduction (thus ruling out biology textbooks).

Using these criteria a list of relevant books was compiled from online search engines and visits to local libraries. Ten texts were then collected on an opportunistic basis and added to the data, providing they met all of the above criteria. These texts are listed in Table 2 below.

Table 2 Texts used for Analysis

Text Reference	Texts
Text A	L. Spilsbury (2009) *Me, Myself and I: All About Sex and Puberty*. London: Wayland.
Text B	J. Powell (2010) *Teen FAQ: Puberty*. London: Franklin Watts.
Text C	R. H. H. Harris (2010) *Let's Talk About Sex: Changing Bodies, Growing Up, Sex & Sexual Health*. 15th edn. London: Walker.
Text D	J. Pollard and C. Kent (2004) *Teen Issues: Sex*. Oxford: Harcourt Education.
Text E	S. Levete (2009) *Talk About: Sex and Puberty*. London: Wayland.
Text F	A. Cooper (2005) *Puberty and Your Body*. London: Hodder Wayland.
Text G	S. Elliot-Wright (2003) *Puberty*. London: Hodder Wayland.
Text H	J. Bailey (2004) *Sex, Puberty and All That Stuff: A Guide to Growing Up*. London: Franklin Watts.
Text I	A. McPherson and A. Macfarlane (2003) *Sex: The Truth*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
Text J	C. Crowder (2012) *Sex Education: A Young Person's Guide*. Peterborough: Need2Know.

Figure 10 (see appendix) cross-references several salient bits of information about each text, comprising the year of publication, the number of pages of running text, the general themes which the text covers, and the intended audience of the text. Most of the texts are relatively short compared to textbooks from other disciplines, and discuss largely the same topics. The

figure indicates a general feature of sex education texts which those who are unfamiliar with them may not be able to intuit at first. Even though these books are known as sex education advice texts, they encompass a whole variety of aspects of adolescence and growing up. Thus one will find chapters on relationships, emotions, the human reproductive cycle, lifestyle choices, puberty, contraception, peer pressure, substance abuse, sexual abuse, internet safety, and illness: all in addition to discussion of sex and sexual health. It is perhaps more accurate, then, to conceive of these texts as general hortatory lifestyle books, with a special attention to sex. Each of the chapters (with the exceptions of those in the more extensive Texts C and J) devotes around one or two pages to discussion of particular topics. The information is often condensed into bullet points or illustrative text boxes, and is given in heavily evaluative language, which in turn is what gives them their 'moralising tone' (Blake 2008; Moore 2012). The texts are all aimed at a teenage readership, with many addressing both older children (c.9-12 years) as well as adolescents (13+ years). All of the texts are similar in terms of style and format, with the single exception of Text I. Text I is unusual in that it comprises a databank of frequently asked questions taken from the 'teenagehealthfreak.org' website (essentially an online forum where older children and teenagers go to ask health and lifestyle professionals for advice about sex, sexual health, relationships etc.). Forum posts are public so that both the anonymised questions and replies may be seen by other members of the public. In Text I these are collated and grouped by topic so that at least structurally the book resembles the other sex education texts. The questions are also reproduced verbatim so that irregularities in spelling and punctuation are retained.

(4.2) Method

Each text was read through entirely before looking for instances of legitimation, which were identifiable by the two semantic criteria outlined earlier (does the proposition refer to a social practice, and is this practice evaluated in some way?). This provided a total of 70 separate legitimations over the 10 texts. The distribution of legitimations varied widely, with some texts containing many examples, and others just one. The following table breaks down the distribution:

Table 3 Frequency of Legitimations in the data set

Text	Number of Legitimations
A	11
B	1
C	11
D	5
E	8
F	6
G	4
H	14
I	3
J	7
	70

The small number of legitimations is to some degree relative to the size of the texts in which they appear. It is therefore perhaps not surprising to find that most of the legitimations identified were found in one of the largest texts. However by the same token, it is perhaps surprising to observe that the largest text (Text I) has the second lowest number of

legitimations. This may be explained by the unusual nature of Text I, which comprises a compendium of questions and answers rather than one long continuous text. What is of interest here is the distribution of legitimations in the texts. 40% (28 out of 70) of the legitimations are found within introductory chapters or sections of the texts. The remaining 60% (42 out of 70) are distributed throughout the individual subject chapters / sections in the texts (e.g. "Relationships", "Puberty", and so on). The tendency of so many legitimations to cluster at the start of these texts could indicate that they are part of an initial move to set out the validity of their existence, and to counter potential questions about why teenagers need to read about this information.

The identification process was iterative, as the presence of a new legitimation strategy in one text necessitated going over the other texts again to ensure I had not missed examples of it elsewhere. Ultimately this meant reading the texts through three or four times. The legitimations were then separated into groups containing similar justifications, using Martin Rojo and van Dijk's (1997) ten existing legitimation strategies as a guide. Of those ten legitimation strategies only two were present in the texts ("Special Circumstances" and "Normality"), with a further three new strategies identified ("Facilitation", "Necessity", "Recontextualization"). Legitimation strategies are not mutually exclusive, meaning that it is usual to find a legitimation which invokes more than one strategy. The following three tables outline which legitimations comprised one, two, or even three legitimation strategies:

Table 4 Frequency of Legitimation Strategy Types

Legitimation Strategy	No. of Occurrences	Ratio to Total No. of Occurrences
(C) Facilitation	35 out of 70	**50%**
(D) Necessity	23 out of 70	**33%** (rounded from 32.85%)
(A) Special Circumstances	18 out of 70	**26%** (rounded from 25.71%)
(B) Normality	15 out of 70	**21%** (rounded from 21.42%)
(E) Recontextualization	5 out of 70	**7%** (rounded from 7.14%)

Note: It is important to remember that the strategies are not mutually exclusive. Many of the legitimations identified in the data contained two or even three legitimation strategies. The total occurrence figure therefore indicates how many legitimations contained *at least* this particular strategy. Thus forty-eight per cent of all legitimations found contained *at least* a facilitation strategy, thirty-four per cent contain *at least* a necessity strategy, and so on.

Table 5 Proportion of Legitimations comprising one or more legitimation strategies.

Legitimations comprising 1 strategy	47 out of 70 legitimations	(a) = (2 out of 46) out of 70 (b) = (11 out of 46) out of 70 (c) = (23 out of 46) out of 70 (d) = (8 out of 46) out of 70 (e) = (3 out of 46) out of 70
Legitimations comprising 2 strategies	20 out of 70 legitimations	(a) + (c) = (4 out of 21) out of 70 (a) + (d) = (9 out of 21) out of 70 (b) + (c) = (2 out of 21) out of 70 (c) + (d) = (5 out of 21) out of 70
Legitimations comprising 3 strategies	3 out of 70 legitimations	(a) + (b) + (e) = (2 out of 3) out of 70 (a) + (c) + (d) = (1 out of 3) out of 70

Key: (a) refers to "Special Circumstances", (b) to "Normality", (c) to "Facilitation", (d) to "Necessity" and (e) to "recontextualization" legitimation strategies.

Table 6 Legitimation Strategy distributions

Legitimation Strategy			
1 strategy only	(a)	2	a6, h14
	(b)	11	c1, c2, c4, c5, d2, d5, e3, e7, h5, h10, i1
	(c)	23	a2, a3, a4, a8, a10, c6, c9, d3, e2, e4, e5, g1, g2, g3, g4, h2, h3, i2, j2, j3, j4, j5, j6
	(d)	8	a7, e8, f2, f3, h6, h7, h11, h12
	(e)	3	b1, d1, h8
2 strategies only	(a) + (c)	4	e1, f1, f4, i3
	(a) + (d)	9	a9, c7, c8, d4, e6, f5, f6, h1, h9
	(b) + (c)	2	a1, c3
	(c) + (d)	5	a5, a11, c4, j1, j7
3 strategies only	(a) + (b) + (e)	2	c11, h13
	(a) + (c) + (d)	1	h4
		70	

Key: (a) refers to "Special Circumstances", (b) to "Normality", (c) to "Facilitation", (d) to "Necessity" and (e) to "recontextualization" legitimation strategies. Small-case letters refer to the texts outlined in Table 6, whilst the numbers serve as an identifying reference point.

To recap, the Research Questions underlying this study are:

RQ1) How are discursive legitimation strategies achieved linguistically within the self-help advice textbooks, in order to validate sex education?

RQ2) What premises are these strategies based upon?

RQ3) What wider discourses are indicated by the analysis of legitimation strategies in the texts?

In order to answer RQ1 I look at how justifications are constructed linguistically within the texts. Justifications are the basis for any legitimation strategy as they provide the reasons as to why a social practice is to be considered legitimate. Therefore the analysis focuses initially on linguistic elements known to be common to legitimation strategies (Martin Rojo and van Dijk 1997), such as purposive *so* and *to* constructions, other subordinating conjunctions such as *because*, and deontic modality in both verbal (*must*, *should*, *need to*, etc.) and adjectival forms (e.g. *important*, *vital*, *necessary*). Other linguistic constructions are analyzed as they 'emerge' from the texts. This is done by identifying the processes which characterize, or are affiliated with, sex education, followed by the identification of justifications related to them. Justifications take one of five forms within these texts, allowing them to be grouped into legitimation strategies accordingly – legitimation strategies are essentially strategies of justification used to invoke legitimacy. The linguistic features of these justifications are then analysed (e.g. modality, transitivity, nominalisation, etc.) in order to illustrate how linguistic strategies are used to construe sex education as justified, and thus legitimate.

RQ2 is answered by applying Fairclough and Fairclough's (2012) practical argumentation framework to the data, which looks at the premises underlying the various components of an argument (claim, goal, means-goal, circumstances, values). Premises are defined as invoked sets of circumstances (real or hypothetical) which provide a rational and/or logical backdrop for the purposes of supporting of an argument (see Fairclough and Fairclough 2012: chapter 2 and pp.36-38 in particular). As Fairclough and Fairclough (2012: 241) argue, 'it is only by understanding representations as premises in arguments for action that CDA can provide an adequate understanding of the relations between structures (orders of discourse, social and institutional facts) and agency, of the agency-structure dialectic' (*Ibid*.: 241). For this part of the analysis I used their model of "practical argumentation" (see figure 2).

Finally, RQ3 is answered by correlating patterns of premises with the legitimation strategies identified in order to reveal the assumptions behind the arguments made. Which scopes of reality are frequently invoked will provide insights into the authors' attitudes towards the purposes of sex education.

Fig. 2: Fairclough and Fairclough's (2012) model of Practical Argumentation
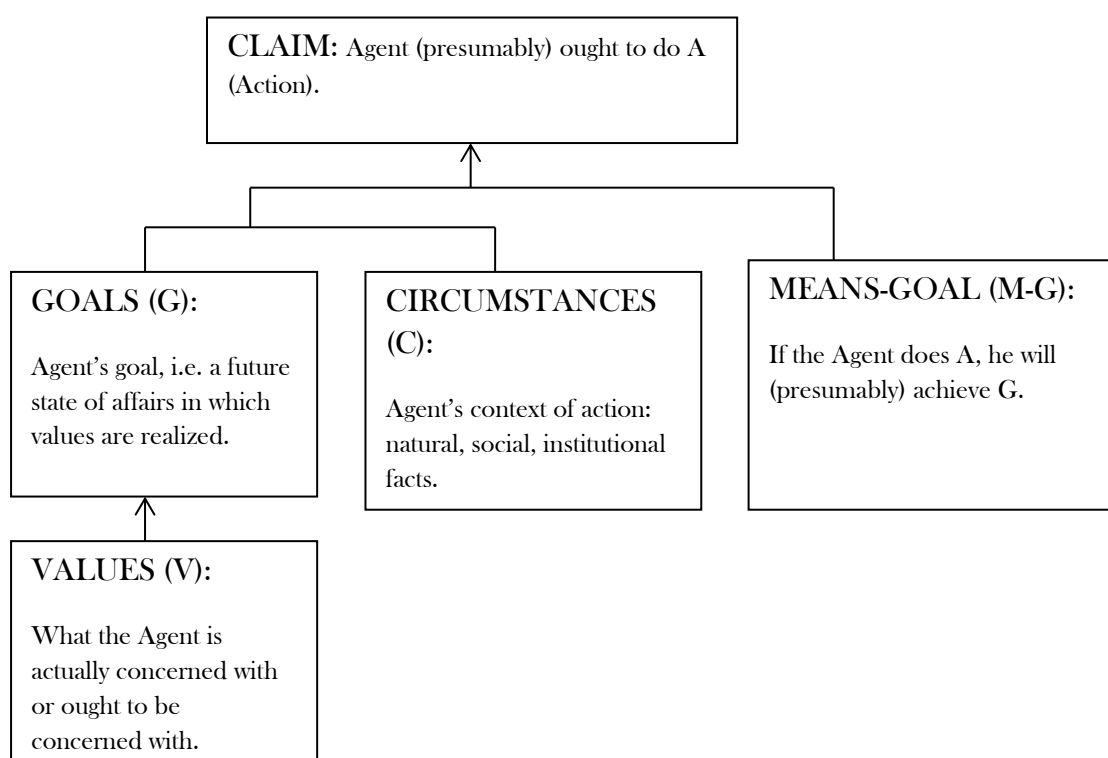
The first step in this second part of the analysis is to identify the constituent elements of the argument within each legitimation. This allows the logical relationships between each element to be investigated, in addition to the premises on which they are based. Fairclough and Fairclough gloss this as 'the hypothesis that action A might enable the agent to reach his goals (G), starting from his circumstances (C), and in accordance with certain values (V), leads to the presumptive claim that he ought to do A' (2012: 44). In the data set the Claim

element is constant, in that it represents the idea that teenagers ought to have a sex education (hence the existence of such commercial advice books). The Goal element thus represents what future state of affairs may be brought into being by taking part in sex education. The premises of the arguments are then cross-referenced with empirical research into sex education in order to corroborate them.

The two strands of analysis will help shed light on how legitimation strategies operate. By analysing the representation of these strategies it will be possible to outline exactly what legitimation looks like in a particular genre. Analysis of the methods of argumentation can also 'contribute to a better understanding of agency, of social action, and thus to an explanation (and normative evaluation) of social processes and practices' (*Ibid*.: 243). This can only be achieved, however, 'if analysis of representations were incorporated within analysis of practical argumentation' (*Ibid*.: 86).

(5) Data Analysis

(5.1) Introduction

In this section each legitimation strategy identified within the corpus of sex education texts is discussed in turn. I provide a definition for each strategy, before outlining the various premises on which it is based (this corresponds to RQ2). I comment upon any linguistic commonalities in the construction of the premises (RQ1), followed by a brief summary of that legitimation strategy. RQ3 is addressed in the discussion section following the analyses.

(5.2) Legitimation Strategy – "Special Circumstances"

(5.2.1) Introduction

The notion of "special circumstances" is quite broad and therefore requires some clarification. When used in the context of the discursive practice of legitimation, "special circumstances" denotes one-off or temporary situations which provide grounds for the enactment of a social practice (at the macro level) or a social action (at the micro level). The practice itself may be new, having been introduced as a reaction to the special circumstances. An example of this might include the introduction of more stringent immigration laws to cope with a sudden influx of foreign migrants (e.g. van Leeuwen and Wodak 1999). Or it may provide implicit confirmation of the necessity or utility for an existing practice, as when a terrorist attack validates the permanent presence of anti-terrorism laws which are inhibitive of many civil liberties (e.g. Rajah 2011). "Special circumstances" can also be deployed as legitimation strategies in order to justify drastic and potentially questionable actions, as in the case of the legitimations issued by the Spanish government when their officials used drugged water to silence North African detainees (Martin Rojo and van Dijk 1997: 523, 538). Therefore the relationship between the social practice/action may be one of proactivity or reactivity, depending on the type of circumstance involved.

Special circumstances can be invoked to legitimate in theoretically any context, though in practice these circumstances are almost invariably negative situations in the form of threats or problems, thus validating a practice which aims to contain or remove them. This contributes in part to the claim that legitimation is in danger of becoming associated solely with damage limitation and risk management in the field of Critical Discourse Analysis. Even though legitimation is prototypically concerned with the justification of controversial actions or decisions (Fairclough and Fairclough 2012), it does not follow necessarily that the special

circumstances invoked have to be associated with conflict, risk or threat. The first set of special circumstances exemplifies this exception to the rule.

(5.2.2) Premises in "Special Circumstances" Legitimations

Premise of inevitability / biological circumstances
At several points within the texts certain processes are invoked as circumstances in need of clarification or explanation. These particular circumstances are biological, and thus inevitable, as they pertain to the pubertal development of the teenager. The existence of these circumstances is presented as inviting comment or explanation, thus providing a basis on which sex education can be legitimated (on the grounds that it provides relevant comments and explanations). For example,

c7   **Many of the physical changes that take place during puberty cause our bodies to work in many new ways**. This means that young people have to learn some new ways to take care of their bodies.
e1   **Puberty is just the beginning of a long and exciting journey towards adulthood.** This journey is made much easier if you understand the changes that take place during puberty and how they might affect your life.
f1   **There are some new challenges to tackle in adolescence** – but if you are prepared for them they won't become problems.

Here, as throughout the rest of the analysis section, bold typeface signifies the premise(s) on which the legitimation is based. Where there is more than one premise, the bold typeface highlights the one which marks that particular legitimation out as an example of the

legitimation strategy being discussed. The occurrence of puberty is not the only biological circumstance which is invoked to legitimate sex education. In addition, personal desires and even one's mere existence are also given as bases on which to justify:

| h4   Which is why you need to know what sex is and how it can affect you, so you can understand **your own sexual feelings and wants (when you have them)**, and decide how you're going to deal with them – and with other people's. |
| h14   **Your body is the most amazing once-in-a-lifetime gift you will ever have. Male or female, tall or short, thin or fat, it's a spectacular, miraculous piece of machinery and it's all yours.** Understand it, guard it, treat it well... and wear it with pride! |

Several metaphors are drawn upon to represent these circumstances. For example in e1 there is an explicit metaphor in 'Puberty is just the beginning of a long and exciting journey towards adulthood'. This draws upon the highly conventionalized conceptual metaphor that is, 'life is a journey'. This metaphor in particular is ubiquitous in the discourse of self-help literature (Askehave 2004), and may take its origins from poetry and literature (Kövecses 2010: 35). The metaphor invokes a spatiotemporal process whereby a person moves towards a goal of some description, such as that of social acceptance or emotional fulfilment. The preceding stretch of text invokes the idea that journeys often require maps, and that this function is fulfilled by sex education – a theme returned to in 'This journey is made much easier if you understand the changes that take place'.

Another metaphor identified within this set is that of the 'body as a machine'. In example h14 the human body is described in adulatory terms as 'a spectacular, miraculous piece of machinery'. The excessive praise, and the inclusion of a second auxiliary metaphor in 'your body is the most amazing once-in-a-lifetime gift you will ever have', both serve to invoke a

sense of value so that the body should be understood and guarded. By establishing it as unique and of very high value, and imploring the reader to 'understand it, guard it, treat it well' using the imperative mood, the author legitimates the learning of such facts, and thus by extension sex education.

Other circumstances refer to specific biological developments such as 'many of the physical changes that take place' (c7) and 'your own sexual feelings and wants (when you have them)' (h4), or to more abstract representations of those developments, as in 'there are some new challenges to tackle in adolescence' (f1).

Premise of danger / risk

In contrast to the natural circumstances invoked in the previous premise, social circumstances can also be used to justify sex education. Threats external to the teenager are presented as outcomes of not knowing or being aware, and thus present consequences of not having a sex education. This includes:

> a9 **Sexual feelings can cause some people to use their strength, age or position in a family to force another person to do something sexual with them**. It is your body and whenever anyone forces you to do something against your will, it is wrong. You need to be aware of how to keep safe from dangers like these.

In contrast to the implicit positive evaluation in the examples from the previous set, the premise of danger and risk is marked by both an explicit and implicit negative evaluation of the circumstances in question. Thus with example a9 the negative evaluation is implied in the phrase 'to force another person...', thus necessitating a need to know how to avoid such situations. As with all examples in these premises, the link between the circumstance and the

legitimation of sex education lies with an appeal 'to know', 'to learn', 'to be aware', and so on.

Other examples of danger and risk derive from lifestyle decisions, most notably those concerning alcohol consumption and drug taking:

e6　Many young people experiment with drinking alcohol. It's important to be aware of the risks of this, relating to sex. **Drinking alcohol makes people feel relaxed and feel more confident. The effect of alcohol on the brain distorts thinking; it can affect a person's judgement about whether or not to have sex. Being drunk can affect a person's ability to clearly say no to sex, or to make sure they use contraception**.
f5　Drinking alcohol or taking drugs might make you feel good at first, especially if a lot of your friends are doing the same thing. However, you need to be aware of the dangers. **For example, it is rare for people to die as a result of taking ecstasy but each year the number of deaths related to ecstasy is increasing.**
h9　You probably know already that **drinking alcohol and taking drugs is incredibly dangerous, especially when you are young**. If you haven't been told about the effects of alcohol, or what the different types of illegal drugs are and what they do to you, then you need to find out.

This set outlines the dire consequences which await those who are unaware of the risks they take when using drugs or drinking alcohol. These consequences include distortion of thought (e6), poor judgement (e6), the inability to refuse sex thus making one vulnerable to sexual assault (e6), and even death (f5). This legitimation works through warning teenage readers by associating certain situations with extreme and negative outcomes. Therefore by performing a warning function, sex education is construed as justified.

Finally, the Special Circumstance may concern a more specific scenario relating to sex. Here the risk is not based on consequences which produce harm, but rather consequences which run counter to one's plans, as in:

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c43   Sometimes, when people choose to have vaginal intercourse, they have planned to have a baby. But **other people may want to wait to have a baby or may not want to have a baby at all**. That's why knowing how to prevent pregnancy is important.

Premise of ignorance

The final set of circumstances invoked by these textbooks concerns ignorance of 'facts'. The reasoning of the legitimation derives from the utility of sex education in removing or at least mitigating the young's ignorance of matters which concern them.

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a6   It is worth going over the facts about sex and contraception again because **you may not have been paying attention in biology class**.

(5.2.3) Premises

Unsurprisingly all of the examples contain Circumstance premises (as defined in Figure 2 – the natural, social and institutional context) as the source of legitimation, which is shown in the table below.

Table 7 Breakdown of justification premises in Special Circumstances

Premise of inevitability (biological circumstances)	Justification	Premise
c7	Many of the physical changes that take place during puberty cause our bodies to work in many new ways.	Circumstance
e1	Puberty is just the beginning of a long and exciting journey towards adulthood.	Circumstance
f1	There are some new challenges to tackle in adolescence...	Circumstance
h4	...your own sexual feelings and wants (when you have them)...	Circumstance
h14	Your body is the most amazing once-in-a-lifetime gift you will ever have. Male or female, tall or short, thin or fat, it's a spectacular, miraculous piece of machinery and it's all yours.	Circumstance
Premise of danger / risk (consequences)		
a9	Sexual feelings can cause some people to use their strength, age or position in a family to force another person to do something sexual with them.	Circumstance
e6	Drinking alcohol makes people feel relaxed and feel more confident. The effect of alcohol on the brain distorts thinking; it can affect a person's judgement about whether or not to have sex. Being drunk can affect a person's ability to clearly say no to sex, or to make sure they use contraception.	Circumstance
f5	For example, it is rare for people to die as a result of taking ecstasy but each year the number of deaths related to ecstasy is increasing.	Circumstance
h144	...drinking alcohol and taking drugs is incredibly dangerous, especially when you are young...	Circumstance
c43	... other people may want to wait to have a baby or may not want to have a baby at all.	Circumstance
Premise of ignorance		
a6	... you may not have been paying	Circumstance

	attention in biology class.	

(5.2.4) Summary

The Special Circumstances strategy operates using Circumstance premises as grounds with which to legitimate sex education. The circumstances appear in a variety of forms as inevitable biological circumstances, dangerous circumstances, risky circumstances, and circumstances of ignorance (see Table 8 below). Each of these real, potential, or hypothetical scenarios is brought to bear as justifications for why sex education is useful or necessary. And because these justifications are tied in with notions of utility or necessity (i.e. with the other legitimation strategies of Facilitation and Necessity, respectively) this strategy serves to perform a largely auxiliary role in the legitimation of sex education. This is supported by the fact that within the data Special Circumstances always appears in combination with at least one other legitimation strategy. In this the strategy is not unique, given the largely supporting roles undertaken by several other legitimation strategies as identified by Martin Rojo and van Dijk (1997): for example see their 'legal procedures' and 'carefulness' strategies.

Table 8 Summary of the Special Circumstances Strategy

Legitimation Strategy	Premises	Means of Realisation
Special Circumstances	* premise inevitability (biological circumstances)	* description of real scenarios (e.g. onset of puberty) * 'life as journey' and 'body as machine' metaphors
	* premise of danger / risk (consequences)	* description of potential / hypothetical scenarios with harmful consequences * semantic components implicitly construing positive negative evaluation
	* premise of ignorance	* description of hypothetical scenario

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The premises used in this strategy invoke a series of real, potential and hypothetical scenarios as Special Circumstances in order to legitimate sex education. Real scenarios include those events which may happen in the present, such as 'many young people experiment with drinking alcohol' (e6), or events which will certainly happen, such as the onset of puberty. The occurrence of problematic activities and the inevitable development of biological processes both embody a different type of Special Circumstances than the ones discussed by Martin Rojo and van Dijk (1997) who originally identified and developed this strategy. The circumstances in their study represent 'flashpoints' of political controversy which provide a license to use extraordinary, but temporary, powers to deal with alleged threats. By comparison the everyday, mundane development of teenagers is represented as a potential source of anxiety for them, thus legitimating mediation by those who have already experienced it. Therefore it is argued here that the strategy of Special Circumstances should be broadened to encompass not just temporary social events (as in Martin Rojo and van Dijk 1997; van Leeuwen and Wodak 1999, etc.), but also temporary biological processes too.

(5.3) Legitimation Strategy – "Normality"

(5.3.1) Introduction

The strategy of "Normality" legitimates on the grounds that the social practice or action is normal, natural, standard etc. Its validity is derived from the fact that the practice / action has been performed many times before, and will likely continue to be performed into the future, resulting in a diminishing need for it to be explicitly justified. Practices which are described as "normal" or "natural" are therefore usually already integrated into society, making any further justification of their existence seem redundant. As a legitimation strategy, a speaker takes a controversial action and then describes it in terms of being normal and natural, or to put it in Holland's terms (2006: 43), turning ideology into culture. Ultimately, then, this strategy is predicated on the idea that the practice is already embedded (i.e. accepted) within society, and is thus beyond reproach.

It is in this masquerading of the contentious into the normative that one discerns the logic of this sociosemantic strategy. Normality, then, 'simply shrugs its shoulders and refers to a presupposed reality: "That's just the way it is"' (*Ibid.*: 52). This notion can be applied in a wide range of public domains, and not just within the debates around Islamism and Western liberal free-market democracy discussed by Holland. As a form of legitimation it is pervasive. And given its pervasiveness it is sometimes difficult to intuit that such practices or discourses may not be normal or natural to all. As van Leeuwen (2008: 111) reiterates, 'the only criterion for distinguishing between a true natural order and a moral and cultural order disguising itself as a natural order is the question of whether we are dealing with something that can, in principle, be changed by human intervention'. And the role of such human intervention may be obscured by a collective "genesis amnesia" (Bourdieu 1977), so that certain actions or practices may become so integrated, so ritualized, within a given society

that it becomes almost impossible for members of that society to contemplate life without them. Arguments used for legitimation on the grounds of "Normality" are thus likely to appear as 'this is what we always do' or 'this is what we have always done' (van Leeuwen 2008: 108).

(5.3.2) Premises in "Normality" Legitimations

Premise of normality

Many examples in the texts construe sex education as a normal activity, thus invoking an a priori existence of consent regarding its acceptability as a topic of knowledge. Sex education is thus legitimate because it is ordinary and an already accepted part of society.

c1	**It's perfectly normal** for people to be curious about and want to know about their changing and growing bodies.
c4	**It's also perfectly normal** to want to know about sex.

Representations of normality include cognate terms, which also imply general societal acceptance:

h5	**It is natural** to be curious about rude words and jokes. It's all part of finding out about sex.
h10	**It is completely natural** to want to explore your own sexuality.

As Thompson and Hunston (2000: 14) note, 'some lexical items are very clearly evaluative, in the sense that evaluation is their chief function and meaning'. This is certainly true of the examples, 'natural' and 'normal' above. Such terms are indicative of prevalent norms and

social values, thus providing an insight into which social practices and ideals have become ossified over time to form the basis of a particular society or culture (e.g. see Holland 2006).

Finally, normality may be represented through high frequency modality via reference to what 'many' other people do:

| c2 | **Most young people** wonder about and have lots of questions about sex. |
| e7 | Read and research – and ask questions – and you'll quickly discover that **lots of other people have been through similar dilemmas.** |

Here the responsibility for the assertion is shifted away from the author(s) and to the invoked and supposedly incontrovertible facts that many others want to know about sex or, alternatively, that many others have been through similar circumstances. High frequency modality is employed to reinforce the sense of mandate and normality (compare with, for example, low modality, where 'few young people wonder about...').

Premise of common sense

Normality may also be invoked in different ways. For example, sex education is also described as sensible through explicitly positive evaluative terms. What is sensible is also likely to be what is familiar or the best course of action, and thus a normative activity.

d2	**It is a good idea** to find out as much information as you can first.
d5	Many teenagers feel unsure about their sexuality. **It is always a good idea** to talk to someone you trust about your feelings.
e3	**It is best** to check out the facts in books or talk to an adult you trust if you have questions.
i1	**It is therefore good** to have some idea about the ups and downs and the ins and outs ahead of time.

In contrast to the evaluative terms in the premise of normality, which justify sex education by evaluating it somewhere along a cline of expectedness (e.g. it is 'normal', 'natural'), the evaluations in the premise of common sense locate sex education along a cline of desirability (see Thompson and Hunston 2000: 23). Both constitute different routes towards claims of 'normality', albeit with one based on familiarity and the other on conformity with prevailing social norms and values.

Some of the activities (which are themselves proxy activities of sex education) are relatively explicit about the justification of sex education texts. For example e3 reads, 'It is best to check out the facts in books... if you have questions'. Such assertions may prove somewhat problematic for teenagers as little or no distinction is made between the quality and depth or range of information provided by such 'books'. Rather the teenager is advised to put their faith in the authority of written facts regardless of what they say, who authors them, and in what contexts. While this may only be a very slight exaggeration, it is a theme which recurs frequently in the texts as a whole. With perhaps a few exceptions, teenage readers are urged to submit to the authority and expertise of teachers, a move which has been actively resisted by many who actually take part in sex education (see e.g. Shoveller and Johnson 2006). So despite the authors' intentions to write textbooks which help and guide the teenager reader, I argue that these texts are, in reality, far from unproblematic (this issue is developed in the discussion section). Even when teenage students are encouraged to engage in different ways with sex education (e.g. through role-playing particular social scenarios in groups and through peer educators), they are often merely 'gaining practise in taking and pushing the 'right line', rather than exploring the complexities of joint decision-making' (Moore 2012: 36; see also Shoveller and Johnson 2006: 52-53).

(5.3.3) Premises

The table below outlines which elements of practical argumentation are deployed as the

source of legitimation.

Table 9 Breakdown of justification premises in Normality

Premise of normality	Justification	Premises
c1	It's perfectly normal...	Value
c4	It's also perfectly normal...	Value
h5	It is natural...	Value
h10	It is completely natural...	Value
c2	Most young people...	Circumstance
e7	...lots of other people have been through similar dilemmas.	Circumstance
Premise of common sense		
d2	It is a good idea...	Value
d5	It is always a good idea...	Value
e3	It is best...	Value
i1	It is therefore good...	Value

As expected the majority of Normality legitimations are based on Value premises pertaining

to normality and naturalness. However there are also two instances (examples c2 and e7)

which are sourced alternatively from the Circumstance premise of the argument. These

examples refer to the commonplace practices of others with high frequency modal

constructions, thus legitimating sex education by implying that it is normal.

(5.3.4) Summary

The strategy of Normality is defined as legitimation on the grounds of positive evaluation

criteria concerning how normal or natural a social practice or action is. No other logic or

rationale is presented as the basis for the justification beyond the sometimes unqualified assertions of the author(s). Thus the teenage reader is told that 'it is a good idea', 'it is best', 'it's perfectly normal' to learn and know about sex and puberty, without providing evidence to back up the claim. This is equivalent to the personal authority legitimations discussed by van Leeuwen (2008: 106) whereby authority 'is vested in people because of their status or role in a particular institution'. He quotes Bernstein's (1971: 154) argument that the assertions of personal authority is 'one of the hallmarks of the "positional family"', an argument which may lend support to the claim that our private lives are becoming increasingly the domain of 'experts' whose pronouncements attempt to mould what we should and should not do, and how we should and should not behave. As has been discussed in an earlier section, the responsibility to teach sex education has gradually transferred from parents to educational establishments (e.g. Gagnon and Simon 2005), something which may also account for the presence of such unqualified assertions in these textbooks. Table 10, below, identifies salient linguistic features of the Normality strategy:

Table 10 Summary of the Normality Strategy

Legitimation Strategy	Premises	Means of Realisation
Normality	* premise of normality	* assertions using evaluative words and phrases (e.g. 'perfectly normal', 'natural') which denote a cline of expectedness
		* high frequency adjectives ('Many young people', '...lots of other people')
	* premise of common sense	* assertions using evaluative words and phrases (e.g. 'a good idea', 'good') which denote a cline of desirability

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(5.4) Legitimation Strategy – "Facilitation"

(5.4.1) Introduction

The legitimation strategy of "Facilitation" justifies a given social action or practice on the grounds that it is instrumental to the completion of some desired goal, effect or use (van Leeuwen 2008: 113). Though van Leeuwen uses the term "Instrumental Rationalization", the term "Facilitation" is preferred here in order to keep the focus on utility rather than 'on the principle of success, of "whether it works or not", i.e. on a rationality of means and ends' (*Ibid*.). I take the view that the binary of success/failure is a limiting principle on which to base a legitimation strategy, and that a principle of utility allows for legitimations which exist in a semantic grey area in between the two extremes: the work of Mulderrig (2011b, 2012) on the increasing prevalence of what she calls 'managing actions' (e.g. this will *help* you to..., our policies *allow* teachers to...) in contemporary society is a case in point. There is a significant degree of scope in terms of the form this facilitation may take, as a social practice may provide one with material, symbolic or semiotic (e.g. in the form of expressed consent) means with which to achieve a goal. "Facilitation" also allows one to achieve different types of goals, in addition to the means by which they are achieved, so that the legitimation of a social practice can be predicated on (not) doing something. This strategy is therefore based on the notion of utility, which shifts attention to its functions and effects, making it appear self-evidently justified (*Ibid*.: 113-115; Martin Rojo and van Dijk 1997: 536, 539; Fairclough 2003: 99).

"Facilitation" legitimates by providing means to ends, regardless of whether the means or ends should exist at all. This type of argument may be undermined by exposing the presuppositions on which it is based. Returning to Mulderrig's (2007, 2011a) examples of the economization of education under New Labour, which was discussed in a previous section,

the artificial injection of market principles into pedagogical programmes was legitimated by reference to what it allowed the students to do. For example, the new practices were now able *to* 'meet the needs of children', 'raise the quality of teaching and learning', and 'deliver greater flexibility' (2011: 573). Thus one can observe that here, 'morality remains oblique and submerged' (van Leeuwen 2008: 113), resulting in 'the subordination of meaning to effect' (Fairclough 1993).

(5.4.2) Premises in "Facilitation" Legitimations

Premise of danger / risk (consequence)

Some of the justifications in the texts are predicated on notions of danger or risk. Hypothetical scenarios involving physical or mental harm to the reader are invoked in order to provide grounds on which to perform the action. This relies on causal reasoning whereby doing something (in this case partaking of sex education) directly results in the avoidance of an unpleasant situation. This is a common occurrence throughout this particular genre as it is essentially a lifestyle guidance text, albeit with a special attention to sex and sexual health. Sexual dangers readily appear alongside other, social dangers and so it is not unsurprising to find both represented within legitimations of the topic. For example,

g4	Knowing about these **can help you say 'no' to using the substances.**
j5	Learning about your sexual responses alone **can keep them from complicating a relationship that may not be ready for sex.**

These instances hint at the more prescriptive (and proscriptive) elements of these textbooks. Assertions as to what the teenager should not do are very much an established component of

sex education (Shoveller and Johnson 2006; Moore 2012). Social issues concerning particular behaviours are reframed as individual choices, thus shifting responsibility away from the structural inequalities which perpetuate and reinforce those behaviours. Thus here we see that merely knowing about certain substances (i.e. alcohol and other drugs) is sufficient to allow the teenager to avoid them through the use of the dynamic modal verb 'can'. This rests on a naïve conflation of knowledge and action, a theme which is manifested throughout the texts (and not just in the legitimations). Similarly, we see learning about sex recast as a means of risk avoidance. Learning about one's own sexual responses, including what they are, when one expects to have them, and what they feel like, is construed as a way of avoiding complications within relationships. This example is ambiguous in that it refers both to learning about the aforementioned responses, and also somewhat euphemistically to the benefits of masturbation in relation to relationships. This latter reading is effectively an exhortation to become familiar with one's own body and desires before one commits to those of another. The assumptions hidden within this are steeped within the broader functions of these texts, which are (at least in part) to prevent early pregnancy and sexually transmitted infections.

Alternatively, otherwise neutral scenarios are invoked as consequences which are then evaluated negatively. Unsurprisingly, perhaps, the prospect of an unplanned or early pregnancy comprises most of the examples within this category.

a8	**To avoid having children before you have the time, money and energy that they take**, make sure you are clued up about contraception.
c9	There are many kinds of birth control, and some work better than others. A person must learn how to use them correctly and every time he or she has sexual intercourse **in order for them to work.**
e5	Understanding the issues involved **can help people make choices about when to start a sexual**

> **relationship, and to avoid unwanted pregnancies and sexually transmitted infections.**
>
> i3   Finding out whether you are pregnant or not is the easy bit. **The decision as to whether you want to stay pregnant is much, much more difficult**, so please, please know all about contraception before you start having sexual intercourse.

These examples are more explicit in their representation of the risks teenagers may encounter. In addition to the explicitness of the problems, there are also elements of genre mixing. References to sex as 'sexual intercourse' and the fully nominalized 'sexually transmitted infections' (rather than just, say, 'infections') interdiscursively manifest the scientific and technical terminology of medical writing. The switch to more formal and technical lexis may be motivated by a desire to lend credibility and weight to the argument, thus reinforcing the severity of the consequences. In reality however this serves to blur the distinction between different areas of social life, resulting in a 'hybridity' of social practices (Fairclough 2003: 35) whereby subjective general lifestyle guidance is conflated with more objective medical diagnosis.

The default presence of informal lexis within these texts becomes more pronounced in examples such as i3 (above). The emphasis and repetition of *please* and *much* is indicative of the highly interactional nature of these texts, whereby the reader is not only acknowledged but also addressed and asked to modify their behaviour or thinking accordingly. The direct appeal to the reader in this particular example is perhaps meant to underline the severity of the hypothetical situation (choosing whether or not to have an abortion), thus making the intervention and guidance of this text all the more urgent (and legitimate).

A further noteworthy point concerns the variety of reasons given to avoid pregnancy. For example a8 is suggestive of the material and financial constraints which attend having a

child. Example e5 also discusses the prospect of consequences by grouping together 'unwanted pregnancies and sexually transmitted infections'. Not only is sex represented as a source of disease, but also pregnancies which are 'supposedly "unwanted", though the question is seldom asked "unwanted by whom?"' (Epstein *et al*. 2003: 1). This is an interesting point, and one which is often overlooked in empirical social research on teenage pregnancy (Wilson and Huntington 2005). The discursive conflicts between what is advocated and what should be avoided (i.e. between guidance and social control) produces tensions which may hinder the effectiveness with which the texts convey their messages. Baker (2005: 216) also identified similar tensions in his study of gay men's sexual health literature, which were mitigated by dispersing the health messages throughout numerous other genres such as 'competitions, lifestyle magazines, sex manuals and travel guides' in order to make them seem less invasive (*Ibid*.: 215). Such genre mixing may contribute to a sense of familiarity or acceptability with what is being advocated, and thus plays an important role in the manufacture of agreement for the purposes of legitimation.

Premise of reassurance

Another premise which appears within the broader strategy of Facilitation is that of reassurance. Sex education is here construed as a means with which to achieve peace of mind. Reassurance is one of the main functions of self-help textbooks and some of the examples present reassurance as an end goal of sex education, as in the following:

a3	**It is also reassuring** to know the facts.
a11	The important thing is not to waste too much of your time worrying about things – get the answers or advice you need **to feel confident and relaxed and get out there and enjoy yourself.**
e2	**You can reassure yourself that everything is alright** by asking questions, reading books like

this one, and checking out some recommended websites on the Internet.
g3   In fact, you may find that talking about your periods and sharing your concerns with friends **is helpful and reassuring for all of you.**
h3   And knowing that everyone goes through similar changes **will give you more confidence in yourself and in how you deal with others.**

The prospect of a positive mental state is represented as the goal which learning and knowing (about sex) can achieve. In short, the advice given as part of sex education is legitimated on the grounds that it facilitates a healthy state of mind. This positive mental outcome is indicated in several syntactic roles, including as a subject complement ('it is also reassuring'), predicate complement ('[in order] to feel confident'), and as the direct object of a clause ('will give you more confidence'). Reassurance is seemingly brought about through engagement with 'the facts'. While it is not elaborated upon in the immediate co-text of example a3, it is clear that this term refers to the sum total of relevant knowledge constructs ('episteme') within society, of which the most salient aspects are represented within the text, as considered by the author. Therefore 'the facts' refers both to the biological processes and functions of sex as well as the social activities and choices which comprise the idiom 'growing up'.

It is certainly sensible to assume that many teenagers who read sex education textbooks will do so because they are anxious, or because they have unanswered questions. What is interesting, however, is how this is appropriated for the purposes of legitimation. For example the authors of the textbooks make particular assumptions about what teenagers will need (and therefore by extension, what they lack), thus providing grounds for the intervention of sex education. Example a11 asserts that one should 'get the answers or advice you need to feel confident and relaxed', thus constructing a teenage reader who lacks confidence, in addition

to treating ignorance as a barrier to achieving a state of reassurance. Similarly h3 describes how 'knowing... will give you *more* confidence in yourself' (emphasis added), which also contributes to a constructed identity of the 'anxious teenage reader'. This in itself is not problematic given the likelihood with which this identity fits the target audience - they are, after all, reading a self-help text. What is contentious is the treatment of teenage identities as homogenous and static, when in fact they are likely to be in flux. The myriad desires, concerns, worries, goals and personalities of teenagers are often condensed into one prototypical teenage reader construct, resulting in frequent complaints from the teenagers themselves that the language of sex education texts is at once irrelevant to them and patronising (Gagnon and Simon 2005). While it is obviously impractical to address the needs and interests of all teenagers, it is particularly convenient for the purposes of argumentation to legitimate sex education on the grounds that it reassures the 'average' teenager, however such a prototypical identity may be constructed.

Premise of preparation

Many of the justifications for sex education are based on its ability to prepare learners for various aspects of adult life. This does not necessarily have to be connected with sexual relationships (though this is of course the primary focus of the texts), but can also centre on other lifestyle decisions and stages of development. For example this could mean lifestyle preparation for the onset of puberty:

a1   If puberty is something that just happens, why do you need to read about it? For a start, it makes sense to know what is going on with your body **so that you can be prepared.**
g1   Paying attention to diet, exercise, rest and personal care **will make you feel ready for anything!**

What activities and situations are teenagers being prepared for here? At the most general level, teenagers are being prepared for puberty, and life ('will make you feel ready for anything!'). This is achieved through generalized activities such as 'paying attention to diet, exercise, rest and personal care', which again draws upon dual meanings based on knowledge and action. Within the context, 'paying attention to' is roughly equivalent to 'being aware of', and thus serves to legitimate sex education on the basis that knowing about such activities is itself a form of preparation. Secondly, 'paying attention' can also represent the actual action of attending to diet, exercise, rest, and so forth. This potential for dual meanings in many of the preparation premise examples is a feature which is also replicated over the other premises. The presence of material and cognitive interpretations in many of the legitimations represents the conflation of knowledge and action (a feature I take up further in the discussion section), which both provide perfectly viable, yet subtly different, meanings. The former ('knowing') embodies the legitimatory function of the text, whilst the latter ('doing') represents its hortatory function (see Oakley 2013). In addition to preparation for more general activities, sex education could prepare one to make certain decisions with regards to sex:

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j7   Even if you are not thinking about having sex, it's a good idea to learn about contraception. **This way, you'll have the information when you need it.**

This example contains the presupposition that teenagers will certainly need 'the information' at some point, and thus sex education is a legitimate venture because it furnishes them with it. In Text J there were also two instances where preparation is represented as a form of empowerment over one's future:

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j2   Weigh the information against your personal values. Above all, take time to learn about yourself

---

and the people you feel closest to. Make positive choices now **to safeguard your health and happiness for the future.**
j4   This section presents the basic facts about sexuality. **Take power over your future**. Know the facts.

In contrast to most of the other examples within the data these present the legitimations within motivational language, as realised by the choice of the imperative mood ('make positive choices', 'take power over your future', 'know the facts'). The motivational tone is very much restricted to the style of one of the texts (Text J) and therefore one must be careful not to generalise from this. However, the theme of empowerment does occur repeatedly across the facilitation strategy. In J2 one can see the individual agency of the teenage reader foregrounded, representing them as solely responsible for their own actions and lives. Knowledge is presented as the source of making 'positive choices', which in turn leads to safeguarding 'your health and happiness for the future'.

Premise of management / coping

Related to the premise of reassurance is that of management and coping. Whereas the former justifies sex education by presenting reassurance as a short term positive outcome, the latter justifies with reference to the more long term activity of coping with various aspects of life. Here I treat reassurance as a phenomenon deriving from a source external to the individual, whilst management and coping are treated as emanating from a more active sense of agency on the part of that individual. The examples identified in the data almost invariably refer to one's ability to cope with the changes caused by puberty, as in:

a2   Finding out about puberty **will also help you deal with the practical side of it, from shaving to sanitary towels.**
a4   There is no 'one size fits all' with puberty and everyone experiences it slightly differently, but being fully informed **will help you deal with it**.
g2   Understanding the changes that happen during puberty **helps teenagers to develop into happy, confident young adults.**
h2   Understanding how and why your body is changing **will make it a lot less worrying and confusing.**

The basic premise underlying all of these examples is that teenagers will need guidance as they are growing up. The facilitative function of sex education is made most explicit in these examples, where almost all of them contain the string *help + NP (Noun Phrase) + to/bare infinitive clause*. The choice of 'help' in the first two examples mitigates the degree of certainty engendered by the modal verb of certainty 'will', giving prominence to the facilitative role of learning in dealing with puberty. In this the texts adopt the role of 'life' expert traditionally fulfilled by the parents of the teenagers, and stems from the long term trend of the formalisation of sex education away from the responsibility of the child's or teenager's family (Porter and Hall 1995).

Premise of good decision making

In addition to reassuring teenagers about the changes they will encounter as they grow up, these texts also aim to facilitate the teenagers' ability to make sound decisions by themselves. Of course what constitutes a 'sound decision' may vary from one culture to the next, and even from text to text, but what is agreed by those who author these texts is that teenagers

should be making them. It has long been conceded that education can only go so far in promoting particular behaviours or decisions (e.g. Gagnon and Simon 2005), and that the teenagers themselves must want to enact them. Thus by asserting that sex education will provide them with the ability to make good decisions, the authors are effectively self-legitimating. The following examples present two factors as contingent on an engagement with sex education: learning/knowing/being, and also making good decisions.

a10	If you know and respect yourself, **you can make the choices that are right for you.**
d3	This book tells you the facts about sex and answers your questions **so that you can make your own decisions.**
e4	The more informed you are about the facts, **the easier it is to make safe decisions**.
i2	This **will help you know what it is that you want, what you like doing, when you want to do it and when you don't want to do it, and especially who you want to do it with**.
j1	First, get the facts you need **to make the right choices for yourself.**
j6	**To make good decisions**, get good information. Learn ahead about the risks you may face as a teen.

Examples a10 and e4 display this premise in the form of conditional constructions, whereby the protasis depicts the activity affiliated with sex education, and the apodosis represents the justification based on the facilitation of good decision-making. E4 is a comparative conditional (Declerck and Reed 2001) whereby the protasis and apodosis form two mutual clines of value. Thus the more one engages with sex education, the greater one's ability is to make 'safe' decisions.

In many of these legitimations the authors draw upon very general representations of knowledge in the form of 'the facts' and 'good information'. An appeal to 'facts' can be a very effective tactic in argumentation as it blocks potential counter-arguments on the grounds

that such facts are somehow incontrovertible. In practice however, '"facts" are imbued with evaluative/normative content and evaluative/normative statements are naturally grounded in facts about human beings' (Fairclough and Fairclough 2012: 74). Related to this point is the question of who gets to decide what the facts are, and what 'good information' consists of. With regards to the examples in this premise, these are left deliberately vague and all-encompassing. As Channell (1994: 178-192) argues, such vague references can have a number of discourse functions, including politeness, displacement and self-protection. More relevant to these data however are the observations that vague language can also constitute attempts to be informal, conversational and persuasive (*Ibid*.: 179-180, 191-192). While the vagueness of these examples may to some extent be attributed to the conversational tone which is common within this genre, the invocation of 'facts' and 'information' can also have a more pragmatic function of defending the legitimacy of sex education. This works on the grounds that a general appeal to knowledge is less likely to be a contentious argumentation premise than an explicit list of content.

Premise of comprehension

The final premise identified within the legitimation strategy of facilitation is that of comprehension, and is also the least frequent of the premises with just one instance in Text A. Sex education is presented as legitimate because it allows teenagers to comprehend matters which might otherwise elude or confuse them. This most obviously applies to the onset of puberty, and is again represented by a purposive *to*–infinitive clause:

a5   Both girls and boys need to know and understand how their own body and that of the opposite sex work **to understand the changes that happen.**

(5.4.3) Premises

This section summarises the justification premises used in Facilitation legitimations. These premises may be located within different elements of an argument, as shown by Fairclough and Fairclough's (2012) model of practical argumentation. To recap, these include a goal premise, a means-goal premise, a circumstance premise, and a value premise. According to Fairclough and Fairclough a fully formed argument will always contain all of these elements. The following table outlines in which section legitimation is invoked.

Table 11 Breakdown of justification premises in Facilitation

Premise of danger / risk (consequence)	Justifications	Premises
g4	...can help you say 'no' to using the substances.	Means-Goal
j5	...can keep them from complicating a relationship that may not be ready for sex.	Means-Goal
a8	To avoid having children before you have the time, money and energy that they take,...	Means-Goal
c9	...in order for them ['kinds of birth control'] to work.	Means-Goal
e5	...can help people make choices about when to start a sexual relationship, and to avoid unwanted pregnancies and sexually transmitted infections.	Means-Goal
i3	The decision as to whether you want to stay pregnant is much, much more difficult,...	Circumstance
Premise of reassurance		
a3	It is also reassuring...	Value
a11	...to feel confident and relaxed and get out there and enjoy yourself.	Means-Goal
e2	You can reassure yourself that everything is alright...	Means-Goal
g3	...is helpful and reassuring for all of you.	Value
h3	...will give you more confidence in yourself and in how you deal with others.	Means-Goal
Premise of preparation		
a1	...so that you can be prepared.	Means-Goal
g1	...will make you feel ready for anything!	Means-Goal
j7	This way, you'll have the information when you need it.	Circumstance
j2	...to safeguard your health and happiness for the future.	Means-Goal
j4	Take power over your future.	Goal

Premise of management / coping		
a2	...will also help you deal with the practical side of it [puberty], from shaving to sanitary towels.	Means-Goal
a4	...will help you deal with it.	Means-Goal
g2	...helps teenagers to develop into happy, confident young adults.	Means-Goal
h2	...will make it a lot less worrying and confusing.	Means-Goal
Premise of good decision making		
a10	...you can make the choices that are right for you.	Means-Goal
d2*	...so that you can make your own decisions.	Means-Goal
e4	...the easier it is to make safe decisions.	Means-Goal
i2	...will help you know what it is that you want, what you like doing, when you want to do it and when you don't want to do it, and especially who you want to do it with.	Means-Goal
j1	...to make the right choices for yourself.	Means-Goal
j6	To make good decisions...	Means-Goal
Premise of comprehension		
a5	...to understand the changes that happen.	Means-Goal

Note: All examples contain justifications within the Value premise, given that the act of legitimation necessarily represents a positive picture of a particular social practice or action. For instances where the premise is listed as Value however, this indicates that legitimation is invoked solely through the use of evaluative language. In addition to Fairclough and Fairclough's (2012) model, van Leeuwen (2007, 2008) also identifies the same phenomenon in his category of Moral Evaluation.

As can be seen from the table above, the dominant way of representing the legitimation strategy of Facilitation is to justify using a Means-Goal premise. However there are also a few cases whereby the justification is invoked in the Goal, Circumstance, or even solely in the Value premises. In these latter elements, the utility of sex education is presented as an

end-goal, as a circumstance from which legitimation is derived (cf. the Special Circumstances strategy) and evaluated positively as helpful, reassuring, etc.

(5.4.4) Summary

To recap, the legitimation strategy of Facilitation justifies a given social action or practice on the grounds that it is instrumental to the completion of some desired goal, effect or use. It comprises the most frequent strategy of legitimation within the data, and in addition it utilizes the largest number of premises, which are summarized for convenience below:

Table 12 Summary of the Facilitation Strategy

Legitimation Strategy	Premises	Means of Realisation
Facilitation	* premise of danger / risk (consequence)	*dynamic modal constructions ('can') showing ability to facilitate *purposive *to*-clauses *genre mixing (advice and medical terminology) *lexical units denoting facilitation (e.g. 'help')
	* premise of reassurance	*lexical units denoting reassurance / confidence *construction of reader identity in need of reassurance
	* premise of preparation	*purposive *to* and *so that* clauses *imperative mood ('know the facts')
	* premise of management / coping	*lexical units denoting facilitation (e.g. 'help') *Purposive *to* and bare infinitive clauses
	* premise of good decision making	*purposive *to*-clauses *vague / abstract nominalisations (e.g. 'the facts' and 'good information') presented as sources

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Purposive clauses define to some extent what the Facilitation strategy is, and so it is unsurprising to find them represented within each of the premises. So too for the presence of dynamic modal constructions which indicate what the teenager 'can' do as a result of sex education. Finally there are also vague nominalisations which serve to establish a useful Circumstance premise on which to base utility arguments, and genre mixing which hybridizes social practices allowing Value premises to be exported from one to another.

(5.5) Legitimation Strategy – "Necessity"

(5.5.1) Introduction

"Necessity" legitimations are based on the idea that a social action or practice is valid because it fulfils a need or obligation. This may mean fulfilment of a need by virtue of the practice merely existing, or because it helps one realize some predetermined need or obligation. The latter sub-category of "Necessity" often appears alongside the "Facilitation" strategy, usually in the form of "the practice is <u>necessary</u> <u>in order to</u> X" (thus confirming its legitimacy). It has been argued that the sources of necessity and obligation may be either internal or external (Depraetere and Verhulst 2008: 5). Internal necessity flows from the internal cognition of the individual, which means that one may impose constraints on oneself, or live one's life according to a set of self-imposed rules. Thus if one says 'I need to lose weight', the source of this moralising is the self. In terms of legitimation strategies, the subjective opinions of a representative of a social institution or practice comprise the source of these internal necessities. This may be a potent strategy if the speaker is an authoritative and powerful figure (see van Leeuwen 2008: 106-108; Reyes 2011), who is able to proclaim that a particular practice is necessary or even obligatory. By contrast there are also external sources of necessity, which Depraetere and Verhulst (2008: 6-11) identify as rules and regulations, circumstances, and conditions. These can be used to argue that a practice is legitimate on the grounds that it meets the needs or obligations of a particular regulation (e.g. that it is within the law), or that it addresses the needs of a particular circumstance which has arisen (e.g. to meet a particular demand).

This legitimation strategy is perhaps the most overt of all the strategies identified in this study. It legitimates practices by making explicit how one can fulfil one's obligations, e.g. "social practice X is legitimate because you have Y obligation to engage with it". As I shall

outline below, there are various sources of necessity (the self, circumstances, conditions) which are invoked in order to legitimate sex education.

(5.5.2) Premises in "Necessity" Legitimations

Premise of responsibility

The most frequent source of necessity given for sex education is that of personal responsibility. The basis for the legitimation lies in the representation of learning and knowing about sex, lifestyle choices, and so on, as an example of being responsible for one's own conduct. This premise constitutes what Depraetere and Verhulst (2008) call an 'internal' source of obligation / necessity, given that the impetus originates within the individual themselves. One reason given for the necessity of personal responsibility is staying healthy.

c4   You may wonder why it's a good idea to learn some facts about bodies, about growing up, about sex and sexual health. **It's important** because these facts can help you stay healthy, take good care of yourself and make good decisions about yourself as you are growing up and for the rest of your life.
h1   Why do I **need to know** about this stuff? Because it's all about you! It's about your body and the ways in which it will change as you grow older. It's about the effect these changes can have on your life, your feelings and your future. It's about growing up.

Personal responsibility is sometimes represented as common sense. For example the exclamatory phrase 'Because it's all about you!' in h1 is potentially ambiguous, and so could be interpreted as mock incredulity, or merely as an explicitly emphasised answer to the question posed previously. Without performing a reception study it is difficult to discern

which reading a teenager might engage with. The researcher's interpretation of such examples must be sufficiently cautious as to allow for alternatives which may diverge from they see within the text. The modal verb in this instance (and indeed in many others identified here) is one of dynamic necessity (Palmer 1990: 127-132) whereby force of circumstance 'indicates what is required for specific purposes or personal reasons' (*Ibid*.: 129). Palmer also points out the NEED (to) is usually voice neutral as opposed to subject-oriented. This is true of most legitimations within this strategy, but examples like h1 provide exceptions to the rule when they are attributed to the reader themselves.

In addition to prototypical constructions using modal verbs such as NEED (to), dynamic / deontic modality is also represented by obligations in the form of adjectives (see Fairclough 2003: 170; Martin and White 2005: 55): common examples within this data set include '[it is] important that...' and '[it is] vital that...'. By using modal adjectives rather than modal verbs it is possible to shift the perception of responsibility for the obligation from the speaker / author to an aspect of the listener's / reader's context. Modal adjectives are subjective, and also presuppose the existence of a tacit agreement that a given social practice is 'important' or 'vital', etc. They are also the sites of much presupposition, so that in example c4 one can assume the existence of certain 'facts', and that these 'can help you stay healthy...', all of which means that learning these facts is 'important'.

Personal responsibility can also take the form of making good decisions about if and when to have sex, in addition to the consequences of those decisions.

| e8 | Enjoying touching someone, or being touched in a sexual way, can make a person want to have sex, but **it's important** to make a considered decision about first having sex. |
| f6 | Many couples find it difficult to discuss contraception. **It is vital** that you tackle this though. If you use contraception properly, you can avoid an unwanted pregnancy. |

h4   Which is why you **need to know** what sex is and how it can affect you, so you can understand your own sexual feelings and wants (when you have them), and decide how you're going to deal with them – and with other people's.
j1   First, get the facts you **need** to make the right choices for yourself.

Several of these examples combine different types of modality within the same sentence. For example e8 and f6 combine dynamic and epistemic modality to describe positive outcomes, whilst at the same time hinting at potentially negative consequences. Thus by outlining that 'being touched in a sexual way, can make a person want to have sex', the author also implies the opposite: that being touched in a sexual way can lead a person to not want to have sex, thus making it 'important to make a considered decision about first having sex'. Similarly with f6 one 'can avoid an unwanted pregnancy' 'if you use contraception *properly'* (emphasis added). And if one does not use contraception 'properly' it can result in an 'unwanted pregnancy', thus making the difference between these potential scenarios hinge upon *knowing* how to use contraception correctly (thus legitimating the source of that knowledge – sex education).

In addition to staying healthy and making decisions about sex, personal responsibility can also comprise an inner obligation to look after oneself.

h6   Get to know your sex organs on the inside as well as the outside. **It's up to you** to take care of them and keep them in good working order.
h7   As a young adult, **it's important** to take charge of your body and give it the care and attention it **needs.** After all, the first person to know if there is something wrong with it will be you.

Again value judgements and moral obligations are implicit in the modal constructions 'it's up to you' and 'it's important to...'. Both examples are predicated on the notion that the reader will be responsible for any consequences should they not look after their body: 'after all, the first person to know if there is something wrong with it will be you' (h7). As with example h1 (above) there is a degree of ambiguity within some of the premises, such as that of h6. 'It's up to you' could be interpreted either as based on choice or based on responsibility by the teenage reader. My own interpretation is that of the latter, deontic meaning. I frame the example within a section on personal responsibility premises given that the co-text contains numerous instances of hortatory language and imperative constructions ('Get to know your sex organs...').

There are also a few instances in the data of more explicit references to social duties and obligations that the teenager may have. These differ from the other circumstances by embodying the normative views of social institutions. Whereas the former concerns dynamic modality, the latter concerns its deontic counterpart.

a7 You may be mature and know your own mind. Maybe you think that as long as you use contraception, it is nobody else's business to tell you when you are ready to have sex. However, you **need to know** how the law affects you and what to consider when making your choices.
h9 You probably know already that drinking alcohol and taking drugs is incredibly dangerous, especially when you are young. If you haven't been told about the effects of alcohol, or what the different types of illegal drugs are and what they do to you, then you **need to find out.**

Example a7 states explicitly that 'you need to know how the law affects you', leaving implicit why one should know this. This sentence alludes to the legal age of consent for all UK citizens (currently age 16 for both boys and girls), and suggests that it should be factored into any decision to have sex. This example is one of the few which is explicitly deontic in terms of its modal compulsion, as it establishes the existence of external social institutions and rules (i.e. the law) which constrain the outcomes of such decision-making. Of course these hints at the legal restrictions which all people in the UK are subject to belie the warning function of this legitimation. Only by knowing which obligations and duties one is subject to can one make an informed and socially acceptable decision. Thus the legitimation of sex education is achieved on the premise that it provides such knowledge. It should also be noted that this example operates on the additional premise of decision-making.

Premise of circumstantial necessity

By comparison there are many other, 'external', sources of necessity which serve to justify sex education. These arise from social situations which impact upon the individual, thus providing the grounds for the intervention of sex education. The first set of circumstantial necessities revolves around aiding comprehension of particular circumstances. As such, many of these examples also feature as part of the Facilitation strategy. The following two sets of examples represent the greatest degree of fuzziness between the categories of deontic and dynamic modality. For example in a9 the source of the obligation could be construed as circumstantial necessity (as it has been here) on the grounds that the presence of a potentially harmful situation requires awareness. Alternatively it could be interpreted as comprising a personal or even social duty to oneself to avoid such dangers by knowing about them.

> a5   Both girls and boys **need to know and understand** how their own body and that of the opposite sex work to understand the changes that happen.

Knowing whether to classify certain modal constructions as deontic or dynamic is often only possible through recourse to the discursive and sociopolitical context from which they originate (Nokkonen 2006; Depraetere and Verhulst 2008). However, even where the contexts are known and taken into account, there may still be discrepancies between the meaning invoked by the speaker / author and the meaning understood by their audience (Sealey and Oakley 2013), resulting in mistaken inferences or implications arising from confusion over where the source of the obligation lies.

Certain decisions, such as whether to drink alcohol, or whether or not to have an abortion, also provide circumstances in which sex education can provide guidance.

> d4   When you are feeling confused, it is hard to make such a big decision. That is why **it is so important** to talk to your parents and support organizations as soon as possible.

> f5   Drinking alcohol or taking drugs might make you feel good at first, especially if a lot of your friends are doing the same thing. However, you **need to be aware** of the dangers. For example, it is rare for people to die as a result of taking ecstasy but each year the number of deaths related to ecstasy is increasing.

Premise of comprehension

The final premise in the Necessity strategy concerns another source of external obligation, namely the opinions of the textbook authors themselves. This premise draws upon what van Leeuwen (2008) calls "Personal Authority" whereby justifications for sex education are not

qualified by any 'evidence' other than the assertions of the speakers / authors. Essentially, the facts are represented as 'speaking for themselves' and the teenagers should take part in sex education because in the opinions of the authors, they ought to.

f2	**It's important** to understand how and why your body is changing.
f3	**It's also important** to understand why you might feel happy and positive one day, and miserable and frustrated the next.
h11	**It's vital** to know this information**. BUT **it's also vital** to know and understand the emotional impact of having sexual intercourse.
h12	So don't think that you don't **need to know** about all this stuff, because you do.

Like those examples in the Normality strategy, Necessity legitimations also draw upon both qualified and unqualified assertions as to the validity of sex education. This is most explicitly visible in h12 where the counterfactual argument 'don't think that you don't need to know about all this stuff' is concluded with the concise justification, 'because you do'. The source of the necessity is therefore represented as merely 'there', and whose very existence is sufficient to merit the reader's compliance. This may prove problematic within the context of sex education given the amount of authority assumed by the author(s). Much of what Fairclough and Fairclough (2012) identify in their practical argumentation model is left implicit within these examples (i.e. Means-Goal premises, Value premises, Circumstance premises), which may result in resistance on the grounds that the readers might not recognize or accept the implicit premises being invoked.

(5.5.3) Premises

Necessity legitimations are based exclusively on Value premises given that the author(s) are making value judgements about how necessary or obligatory a social practice is. Like the Normality strategy, Necessity can appear by itself or in an auxiliary role to another legitimation strategy (such as Facilitation). Necessity is also the second most common strategy within the data. The table below indicates the justification premises for each example covered here.

Table 13 Breakdown of justification premises in the Necessity strategy

Premise of responsibility	Justification	Premises
c4	It's important because these facts can help you stay healthy, take good care of yourself and make good decisions about yourself as you are growing up and for the rest of your life.	Value
h1	Why do I need to know about this stuff? Because it's all about you!	Value
e8	...it's important to make a considered decision about first having sex.	Value
f6	It is vital that you tackle this though...	Value
h4	...you need to know what sex is and how it can affect you,...	Value
j1	... get the facts you need to make the right choices for yourself.	Value
h6	It's up to you to take care of them and keep them in good working order.	Value
h7	...it's important to take charge of your body and give it the care and attention it needs.	Value
a7	...you need to know how the law affects you and what to consider when making your choices.	Value
h9	If you haven't been told about the effects of alcohol, or what the different types of illegal drugs are and what they do to you, then you need to find out.	Value
Premise of circumstantial		

necessity		
a5	Both girls and boys need to know and understand how their own body and that of the opposite sex work...	Value
a9	You need to be aware of how to keep safe from dangers like these.	Value
d4	...why it is so important to talk to your parents and support organizations as soon as possible.	Value
f5	... you need to be aware of the dangers.	Value
Premise of comprehension		
f2	It's important to understand how and why your body is changing.	Value
f3	It's also important to understand why you might feel happy and positive one day, and miserable and frustrated the next.	Value
h11	It's vital to know this information. BUT it's also vital to know and understand the emotional impact of having sexual intercourse.	Value
h12	So don't think that you don't need to know about all this stuff, because you do.	Value

(5.5.4) Summary

The legitimation strategy of Necessity functions by representing sex education as a necessary or obligatory social practice. The authors of the texts invoke it by employing various sources of necessity, comprising personal responsibility, circumstantial necessity, social duty and force of facts. Sex education is represented as legitimate based on its ability to fulfil, or to help teenagers fulfil, each of these necessities and obligations. Table 14 identifies the linguistic and discursive means with which this strategy is achieved.

Table 14 Summary of the Necessity Strategy

Legitimation Strategy	Premise	Means of Realisation
Necessity Circumstances	* premise of responsibility	* potential scenarios linked by dynamic and epistemic modal constructions (modal verbs, adjectives and phrases) * 'internal' source of obligation / necessity * normative deontic modal constructions * vague references to social obligations (e.g. the law * 'external' source of obligation / necessity
	* premise of circumstantial necessity	* dynamic modal constructions * 'external' source of obligation / necessity
	* premise of comprehension	* unqualified assertions that teenagers should have sex education * dynamic modal constructions * 'external' source of obligation / necessity

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As can be seen from the summary table, Necessity legitimations utilize a variety of premises, all but one of which invokes external sources, obligation and necessity. Despite this relative variety, compared to some of the other strategies identified within this study, the most frequent premise is based upon the notion of internal necessity. Biological developments during puberty, the need to stay healthy, the need to avoid harmful risks and situations, and the need to be able to make good choices are all justifications given for the legitimacy of sex education, and are in keeping with the theme of the texts. Other reasons given include legal obligations.

(5.6) Legitimation Strategy – "Recontextualization"

(5.6.1) Introduction

The fifth and final discursive strategy of legitimation comprises the recontextualization of sex education in terms of another activity, which then in turn construes sex education as legitimate. As I have shown, the concept of recontextualization may be applied as a framework in itself within Critical Discourse Analysis (see van Leeuwen 2009) by looking at which elements of a practice are chosen as significant within representations. However, the type of recontextualization I am concerned with here is more specific. It is the equivalent of what van Leeuwen elsewhere calls 'theoretical rationalization' (2008: 115-117), whereby 'one activity is defined in terms of another, moralized activity' (*Ibid.*: 116). There are several sub-types of theoretical rationalization, including explanations and predictions, but the one which is of relevance here is the sub-category of 'definitions'. As van Leeuwen explains, 'for a definition to be a definition, both activities must be objectivated and generalized, and the link between them must either be attributive ("is", "constitutes", etc.) or significative ("means", "signals", "symbolizes", etc.)' (*Ibid.*). The basic formula for this may therefore be glossed as "X is Y" or "X means Y".

The basis of "Recontextualization" is similar to that of the "Normality" strategy in that a social practice is being rebranded as something more familiar and thus less contestable. Between them these two strategies perform a vital sociocognitive function by changing contestable practices into more palatable alternatives. "Recontextualization" in particular draws explicit logical and semantic relationships between a social practice and cultural values (see below). The effect of this is to obscure what the practice actually involves by transforming it into terms which are intrinsically uncertain (Channell 1994: 20), with 'its value deriving from the fact that it is vague, evoking a set of "principles" that can have

positive associations' for all concerned (Holland 2006: 43). This obfuscatory transformation has its foundations in the normative character of moralising language: 'culture… has little to gain by formulating itself too explicitly in discourse' (*Ibid*.).

Recontextualizations can work at varying degrees of abstraction and so therefore it is important to outline which 'level(s)' are being referred to here. I shall only be discussing recontextualization at the most basic semantic level: in other words, conceiving X as equal to, or an element of, Y. The much broader definition employed by scholars such as Fairclough (2003: 222) treats whole discourses, as opposed to individual entities or processes, as 'a matter of how elements of one social practice are appropriated by, relocated in the context of, another'. It concerns the selective filtering of information which occurs when one represents a social practice. With these theoretical underpinnings in mind the following section outlines all examples of the Recontextualization legitimation strategy, as well as the linguistic, semantic and discursive choices authors make when justifying sex education.

(5.6.2) Premises in "Recontextualization" Legitimations

Premise of analogy

Recontextualization is by far the least frequent of the legitimation strategies identified in the discourse of these sex education texts. Out of the 70 examples of legitimation, only 6 displayed this particular strategy, all of which utilize the same argumentation scheme. Given the small number identified, all of the Recontextualization examples are discussed below.

c11	**A large part of growing up is learning to take care of yourself in a healthy way.**
h13	**Part of growing up is learning how to take care of yourself.**

The main way in which a process can be recontextualized into another process is to employ a copular verb. Copular verbs are defined as syntactic links which relate grammatical complements to subjects within a clause (Huddleston and Pullum 2002: 218). The most common copular verb is BE (*Ibid.*: 53), though other verbs may also serve the same function, e.g. compare 'He *stayed* very quiet' to 'He *was* very quiet' (Quirk *et al.* 1985: 55). It is also acknowledged that in some contexts copular BE 'has little semantic content [and]… primarily serves the syntactic function of filling the verbal predicator position, and thus carrying the tense inflection' (Huddleston and Pullum 2002: 218). In recontextualizations, however, copular BE has a number of syntactic and semantic functions which contribute towards a process of legitimation.

Copular verbs may also contribute to the discursive representation of legitimation. The use of the copular allows the speaker to set up different kinds of relationship between two participants within the same clause. For example one participant may be defined (and thus recontextualized) as a characteristic or property of another participant, as in the example 'She is hard to please' (Huddleston and Pullum 2002: 266). This is called the copular's ascriptive function. Alternatively one participant may be identified (and thus, again, recontextualized) as a second participant, as in 'John is the chairman'. This second type of relationship 'serves to specify, or identify' the value of a predefined variable (*Ibid.*). This is called the copular's specifying function. One way to differentiate the two is to remember that 'syntactically, the specifying construction normally allows the subject and the predicative to be reversed' (*Ibid.*: 54, 268-9).

While a copular clause may manifest one or the other function, it is not uncommon to find semantically ambiguous examples where both readings are equally valid, as in the case of c11 and h13. In addition it would be entirely possible to exploit the ambiguity of such constructions for rhetorical purposes. Huddleston and Pullum's example, 'His first proposal

was a joke', could be read as specifying (i.e. a joke, and not a toast or a solution) which could mask its ascriptive reading whereby the proposal is evaluated negatively, as in 'His first proposal was laughable' (*Ibid.*).

With this in mind, one reading of legitimations c11 and h13 would perhaps suggest that 'learning to take care of yourself' is identifiable as 'part of growing up', and thus specifying. However, if one takes an ascriptive reading then the meaning of 'part of growing up' becomes a *property* of 'learning to take care of yourself'. The specifying reading of these two legitimations rationalizes sex education ('learning to…') as an inevitable activity ('growing up'). By contrast the ascriptive reading naturalizes sex education as a constituent element of 'growing up'. While the logic of the two functions may be different, the effect is the same: legitimation.

Copular constructions are useful in the formation of arguments as they allow the speaker to draw analogies in much the same way as traditional sayings, such as 'home <u>is</u> where your heart is' and 'an Englishman's home <u>is</u> his castle' (Halliday 2004: 248). Analogies made from copular constructions may also have a sociocognitive function in that social practices can be recontextualized using more familiar terms or more familiar practices, thus lending support to the claim that 'persuasion presupposes comprehension' (van Dijk 1998: 244). For example consider the following,

> d1   Before you do anything it is best to think about it first. Before you go on holiday, it is good to look at a guidebook. Before you go to a new school, it is good to talk to the people who have been there. **Sex is the same**.

Some scholars, such as van Leeuwen, have argued that 'comparisons in discourse almost always have a legitimating or delegitimating function' (2008: 111). He explains that

analogies often draw upon activities which are associated with positive or negative values, thus implicating the original activity with those values (*Ibid.*: 112). So in the scenarios outlined by example d1 the preparation behind going on holiday and going to a new school is given as good behaviour to emulate. It is interesting to note the cumulative force behind the rhetorical tropes in this example. Not only are (several) analogies given to legitimate sex education, but there is also a highly generalized and moralized saying. Learning everything there is to know about sex is presented merely as another case of the maxim 'Before you do anything it is best to think about it first' exemplified.

As mentioned above, the most common verb in copular constructions is BE. In the data however there was a single example of a copular with a different verb, 'means':

h8   **Being responsible** means thinking about other people and respecting their feelings. It **means knowing right from wrong** and not putting yourself or others in danger. It means thinking ahead and not just about what you want.

A feature common to all of the recontextualization legitimations within the data is the use of generalized activities to refer to both sex education and the reasons given to validate it. These generalized activities tend not to have explicitly marked boundaries, making it difficult for the reader to discern what would fall within the remit of 'knowing right from wrong', for example, as each reader is likely to have their own interpretation of what this would involve. One explanation for this would frame the logic in terms of in-group membership, whereby the authors deliberately use fuzzy concepts to appeal to as wide an audience as possible. Some scholars argue that such 'catch-all' phrases are crucial to winning over support from a diverse range of people (Channell 1994; van Dijk 1998; Fairclough 2000), and that it is these 'socially shared representations… [which] provide the grounds for judgements about what is

right and what is wrong, good or bad' (van Dijk 1998: 257-8). This strategy shares similarities with the referential strategies which are analysed by cognitive linguists (Hart 2010: 49-61; see also van Dijk 2009a, b), though instead of categorising social groups the emphasis is on categorising social practices.

The recontextualizations found within the data all share similarities in terms of their clause structures, which are known as Relational Processes in Systemic Functional Grammar (e.g. see Halliday and Matthiessen 1999: 144-147; Halliday 2004: 210-248; Machin and Mayr 2012: 110). The use of copula constructions in recontextualizations may function in a similar way, and may also be motivated by the writer's desire to de-agentalize a proposition. Because these constructions construe processes of 'being' and 'having', the question of actors or goals is no longer relevant, but rather 'allow[s] us to present as 'facts' what could be classed as opinion' (Machin and Mayr 2012: 110).

h5   It is natural to be curious about rude words and jokes. **It's all part of finding out about sex.**

Example h5 also presents sex education in a matter of fact way which serves to normalize 'finding out about sex' as inevitable.

b1   Never bottle up feelings of depression: **talking about them to someone you trust** – whether a relative, school nurse, counsellor, doctor or youth worker, **is the first step to feeling better.**

This legitimation is one of a few examples found within the entire data set which represents a communicative activity affiliated with sex education ('talking about them'), rather than a

cognitive activity. Compared with, say, example d1 (above), this legitimation operates on a much more implicit level. The exhortation to talk with professionals about emotional (and sometimes sexual – depending on the context) concerns is constructed as a means 'to feeling better'. The *importance* of authority figures and 'experts' is thus foregrounded here. Note also the proliferation of individuals which this text advocates as helpful contacts: relative, school nurse, counsellor, doctor, and youth worker. The legitimation thus works by conveying submission to the expertise and advice of authority figures (of which this textbook is one, or rather a resource written by one) as beneficial to the reader.

The discussion of problems related to sex and health (including mental health) is an established component of sex education (Harrison 2000), and thus talking about such problems within peer-group situations is encouraged, given their pedagogical motivations. The legitimation (b1) functions because it is represented as therapeutic, and thus beneficial, to the teenager. This example therefore fulfils two distinct discourse practices: that of the legitimation of formalised sex education, and of advice to young people concerning lifestyle choices and issues. It is also interesting to note that almost all of the people recommended for discussion about depression are adults, with perhaps the exception of 'relative' – this point is developed further in the discussion section.

(5.6.3) Premises

As one can see from the table below, Recontextualization legitimations invariably invoke Value premises as the source of justification. Sex education is construed as a range of generalized activities which are loaded with evaluative meaning, such as 'being responsible' and 'part of growing up'. The justification derives from describing sex education as (or as like) those other activities.

Table 15 Breakdown of justification premises in Recontextualization

Ref.	Justification	Premises
c11	A large part of growing up...	Value
h13	Part of growing up...	Value
d1	Sex is the same.	Value
h8	Being responsible... means knowing right from wrong...	Value
h5	It's all part of finding out about sex.	Value
b1	...talking about them to someone you trust... is the first step to feeling better.	Value

(5.6.4) Summary

The legitimation strategy of Recontextualization operates by construing one activity in terms of another, and in this case by construing sex education as another activity. The strategy draws upon only one argumentation scheme / premise in these texts: that of analogy, and grounds the justification within the Value premises of each argument. The values are not explicitly stated, making them both difficult to challenge and presumptive of the reader's tacit agreement (Thompson and Hunston 2000: 8). This works because 'the less obtrusively the evaluation is placed in the clause, the more likely it is to successfully manipulate the reader' (*Ibid.*: 9). The notion of 'growing up', for instance, does not only represent the biomechanical and chemical processes of puberty, but rather it has become a culturally inflected term which denotes conformity to (adult) social norms and expectations, as well as ideas of personal and social responsibility for one's actions (as in the reprimand, 'grow up'). Table 16, below, outlines the linguistic, discursive and syntactic means by which this strategy is realised.

Table 16 Summary of the Recontextualization Strategy

Legitimation Strategy	Premise	Means of Realisation
Recontextualization	Premise of analogy	* copular constructions * analogies ('sex is the same') * generalized and vague constructions (e.g. 'growing up', 'being responsible') * implicit positive evaluations

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As has been shown above, Recontextualizations which leave the least scope for plurality of opinion are the ones which are the most likely to be successful legitimations. This view is also held by van Dijk, as he explains that 'ideological persuasion is facilitated by lacking social and political knowledge, if recipients have no alternative opinions, and if ideological propositions do not obviously clash with their personal experiences' (1998: 246). Based as they are on the truth value of 'X is Y', attributive legitimations could also be seen as contributions to Foucault's notion of 'regimes of truth' (Foucault 1980). They are arguably more effective conveyors of legitimacy because of their basis on the 'objectivity' of 'the way things are' as opposed to the 'subjectivity' of 'the way I, the speaker, see them'. In short, Recontextualization is a powerful legitimation strategy due to its ability to make an activity's legitimacy seem inherent. The social institutions which define and uphold such notions of legitimacy (e.g. schools, Government) are made less visible to the reader/hearer by making the activity seem natural, logical or just necessary.

(6) Discussion

(6.1) Introduction

This section discusses the findings identified in the previous analysis. Summaries are provided for both the legitimation strategies and the premises on which they are based, in addition to the patterns found. I then evaluate the utility of Fairclough and Fairclough's (2012) practical argumentation approach to Critical Discourse Analysis, highlighting both its strengths and its limitations. The bulk of the discussion is given over to interpreting the patterns found, and considering whether or not they provide evidence to support the predominant view of sex education texts as comprising discourses of risk and damage limitation. I then provide a section summary to recap the main points discussed. The research questions underpinning this study are repeated below in order to help frame the discussion:

RQ1) How are discursive legitimation strategies achieved linguistically within the self-help advice textbooks, in order to validate sex education?

RQ2) What premises are these strategies based upon?

RQ3) What wider discourses are indicated by the analysis of legitimation strategies in these texts?

(6.2) Summary of legitimation analyses

A total of five legitimation strategies were identified within the ten sex education texts. In turn these strategies utilised fifteen different premises in order to construct the arguments. The following table summarises the legitimation strategies and the premises which were identified within the data.

Table 17 Strategies of Legitimation summary

Strategies	Premises	Means of realisation
Legitimation		
* strategy of special circumstances	* premise of inevitability (biological circumstances)	* description of real scenarios (e.g. onset of puberty) * 'life as journey' and 'body as machine' metaphors
	* premise of danger / risk (consequences)	* description of potential / hypothetical scenarios with harmful consequences * semantic components implicitly construing positive negative evaluation
	* premise of ignorance	* description of hypothetical scenario
* strategy of normality	* premise of normality	* assertions using evaluative words and phrases (e.g. 'perfectly normal', 'natural') which denote a cline of expectedness * high frequency modality ('Many young people', '...lots of other people')
	* premise of common sense	* assertions using evaluative words and phrases (e.g. 'a good idea', 'good') which denote a cline of desirability
* strategy of facilitation showing	* premise of danger / risk (consequence)	*dynamic modal constructions ('can') ability to facilitate *purposive *to*-clauses *genre mixing (advice and medical terminology) *lexical units denoting facilitation (e.g. 'help')
	* premise of reassurance confidence	*lexical units denoting reassurance /

		*construction of reader identity in need of reassurance
	* premise of preparation	*purposive *to* and *so that* clauses *imperative mood ('know the facts')
	* premise of management / coping	*lexical units denoting facilitation (e.g. 'help') *Purposive *to* and bare infinitive clauses
	* premise of good decision making	*purposive *to*-clauses *vague / abstract nominalisations (e.g. 'facts') and 'good information') presented as sources of good decision making
	* premise of comprehension	*purposive *to*-infinitive clause
* strategy of necessity	* premise of responsibility	*potential scenarios linked by dynamic and epistemic modal constructions (modal verbs, adjectives and phrases) * 'internal' source of obligation / necessity * normative deontic modal constructions * vague references to social obligations (e.g. the law * 'external' source of obligation / necessity
	* premise of circumstantial necessity	* dynamic modal constructions * 'external' source of obligation / necessity
/		
	* premise of force of facts (assertions)	* unqualified assertions that teenagers should have sex education * dynamic modal constructions * 'external' source of obligation / necessity
* strategy of recontextualization	* premise of analogy	* copular constructions * analogies ('sex is the same') * generalized and vague constructions (e.g. 'growing up', 'being responsible') * implicit positive evaluations

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As one can see from the table above, the strategies of Facilitation and Necessity contain the biggest variety of premises relative to the other strategies. Many of the premises (preparation, good decision making, personal and social responsibility) justify sex education based on what the teenage individual should do, thus heavily emphasizing agency over structure within the legitimations (a theme returned to below). Others justify on the sole basis of the author(s)' assertions (e.g. force of facts, analogy), or on circumstances which require the intervention of sex education (inevitability / biological circumstances, danger / risk, ignorance, circumstantial necessity).

(6.3) Discussion of findings

(6.3.1) Discourse of 'Knowledge is (em)power(ment)'

The shared norms which all of these examples tap into what has been called the 'knowledge-based economy' (Fairclough 2010). Wodak and Meyer (2009: 12) define the Knowledge-Based Economy as the 'quantification and economization of knowledge [which] serves to rank social institutions and individuals'. This privileging of (the acquisition and deployment of) knowledge has resulted in the emergence of macro discourses (though Fairclough uses the term 'nodal' discourse) which 'subsume and articulate in a particular way a great many other discourses' (Fairclough 2010: 507). The significance of this for the present study lies in educational discourse, which is itself part of a wider 'nodal' 'knowledge is power' discourse. It must also be pointed out that the Knowledge-Based Economy is not constrained by linguistic or geographical boundaries, but rather 'has penetrated most domains of our western societies and is also colonizing other parts of the world' (Wodak and Meyer 2009: 12). Thus when the authors of these advice texts argue for the importance and necessity of sex education, they are merely invoking the prevalent paradigm whereby knowledge is the 'legitimate' agent of both social change and social stability (e.g. Fairclough 2009: 149; 2010: 510-13).

This is not to say that this conceptualisation of 'knowledge as the agent of social change' (or rather the process of 'knowing', *pace* Michael Billig's reflexive critiques regarding the use of nominalizations in the discussions of critical discourse analysts; 2008) has gone unchallenged. Many researchers in the field of youth sexual health have provided much empirical research to argue that there is no causal relationship between knowing about a particular issue, and the occurrence of positive or negative sexual health outcomes (Wilson and Huntington 2005, Shoveller and Johnson 2006, Duncan 2007, Moore 2012) despite the

frequent citations to the contrary in media reports and political debates. Such an argument has been labelled as 'reductionist' (Shoveller and Johnson 2006: 48, 57; see also Rhodes, Stimson & Quirk 1996) given the reliance on a simplistic causal relationship between sexual health knowledge and improved sexual health outcomes. Research in the field of sex education has shown that the 'knowledge is empowerment' discourse is endemic, and within the genre of self-help advice books in particular. However, the premises and justifications in these texts at least draw upon lay assumptions about the impact of sex education which are not substantiated by empirical evidence (as with the studies cited above). For example the American scholars Gagnon and Simon found that 'if the schools do not provide sex education it does not follow that there will be no sexual learning' and 'that the primary source of sex information is the peer group has been a stable characteristic of most of the populations studied' (2005: 86). As the texts imply, but do not explicitly articulate, the preferred source of such information is construed as the adults themselves.

All of the texts urge teenagers to seek the opinion of their elders (or, more rarely, their peers) with respect to sex, relationships, emotions and so forth. This is often framed in premises of (personal and social) responsibility, preparation and good decision making. Very rarely are the teenagers left to learn and comprehend their individual circumstances by themselves: the omnipresent figure of 'the adult' is always there ready to mediate and explain their situations for them (I will return to this point shortly). Secondly, this very mediation (which, interestingly in these examples and others within the texts, is presented as an open dialogue between adult and adolescent) provides the premise on which sex education is legitimated, namely that dialogue with adults 'is the first step to feeling better [about depression]' (b1) and it 'helps' (c3). Thirdly, and again, there is a discrepancy between what is advocated and the reality which most teenagers face. As Shoveller and Johnson note, 'nurses, doctors or teachers began to realize that their messages had failed to resonate widely with many young

people…. [and that] the health and education systems in tandem began to train (and lend authority to) student peer-educators' (2006: 52). This is noteworthy in that only rarely do the texts analysed in the study promote peer support networks *over* advice from adults. Even when they are involved they function as little more than mouthpieces for the adult educators rather than providing genuine and spontaneous peer perspectives: 'peer educators were marshalled to discuss and "relate to" other young people about the dangers of having sex' (*Ibid.*). Where these texts do introduce other, peer, voices they are usually in the form of (fabricated) personal narratives. Indeed as I have argued elsewhere, 'authors of sex education texts attempt to mould the actions of the adolescent reader in line with their own norms and expectations by ventriloquizing the characters in them [i.e. the narratives]' (Oakley 2012).

In many ways the actions, emotions and decisions of young people regarding sex, relationships and growing up are pre-empted. Retrospective prescriptions about what teenagers 'need' to do have the potential to alienate them if their experiences and expectations do not match up to those prescriptions (Moore 2012: 36). This pre-emption is yet another manifestation of the 'knowledge is empowerment' discourse in which the adult educator occupies the privileged position of knowing about pubertal development, and is able to pronounce on what is necessary to achieve a healthy, positive, safe etc., future. Foucault's concept of Power/Knowledge is of particular relevance here. Foucault treats knowledge as merely another manifestation of power, one in which the pronouncements of experts serve to regulate and control the behaviour of 'powerless' groups (Foucault 1980). These pronouncements comprise 'regimes of truth' (*Ibid.*) which may be defined as 'sets of understandings which *legitimate* particular social attitudes and practices' (Cameron *et al.* 1992, emphasis added). Regimes of truth comprise 'facts' which are difficult to argue against, but allow the speaker or writer 'to construct particular people ("criminals", "deviants", "teenage mothers") as targets for social control' (*Ibid.*). The *need* for sex education is

presented as entirely justified and truthful on the grounds it helps young people 'to know and understand' (a5), 'to feel confident and relaxed' (a11), 'to know what sex is' (h4), and so on. As with all language, construal of what the truth is frames reality in particular ways, with certain aspects foregrounded at the expense of others (which are backgrounded or omitted). Critical discourse analysts are well aware that there is always room for multiple or even competing 'truths'. Mills writes, 'what is studied in schools and universities is the result of struggles over whose version of events is sanctioned. Knowledge is often the product of the subjugation of objects, or perhaps it can be seen as the process through which subjects are constituted as subjugated' (1997: 21). The examples of necessity legitimation clearly demonstrate whose 'version of events' is sanctioned – adults' (see Shoveller and Johnson 2006: 50 for a discussion of sanctioned rhetoric in sex education). While Foucault's notions of Power/Knowledge and regimes of truth are useful in theorising power relations between groups, one finds that in practice groups are very rarely entirely powerless or powerful. It is, then, perhaps better to conceptualise power as performative, or as Judith Butler puts it, 'that reiterative power of discourse to produce the phenomena that it regulates and constrains' (1993; for the origins of research on performatives which influenced Butler's theory see Austin 1962).

The concept of adolescents as powerless (in the case of sex education) does not take into consideration instances where, for example, teenage mothers may identify as 'proud parents' with increased self-esteem as a result of having a child, coupled with 'a sense of direction and purpose' (Wilson and Huntington 2005: 65, Duncan 2007: 317). The performing of resistance to prevailing public discourses, like the case of the young mothers' contradiction of the social victim / social threat discourse (Duncan 2007: 310), must be taken into account when discussing adolescents as the powerless party in sex education.

If we now conceptualise the premises of the legitimations as performances (of knowing), the retrospective construal of sex education as necessary / normal / facilitative etc. can be seen as a mitigation strategy for assumed adolescent innocence and naivety. These mitigations fall into the two categories of cognitive processes and affective processes. For example the reasons *for* the necessity of sex education are framed within the domain of promoting mental wellbeing: so in f2 sex education is 'important' because it facilitates understanding, and in a11 it is 'advice [that] you need' because it promotes confidence and relaxation. This quite clearly construes sex education within a rhetoric of empowerment and, more specifically, within a focus on individual empowerment. As Moore notes, 'that Sex and Relationships Education is now concerned not just with physical but emotional health means that the most personal aspects of human experience are made legitimate subjects for critical scrutiny and correction' (2012: 37). This empowerment takes several forms, but is usually manifest in situations of anxiety or risk. The emphasis on self-improvement and individual empowerment has received criticism from some scholars, given that 'most attempts at managing the problematics of teenage sex are highly clinical or focus on improving the self – few interventions focus on affecting youths' social contexts' (Shoveller and Johnson 2006: 55). This invokes the traditional dialectic of structure and agency which underpins much Critical Discourse Analysis. Sealey and Carter (2004: 11) outline 'the distinguishing properties and powers of agency [which] are self-consciousness, reflexivity, intentionality, *cognition*, *emotionality* and so on' (emphasis added). It is intriguing to note that legitimation of sex education is often framed in this way, as enabling or promoting the agency of young people, given that strong parallels have been drawn elsewhere between other social 'problems' (e.g. obesity, youth crime) and social trends such as poverty (Moore 2012: 27). Legitimation of sex education is therefore presented as both remedy and repellent to a variety of social ailments, framed as it is in 'a rhetoric of individual error and responsibility for risk' (*Ibid.*).

Given the parallels between trends such as poverty and the prevalence of social issues such as teenage pregnancy, drug use, crime etc. it is illuminating to see how time and again these texts justify the necessity of sex education at the level of the individual. As I have noted above, there is little (if any) emphasis in these texts on the structural forces impinging on youth sexuality. This point is developed by Moore when she says 'to suggest that what these young people primarily lack is self-esteem is to wilfully ignore the socio-economic factors that shape their choices. The effect is to de-politicise and individualise a problem that is better conceptualised as a matter of social disadvantage' (*Ibid.*: 38).

The advocacy of adolescent self-awareness and reflexivity should therefore be set within a framework that recognizes, and creates allowances for, the influences of structure *and* agency in such representations. For example, though individuals may make their own decisions and demonstrate awareness of their own feelings and opinions, they are not always capable of enacting these. Such self-reflection and self-awareness is frequently, if not always, the subject of external cultural and structural constraints which mould the shape and outcome of such internal processes (see e.g. Archer 2000: 12, also Sealey 2009, 2012). A recent article on the representations of constraint given by members of the public who were interviewed about their lives, concluded that there are three main types of constraint which they may face: physical, structural and cultural (Sealey 2012). Sealey analysed discursive construals of constraint from the self-reflections of the local residents being interviewed. Similarly the constraints identified in this study are manifested subtly in the form of presuppositions and implicatures.

There is the presupposition that without the intervention of sex education adolescents will engage in poor and potentially harmful decision-making. The constraint alluded to is one of naivety, which stems from wider cultural assumptions about the innocence of the young. This constraint falls within the more abstract strand of Sealey's third category of constraint

('cultural') in that there is 'a conflict between social norms and the speaker's own stance' (Sealey 2012: 203). Naivety, like the blindness discussed by some of the interviewees in Sealey's study, is not in itself a form of constraint. It is only so when taken in relation to the prevailing values, attitudes and norms which circulate within society.

The basis of the self-awareness rhetoric centres on an inherent trait or attribute in the adolescent which requires cultivating (such as confidence, or the ability to make sound decisions). The element of constraint derives from a relative and normative sense of something lacking, a constraint which hinders the progression of teenager to adult. This is certainly not an isolated finding as, for example, Pearce's study of Australian sex education manuals for boys in the 1950s shows; this focuses 'upon their underlying messages about the edification and shaping of the future man' (2004: 73). This falls into a general view of adolescent development which treats adulthood as a *goal* to be achieved (e.g. to achieve maturity, self-confidence) rather than an on-going process of biological, psychological and social development.

Following on from the previous discussion of cultural constraints as the basis of sex educations legitimacy, I now address the concept of 'good' and 'right' decisions which function as part of these constraints. Because these constraints are construed as residing within the individual rather than society at large, and because they operate largely 'behind-the-scenes', it is difficult for teenagers to identify the ideologies underpinning such legitimatory advice. By attributing the 'defect' or 'constraint' to the adolescent individual the authors of these texts are able to impose norms and values on to that individual within a rhetoric of self-awareness. Constraints are thus constructed for the explicit purpose of legitimation. It is acknowledged that some scholars may consider this view overly cynical, given the lens of critique which defines all Critical Discourse Analysis (for criticisms of this, see Widdowson 1995, 2003; Martin 1999; Jones, 2007). However, given the perennial

conclusions from researchers in the field of sex education that much of what is written and communicated to young people is done through a prism of negativity (through risk, danger, etc.), it is justified to critique this prism given the benefits of moving towards a more positively-driven discussion of sex and growing up. By focusing on inequalities of power and negative representations of teenagers and their lifestyles in these texts, critical discourse analysts are then able to identify what would comprise more empowering representations and treatments of the subject matter. While this does not quite reach Martin's (1999) criteria for a Positive Discourse Analysis, it certainly provides a much-needed space for the outline of such changes.

Returning now to Foucault's work on power and knowledge, sex education texts have often been analysed in terms of normative practices and the ossification of negative beliefs about sex and sexuality (e.g. Thorogood 1992, 2000; Monk 1998, 2001; Hall 2004, 2009; Shoveller and Johnson 2006; Moore 2012). This approach has provided useful and illuminating insights into how attempts to control and manage the emotional and biological changes of puberty are manifested. One way is to devolve the responsibility for sexual regulation to the teenagers themselves. This mechanism for sexual self-regulation arises out of the circulation of 'expert' discourses pertaining to how best to look after one's own body, both physically and emotionally. This is outlined by Foucault when he says

> it is not the accentuation of the forms of prohibition that is behind these modifications in sexual ethics. It is the development of an art of existence that revolves around the questions of the self, of its dependence and independence, of its universal form and of the connection it can and should establish with others, of the procedures by which it exerts its control over itself, and of the way in which it can establish a complete supremacy over itself

Such self-control is usually achieved through the problematization of sex, or rather aspects of sexual behaviour which are recontextualized and moralized to suit the standards of the day (see Foucault 1986: 11). All of this operates within a proliferation of talk around and about sex, by not just experts but 'lay' people. To this end some scholars maintain that such a proliferation of discourse, in this case relating to sex, will have a counter-effect on such expert discourses given the fact that 'people are also aware of the plurality of expertise, of the fact that many problems have more than one expert solution. As a result, expert authority may be waning, albeit only slowly' (van Leeuwen 2008: 107). This may have a profound influence on how sex education is legitimated in advice texts. In the texts analysed in this study, there is a preponderance of Facilitation legitimations whereby the justification is derived from sex education doing something *for* the teenager (e.g. facilitating self-confidence, more balanced lifestyles, happier relationships, etc.). By comparison there is no significant mention of experts, or "studies" which have alleged to show positive outcomes for those undertaking a sex education. Could this be evidence for the waning of expert discourse as predicted by van Leeuwen? This would seem unlikely. Expert discourse may be invoked in ways other than the surface level attribution of justifications to named authorities, be they doctors, professionals, reports or studies more broadly (van Leeuwen 2008: 107), such as through the self-construction of an expert identity by the author(s) via a recourse to using modal verbs of certainty (*will, can*) and other predictive devices. The ability to divine the course of pubertal processes is seemingly sufficient grounds for the authors to cast themselves in the role of 'expert'.

As I have shown, sex education is construed as a medium through which various kinds of social, cognitive and sexual awareness is achieved. The authors effectively hand over the tools with which teenagers may construct their own identities and values (see Sunderland

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2004: 173-7). This idea draws upon Butler's performativity theory which I introduced earlier. By learning, for example, the teenager is then able to self-construct / perform their identity as a diligent student. This is another key feature of legitimations in sex education texts: various model identities are offered as part of establishing the basis for the legitimacy of sex education. Sex education is legitimate because it helps teenagers who are prepared, teenagers who research and ask questions about their bodies, and so on. In short, the authors of these texts establish behavioural templates for what a teenager would do or be like in an ideal world, and then impose such expectations upon the readers to occupy and take up those templates / roles. From a Foucauldian perspective this may be explained as a means with which to assert control over the teenagers' bodies. Foucault introduces 'docile bodies' as bodies 'that may be subjected, used, transformed and improved' (1977: 136). The purpose of advice texts such as these serve to improve adolescent bodies via health regimes (e.g. advocacy of healthy foods, regular exercise etc.) and transform them into compliant bodies which avoid unsafe, unhealthy, or immoral situations. The more adolescents ask questions and seek answers from their adult educators, the more opportunity there is for their personal and social lives to be mediated and moulded by the representations of the educators. Sex education, therefore, provides the 'answers' and the 'facts' in order to model adolescents into keeping within societal norms. The consequences of not reading (about sex and puberty) (e7) or engaging in self-reflection will presumably lead to the reader not making the right choices (a10), not being prepared for the onset of puberty and the anxieties which attend it (a1, e1, f3), and having less confidence and self-esteem than if one did (h3). The construction and ascription of identities builds upon a system of values which are either foregrounded or backgrounded in order to highlight different facets of that identity (see Sunderland 2004: 176-7). In the case of these texts, for example, the authors construct teenagers as good, diligent students by foregrounding particular actions which are expected of them, whether it

is *knowing*, *understanding*, *reading*, *asking questions* – in short, processes which are enabled and facilitated by texts of this sort (i.e. advice texts). That said, one must also bear in mind that the 'construction of an individual is achieved not in the talk of that individual but is socially negotiated in interaction' (*Ibid.*: 177). Identities cannot merely be imposed upon teenagers (e.g. the 'diligent student') but rather negotiated with them. This ties in with the empowerment agenda on which all texts in this genre are predicated.

(6.3.2) Discourse of Damage Limitation

The second discourse which emerges from a practical argumentation analysis of these texts is that of 'damage limitation'. The logic of this discourse is based on an overtly negative perception of teenagers' behaviour as problematic, and something which needs to be managed directly. The promotion of preventative measures functions to induce teenagers 'to begin to exercise their will to resist temptation' (Harrison 2000: 32), and when this is not possible, to engage in 'damage limitation' (Hall 2009). This is represented most readily in premises of danger/risk, responsibility, ignorance, and circumstantial necessity.

Adolescents are sometimes formulated as ideally non-sexual beings who are to be shielded from explicit representations of carnal knowledge. This is best explained in terms of a series of tensions which serve to produce a sex education which is inadequate for all concerned: for the adults it is often deemed too liberal, and for the teenagers it is often deemed too authoritative and inaccurate a representation of reality. On the one hand the readers of these texts are classified legally as children given that they are under 18 years of age. This viewpoint privileges only communication of very restricted sexual knowledge due to the widespread cultural notion of protecting the innocence of children (Pilcher 2005: 154). On the other hand the readers are adolescents and therefore young adults who are increasingly

capable of formulating their own feelings and desires, and who may or may not already have experience of sexual activity. Tied in with this is an on-going tension between protection and empowerment. This is further complicated by differences in opinion as to how much (or how little) information adolescents should be privy to, no doubt because 'the discipline itself moves in particular cycles, [and is] hugely influenced by the moral and political climates of the day' (Harrison 2000: 3, also see Pearce 2004: 73). At present, secondary schools in the United Kingdom are legally obliged to produce a publicly available policy statement on sex education which outlines exactly what is or is not being taught and any (e.g. religious) biases (Harrison 2000: 20). Due to the fact that the reproductive cycle is the only compulsory element of sex education in schools, there is little coordination over what is to be considered too little or too much information. Despite this, however, there is a growing recognition particularly among the more recent advice texts analysed here that older children as well as teenagers are sexually aware, if not active. Legitimations of sex education often draw upon concepts of risk and danger, and of adolescents as innocents who, in order to reach adulthood, must engage in self-reflection and improvement. Constructs of ideal teenage readers are invoked in an attempt to mould the behaviour of readers in line with the norms and expectations outlined in the texts (Oakley 2013). Sex education therefore comprises an attempt at social engineering which 'can provide a knowledge and understanding of traditional moral rules by allowing pupils to reflect on them, to create a general propensity to obey these rules, with a belief that others should obey these rules' (Harrison 2000: 32).

(6.4) Summary of the practical argumentation approach

Fairclough and Fairclough (2012: 86) argue that an 'analysis of argumentation can make a major contribution to strengthening textual analysis of CDA'. This is done by 'critical questioning of the acceptability of... premises and the relations between them and the claim, as well as critical examination of the claim itself' (*Ibid.*: 11). Within these texts the claim is that sex education is legitimate, and the premises are the premises which justify and validate this claim.

(6.4.1) Uses

One of the main uses of the practical argumentation approach is that it can be used to 'identify the nature and causes of what is "wrong"... and produce knowledge which could (in the right conditions) contribute to "righting" or at least mitigating these "wrongs"' (*Ibid.*: 101). In the case of this study this entailed identifying the negative discourse of 'damage limitation' based on premises which focus disproportionately on the risks and dangers teenagers face, and the unhealthy or unwise choices they are likely make without sufficient guidance. This discourse perhaps contributes to feelings of disengagement and disaffection with the subject of sex education (on the part of its recipients), thus undermining the very goal of sex education, which is to benefit and empower young people. The authors of the texts often make claims and invoke value judgements without making explicit the premises on which they are based. While this may be an accepted feature of 'expert' discourse which has become so prevalent in recent years, it often results in the alienation of teenage readers on the grounds it does not apply to them or that they refuse to recognise the unqualified authority of the authors. Rather than attempting to rationalize with teenagers about the benefits of sex education, many of the authors merely use bald assertions to make their claims. Thus the

practical argumentation approach is useful in outlining what can be done potentially to improve teenage engagement with sex education programmes, for example by encouraging authors of such texts to make explicit the rationales behind their arguments, and to frame premises not in terms of social engineering but in terms of social empowerment.

(6.4.2) Limitations

This approach also has limitations. One such limitation which is pertinent to the texts analysed here concerns the amount of inference needed with which to reconstruct complete arguments. Several of the legitimations identified in this study comprised little more than single sentences or even clauses, thus necessitating a degree of qualified interpretation. Many premise elements (e.g. Circumstance, Means-Goal, Goal etc.) are left implicit which means it is difficult for the researcher to avoid imposing his or her own conclusions. This can be mitigated to a considerable degree by taking into account the context of the entire co-text and text generally. However there were still instances which proved somewhat difficult to analyse given that they appeared in isolation from the main body of the text (e.g. in captions accompanying pictures).

Another more practical limitation with the framework specific to this study is the amount of space (and word count) needed to analyse even a relatively small number of arguments. Fairclough and Fairclough analyse arguments by breaking them down into their composite premise elements, and entering them into individual tables (see 2012: 88, 140-141 for examples). This means including the argument in full, and then again as they are broken down into each premise with a small paragraph commenting on each. It was decided early on that an abbreviated form of this model would have to be employed in order to discuss as many arguments as possible.

(6.5) Conclusion

To recap, the research questions underpinning this study are as follows:

RQ1) How are discursive legitimation strategies achieved linguistically within the self-help advice textbooks, in order to validate sex education?

It was found that the texts employed five different, but often complementary, legitimation strategies to justify the existence of sex education. The strategy of Special Circumstances legitimated on the grounds that the existence of certain situations requires the intervention of sex education. The strategy of Normality legitimates on the basis that sex education is normal, natural, and thus familiar and beyond reproach. The strategy of Facilitation legitimates sex education by highlighting the utility of sex education, showing teenagers what it can help them to do, to be, or to achieve. The strategy of Necessity legitimated sex education by arguing that it is necessary or even, in some circumstances, obligatory. And finally the strategy of Recontextualization legitimated sex education by representing it as another value-laden activity, or by comparing it with another such activity.

RQ2) What premises are these strategies based upon?

Premises pertaining to personal / social responsibility and risk are the main bases on which sex education is legitimated within these texts. The necessity of learning and making socially sanctioned or appropriate decisions is a fundamental part of the arguments employed. The premises also highlighted individual teenage agency over more abstract structural forces, thus attributing harmful choices and situations as the responsibility of teenagers instead of the social institutions which shape them. It has been shown that the blanket devolution of culpability for the circumstances teenagers find themselves in does little to endear them to the

subject. Also, vague appeals to knowledge are frequently invoked (e.g. appeals to 'the facts', 'good information', 'good decisions') as premises underlying the validity of sex education. The vagueness may be interpreted as a pragmatic strategy of self-protection by obscuring exactly what constitutes 'facts' and 'good information', thus making the legitimation claims harder to contest. It also constitutes a problematic assumption of authority on the part of the authors in that many teenagers view such assertions as arbitrary and patronising. Finally the arguments are based on premises which construct the teenage reader as unlikely to make normative and socially acceptable decisions without the intervention of adult guidance. Role model teenagers are constructed in the texts in order to justify sex education and to provide a benchmark which real teenagers should aspire to. This is also problematic given the feelings of alienation it may cause. In this respect the analysis confirmed the arguments made in some of the educational and sociological literature on sex education (Gagnon and Simon 2005; Shoveller and Johnson 2006; Moore 2012), that the premises on which it exists are preoccupied with negative aspects of life (dangers, risks, threats, situations to avoid such as pregnancy and venereal disease) rather than positive aspects such as pleasure. This is not to say that positive premises do not feature within the legitimations, however. My position as a researcher remains largely unchanged in relation to sex education textbooks as useful, helpful, but often contradictory texts.

RQ3) What attitudes emerge towards the recipients of sex education (i.e. teenagers), and do these constitute a discourse of 'damage limitation'?

Two discourses were identified in the legitimations. The dominant discourse comprises 'knowledge is empowerment', and treats teenagers as individuals who can gain reassurance, self-awareness etc. from taking part in sex education. A second discourse confirms the claims

made in previous research which argue that sex education contains a discourse of 'damage limitation' inclusive of 'risk' and 'danger'. In contrast to the first discourse which conceptualises teenagers as young adults who benefit from empowerment, this latter discourse construes them as (legally) children / innocents who would benefit from social management and regulation. The presence of these competing discourses within the texts creates an epistemological tension whereby young people are simultaneously free to make their own decisions in life, but also constrained by which decisions are normative and socially / morally appropriate. In addition to this is the vastly disproportionate emphasis on agency over structure in the texts generally, so that harmful situations are represented as more often than not the consequence of poor decision making or ignorance of 'the facts'.

(6.5.1) Strengths, limitations and implications for future research

The main strength of the research lies in its ability to highlight premises and value assumptions which may not otherwise be amenable to introspection. It shows justification patterns which, when looked at holistically, provide clues to prevalent cultural assumptions and discourses about sex education and its recipients. Perhaps the most salient limitation is the relatively small number of texts analysed, a decision largely necessitated by the choice of analytical framework. While ten texts have been shown to provide evidence for the existence of competing discourses and legitimation patterns, a much larger study looking at, say, fifty texts would provide an even firmer basis on which stake these claims.

This study has shown that contemporary British sex education texts contain competing discourses which serve to undermine attempts to engage teenagers with the subject. Future directions could include a diachronic analysis of a much larger set of sex education texts to investigate changing deployment of legitimation strategies and premises over time. For

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example do texts from twenty years ago employ the same *types* and *combinations* of legitimation strategy as those of today? It has been shown by an abundance of research from the fields of education and sociology that the discourse of damage limitation has been a recurring feature of sex education programmes in Britain and elsewhere (e.g. the US, Australia, New Zealand). However, are there other discourses such as the 'knowledge is empowerment' discourse which have existed through time, or have certain discourses waxed and waned in accordance with the political and social climates of the day?

Another suggestion concerns either a synchronic or diachronic study of multimodal legitimation in these texts. For example how do the authors justify sex education using the visual mode instead of / in addition to the linguistic? It would also be fruitful to compare and contrast the discourses invoked by the visual and the linguistic within a Multimodal Critical Discourse Analysis (MCDA), and thus accounting for any conspicuous discrepancies between the two.

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Appendix

Table 18. Summary of Texts used

Source	Date	Size	Coverage	Audience
Spilsbury (Text A)	2009	58 pages	Puberty, Growing Up, Sex, Health, Lifestyle Choices, Reproduction	Teenagers
Powell (Text B)	2010	38 pages	'Covering all aspects of puberty from physical changes and emotions to body image and eating disorders, this book offers support and advice on the complex changes you experience during puberty.'	Aimed at 'young people' – specifically teenagers
Harris (Text C)	2010	82 pages	Puberty, Growing Up, Sex, Health, Lifestyle Choices, Reproduction	'Pre-teens and teenagers'
Pollard & Kent (Text D)	2004	48 pages	'This book tells you all about sex in the real world. It explains what sex is, what you should think about before you have sex and what can happen if you decide to have sex. Facts are explained clearly and advice is given by professionals.'	Aimed at 'young people' – encompasses older children and teenagers
Levete (Text E)	2009	42 pages	'Talk About: Sex and Puberty includes statistics about STDs, teenage pregnancy and the changes that puberty brings about. It looks at what happens when young people experience puberty, from the physical changes through to the emotional changes, and explores the sometimes-difficult emotions that accompany puberty. This book also looks at the issues surrounding sex and relationships faced by young people, and offers ways in which to manage them.'	Aimed at 'young people' – encompasses older children and teenagers
Cooper (Text F)	2005	42 pages	Puberty, Growing Up, Sex, Health, Lifestyle Choices, Reproduction	Aimed at 'young people' – encompasses older children and teenagers
Elliot-Wright (Text G)	2003	56 pages	Puberty, Growing Up, Sex, Health, Lifestyle Choices, Reproduction	Aimed at 'young people' – encompasses

				older children and teenagers
Bailey (Text H)	2004	98 pages	Puberty, Growing Up, Sex, Health, Lifestyle Choices, Reproduction	Teenagers
Macfarlane & McPherson (Text I)	2003	117 pages	A collection of emails to www.teenagehealthfreak.org and responses by medical professionals, covering topics on sex, health, relationships and contraception.	Aimed at 'young people' – encompasses older children and teenagers
Crowder (Text J)	2012	91 pages	'This educational guide is designed to be read alone or together with an adult, or possibly in the context of a sex education class…Contained within its pages you'll find basic information about the physical changes of puberty, as well as reproduction, sexually transmitted infections, and safe sex practices. Also it covers the emotional changes of puberty and the challenges of adolescence. It offers straightforward suggestions for dealing with dating situations and responsible sexual actions.'	'This book is targeted at teenagers and pre-teens, beginning around age 11 when they are first introduced to sex education.'