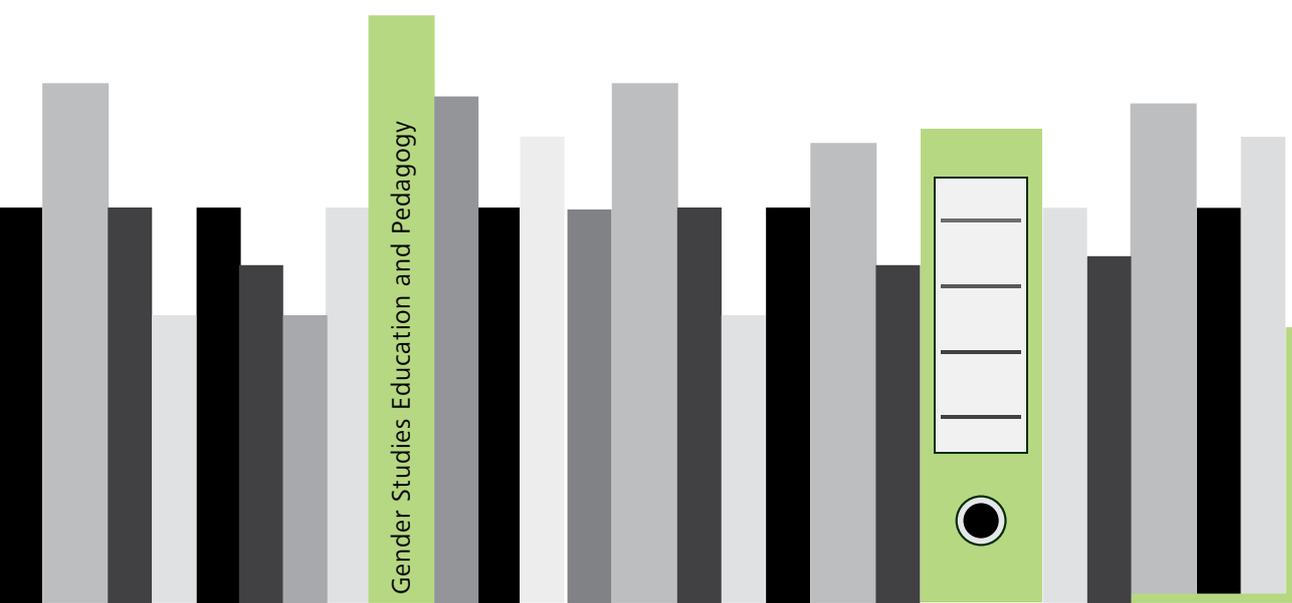


A SERIES ON GENDER STUDIES

# Gender Studies Education and Pedagogy

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Eds Anna Lundberg & Ann Werner



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In 2012 and 2013, the Swedish Secretariat for Gender Research publishes a five-part series on Swedish gender studies, in which *Gender Studies Education and Pedagogy* is the first part. The aim is to highlight and spread knowledge about gender studies to wider circles, both within and outside universities and other higher education institutions. The publication of this series is being led by editors Anna Lundberg (Linköping University) and Ann Werner (Södertörn University), and includes a reference group of representatives from gender studies disciplines in Sweden as well as the authors who have contributed to the publications.

The themes for the four following publications are: What the future holds for students of gender studies – a national alumni survey; Gender studies, politics and social responsibility; Academic challenges in writing and thought; Theoretical/methodological contributions from gender studies. It is not yet decided whether the remaining parts will be translated to English.

The publications have been selected based on consultations between the series editors, the Swedish Secretariat for Gender Research, the reference group and the authors. The reference group consists of: Ulrika Jansson (Karlstad University), Jenny Björklund (Uppsala University), Stina Backman (Linköping University), Hanna Hallgren (Södertörn University), Fanny Ambjörnsson (Stockholm University), Irina Schmitt (Lund University), Erika Alm (University of Gothenburg), Gunnel Karlsson (Örebro University), Kristin Järvstad (Malmö University) and Mia Liinason (Genusforskarförbundet).

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# Preface

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*Kerstin Alnebratt*

It has been almost 40 years since the discipline now known as gender studies was established, and theoretical, methodological and institutional developments have been rapid during this time. Today it is possible to receive both bachelor and master degrees in gender studies in Sweden, and an increasing number of HEIs offer doctorates in the discipline. Gender studies programs have received strong evaluations from the Swedish National Agency for Higher Education.

By publishing this *Series on gender studies*, the Swedish Secretariat for Gender Research wishes to further examine gender studies. What characterizes Swedish gender studies in the 2010s? What do the often very satisfied students do after completing their studies? As a cross- and post-disciplinary field of study, gender studies is required to meet specific challenges demanding questioning, innovative thinking and reflection. How has this affected the contents and formulation of the subject?

In this first publication, educational methods are the focus. Is there a specific gender studies approach to instruction and learning? What have inquiries and reflection on the roles of instructors and researchers meant for the formulation of education methods? Through concrete and practical examples, the reader is provided with good insight into and reflections on instruction practice.

We hope that the series will be interesting and inspiring not just to gender studies instructors and researchers, but also to others both within and outside the university context. We want the series to contribute to a deeper discussion on education methods that can assist in the development of both gender studies and other disciplines.

Kerstin Alnebratt  
Director, Swedish Secretariat for Gender Research

# The pedagogy of gender studies

Between experience-based learning and scholarly dialogue

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*Anna Lundberg & Ann Werner*

This specific text deals with the education methods of gender studies. It discusses what happens in a gender studies classroom, what the processes of learning and challenges are like and what are considered to be the important pedagogical aspects. It also discusses how instructors of gender studies work in various ways to create good conditions for learning, for all students, and it brings out difficult issues in learning processes involving critiques of power, as well as the strengths of gender studies education methods.

Gender studies is a relatively young discipline, although there are high levels of competence among its instructors and researchers; it has achieved good results in external evaluations of its programs (HSV 2007, HSV Decision 12/06/2012, Reg. no. 643-03443-11) and in competition for research funding. The basic features of the discipline include a critical approach aimed at change, as well as an active and conscious relation to power and identified hierarchies. It is possible that the discipline's background and connection to feminist activism, in addition to its critiques of traditional analytical methods, have contributed to gender studies being questioned in the media on a regular basis (Swedish National Agency for Higher Education, 2007:26). One of the discipline's strengths is its consistent and clear focus on critically approaching scientific inquiry, specifically with regards to issues of power and social responsibility. This is consistent with some of the most central formulations in the Higher Education Ordinance/Qualification Ordinance regarding students' abilities to formulate critical discussion, as well as the "insight into the role of knowledge in society and the responsibility of the individual for how it is used" (Higher Education Ordinance 1993:100, Annex 2).

Gender studies' contents are multi- and cross-disciplinary, since gender research is conducted within several empirical and theoretical contexts. However, one common denominator is that gender theory and methods are based on a well-founded critical and dynamic discussion of power structures in research, society and culture. Judith Butler (1994) called gender research a field without "proper objects" of study, i.e. gender studies can and should study almost everything. This definition of gender research is based on the idea that it is impossible to separate power structures and ideas of gender, class, ethnicity, race, sexuality, etc. from each other. This is an idea that has characterized Swedish gender studies in recent years (De los Reyes, Molina & Mulinari 2002, Lykke 2005).

Considering the interest in power and critical creative thinking within the discipline, it logically follows that educational methods and curricula in gender studies both require continual development, and a continual focus on power awareness. Gender studies instructors and students work towards being reflective, using their experiences, questioning hierarchies, uncovering unequal systems, networks and practices and creating alternative structures, not least within their own discipline. Gender studies researchers who are active in subjects other than gender studies also conduct such work. This applies not only to the contents of the discipline and the research connected to it, but also to how it is taught in the classroom. Within higher education, equal

opportunity laws ensure that students are not treated differently. Providing students in higher education with equal opportunities requires types of instruction that do not exclude groups and individuals, instead ensuring that all students can have their say. This legislation can be seen as a starting point for discussion concerning the development of the types – and not just the contents – of instruction.

This publication (*Gender studies education and pedagogy*) aims to highlight a few aspects of the pedagogical and educational work conducted in gender studies and research by 1) explaining the ideas behind gender studies instruction practice and 2) providing concrete examples of strategies and methods from the gender studies classroom. The contents and methods, which are described here, are based on solid research. We believe that gender studies provides conscious and thorough approaches to different types of hierarchies and power structures within instruction practice, and that these approaches might be enriching and thought-provoking even for readers outside the discipline of gender studies.

### *Pedagogical and didactic aspects of gender studies*

The subject of gender studies is characterized, as was mentioned earlier, by pluralism, and is strongly diversified. This may well be viewed as one of the strengths of the discipline. Gender studies, as a subject for research and instruction, bridges disciplinary boundaries between the humanities, social sciences and natural sciences, and the discipline both borrows from and lends itself to other disciplines. Gender studies cannot therefore claim to own or be the origin of the methods of power critiques or of the theories aimed at change which are used in its classrooms. However, it must be emphasized that instructors of gender studies work continuously towards the improvement and further development of methods of power critiques. The didactics, i.e. the instruction methods, strategies and approaches that can be found in Swedish gender studies, have their historical roots in both activism and pedagogical critical theory. Paulo Freire (1976) is a key thinker within critical pedagogy who believes that oppressed groups must own their own learning and their own history and not be taught authoritatively by others. Another important thinker within critical pedagogy is bell hooks who in her trilogy on learning has written about critical thinking, experiences and methods concerning gender, class and race hierarchies in the education system (hooks 1994, hooks 2003, hooks 2009). Kevin Kumashiro (2002, 2009) has also had a major impact in Sweden, particularly with his perspectives on queer/norm-critical pedagogy. At the same time, methods and strategies from feminism, anti-racism and queer activism from the 1960s onwards have inspired the fields of power-critical and innovative pedagogy and didactics that inspire gender studies today. It is therefore difficult to draw a clear line between anti-racist pedagogy, feminist pedagogy, gender pedagogy, norm-critical pedagogy and other types of power critique. However, these have focused on different issues during different time periods. After initially focusing on oppressed groups during the 1960s and 1970s, power-critical pedagogy has increasingly come to emphasize the role of the teacher, the meaning of self-reflectivity and the interplay between didactics and the contents of learning (Bromseth & Darj 2010). The driving forces within gender studies are its diversity and the learning processes it employs, and it is important to note that there is not one universal pedagogy or didactical approach uniting gender studies programs, or active gender studies researchers, in Sweden. However, it is important to distinguish gender studies pedagogy, which is characterized by that which was described above, from teaching about gender, which may be conducted using a range of pedagogical methods without any reflection on power.

Instruction about a research field which involves power critique, whilst at the same time working towards counteracting power inequalities and creating alternatives in the classroom, places great demands on the instructor. Gender studies teaches the critique of power, and the contents of the instruction can often have a powerful impact on the students, something which is touched upon in many chapters of this publication. On the one hand, gender studies is a highly theoretical, critical subject and, on the other, it is a subject with interests in concrete social, cultural, political and economic conditions - conditions which touch upon the intersection between personal and public spheres. These elements, all characteristic of the subject – elements which concern power systems running across public and private spheres, lived experience and scholarly discussion – lead to many gender studies students becoming strongly engaged in their studies, both emotionally and intellectually. From an educational perspective, this requires pedagogical work which takes into account both the emotional and the rational parts of the learning process. This creates an interesting duplicity, where the teacher on the one hand is an authority and on the other works with methods and teaches theories which question that very authority.

### *The pedagogy of gender studies: highlighting five aspects*

This publication has been produced as a result of collaboration between editors Anna Lundberg and Ann Werner, the Swedish Secretariat for Gender Research represented by Josefine Alvunger and Inga-Bodil Ekselius, and Janne Bromseth, Anita Hussénus, Ulla M Holm, Renita Sörensdotter, Kerstin Norlander, Nina Lykke and Berit Larsson. On 2 May 2012, we met in Göteborg for a workshop where the theme was the pedagogical methods and didactics of gender studies. Various people were invited to participate in the workshop, following suggestions from the publication series reference group.

During the meeting, we discussed the aspects of the pedagogical methods and didactics within gender studies which could be interesting to highlight. The publication's target group was also discussed. The themes which arose constitute the framework for this introductory chapter and those that follow.

The five chapters all contain both discussions and reflective text as examples of didactic methods. The highlighted examples are taken from the teaching of gender studies as conducted at Swedish HEIs. Many more examples and authors were possible – and we encourage the reader to delve deeper into the reference lists and to test and develop the methods and arguments that are presented there. The purpose is not to present a complete picture of educational methods within gender studies, but rather to give specific examples and suggestions from the field.

In Chapter 1, Kerstin Norlander describes the method known as empathetic reading. In a subject such as gender studies, where both examination and a critique of power relations and established knowledge are central elements, it is important that the student not only learns to read critically, but also to read carefully. To read empathetically is to carefully gain an abundance of perspectives; it is to understand and acquaint oneself with different perspectives in order to be able to answer/discuss/handle/criticize. In short, it is about scholarly attentiveness. Norlander writes: "The basic idea is that readers must understand a text on its own conditions first, before they express an opinion about it. Thus, the method means that readers must challenge their own preconceptions, which may sometimes be difficult, but which opens up the possibility of exciting reading adventures and the conquest of new knowledge." The method also means that the student practices the important art of providing constructive and well-founded criticism.

In Chapter 2, Nina Lykke writes about intersectional gender pedagogy. The chapter is tied to an idea – central to contemporary gender studies research: that power structures and ideas concerning gender, class, ethnicity, race, sexuality, etc. intersect each other and that these power relations, which work in concert, also have a place in the classroom. One of Lykke’s objectives is to increase awareness of this; she concretely links the discussion of intersectionality to the classroom setting and to didactic methods with roots in feminist peace activism. Lykke’s chapter also emphasizes the importance of students being trained in, on the one hand, the examination of their own perspectives and, on the other, being able to shift to/imagine the perspectives and starting points of others. Lykke terms this transversal dialogues.

In the third chapter, Anita Hussénus, Kristina Andersson and Annica Gullberg write about the instruction of gender studies within other subjects and disciplines. As has been mentioned previously, gender studies as a teaching and research subject crosses several disciplinary boundaries; its methods both borrow from and lend themselves to other subjects and its contents add important perspectives to other fields of education. The chapter written by Hussénus, Andersson and Gullberg is based on a practical research project conducted within the teacher education framework with a focus on natural science disciplines. The chapter is linked to the critical approach of gender studies through its examination of the way in which the natural sciences are viewed as disciplines for which boys have a more natural talent. The chapter presents methods to in part deal with experiences of this unequal situation in the classroom, and in part provide prospective teachers with tools to handle the situation in their future profession.

In Chapter 4, Janne Bromseth and Renita Sörensdotter highlight norm-critical pedagogy as an opportunity to change the way teaching is conducted in teams. Starting with the pedagogical developmental work conducted by the team of teachers at the Division of Gender Studies at Stockholm University, the authors discuss how teachers and students position themselves in the power structures of the classroom. The chapter presents and discusses norm-critical pedagogy and experience-based learning as two ways of challenging dominance and discrimination in educational contexts and of promoting inclusive teaching. Working in what is known as ‘tutor groups’ is one type of instruction used and developed within gender studies at Stockholm University. This method is also described in the chapter. The process of working within teaching teams is highlighted by Bromseth and Sörensdotter, who describe how pedagogical development work can be consciously shaped as a group process.

In the fifth and final chapter of the publication, Berit Larsson begins with what she views as the focal point of gender studies teaching: crossing boundaries and (self-) reflection. She poses the question: What purpose does gender studies serve? Apart from the self-evident relevance of the discipline to social and political research in an unjust and unequal world, Larsson considers the discipline essential in assisting students in becoming independent in both thought and action. What is interesting is not what the students know, but what may be done with what they know. Larsson connects lived experience with the lessons learned in higher education. She stresses the importance of teaching power-consciously about power insofar as instructors also have to place their own position under scrutiny. Just as in Chapters 1 and 2, what is emphasized here is the importance of honing the student’s ability of self-reflection and of crossing boundaries. This enables gender studies students to learn how to handle an abundance of perspectives as well as conflicts of interpretation.

Gender studies pedagogy moves between knowing, being and doing, between experience-based learning and scholarly dialogue, between self-reflective knowledge

and cross-boundary science. It makes pedagogical work a dynamic field which is in motion and full of ideas. We believe these five chapters reflect this.

*We hope that you enjoy this publication.  
Anna Lundberg and Ann Werner*

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# Empathetic reading

The art of reading a text on its own terms

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*Kerstin Norlander*

There are many ways to read a text: one can skim through it, delve into it to read a section of interest, read it quickly using a special reading technique (*speed reading*) or read it slowly, with reflection. Different reading techniques are part of the professional competence of researchers. The selection of reading method is based on the problem that to be solved using a specific text, whether that is searching for facts, supporting argumentation, writing a research review or understanding a theory that is to be applied (Booth, Colomb & Williams 2003, ch. 6). Over the last decades, there has been a decrease in the teaching of careful and reflective text reading in Swedish compulsory and upper-secondary schools. Since 1989, the educational system has undergone neoliberal political reforms and reorganisation. As a consequence, Sweden has lost position in the global ranking of 15 year-old pupils' reading comprehension in the last PISA survey (PISA 2010). Thus today's students have only a basic knowledge of reading techniques, which negatively influences their ability to achieve success in their university studies.

At the turn of the millennium, in connection with Umeå University's revision of courses in gender studies, we started teaching "slow reading", also known as "close reading" (Fletcher 2007, Andersson & Kalman 2010). The aim was to develop the students' skill in reading texts critically and to give them the possibility to reflect on their role as readers. I tentatively name this reading method empathetic reading, in order to emphasize the need to be emphatic about the perspectives of others; i.e. the author's intentions with her or his text and to show respect for the author's ambitions. The basic idea is that the reader must first understand a text on its own terms, and not until then express an opinion about it. The method implies a challenge to the reader's preconceptions, which may sometimes be tough, but also opens up exciting reading adventures and the possibility of gaining new knowledge. The same basic idea is in use at seminars and in the public defence of doctoral theses at Swedish universities. Anyone commenting on a text always starts by giving a summary of the text, after which the author approves the summary. Thus, the commentator must be able to show that she or he has understood the author's intentions with the text, since a good dialogue requires agreement on what is to be discussed. The object of this article is to describe the method of empathetic reading and to give an example of how it can be used. Some reflections on experiences of using the method in gender studies at Umeå University are also presented.

Empathetic reading involves the students studying a text with help of six questions: What? How? Purpose? Context? Who? Further? The questions are answered in a written assignment created by a group or a single student.

The question *what* aims to help the student dissect the text and to provide an initial understanding of what the text is about. The student examines the following: What thesis does the author assert? What does the author want to show/prove/refute? What questions does the author pose? What conclusions does the author draw?

The question *how* provides preconditions for understanding how the author constructs the reasoning in the text: Which tools – arguments, theoretical and/or met-

hodological approaches, empirical data, interpretations/understandings, reasons/explanations – does the author work with?

After examining *what* and *how*, it is possible to understand the *purpose* of the text. The aim may be broader than explicitly expressed in the text, or it may be based on hidden intention. The student asks questions as to what the text shows/proves/refutes/makes visible/questions/compares/examines? The student also poses the question: Is there an underlying objective?

In order to understand the question of *purpose*, it is essential to interpret the text as a part of a general whole from which it has originated, i.e. to problematize the context of the text. It is important that the student realizes that scholarly texts, but also other types of texts, are produced in a specific milieu. Texts are characterized by the time in which they are written, and by certain academical and societal conditions. In short: When was the text written? Where (in which research community, and/or geographically, culturally, social circumstance)? Against which backdrop – debates or events – was it written? Which other texts does it relate to?

The question of *who* may provide a deeper insight of the text, in terms of why it was written and why it deals with a certain topic. The student examines the following: Who wrote the text, for whom, and who is the text about? Which area of expertise, discipline or field of experience does the author represent?

Finally, when the student has worked through the text – studied it on its own terms – the student can go *further* and present hers or his own reflections on the text. Consequently, the student responds to the following: Formulate your own opinion of the text!

I will give an example of how the method may be used to read a text. I have not chosen a scholarly text for this purpose, but a political speech that most Swedes would claim to be familiar with: the speech delivered by the party leader of Vänsterpartiet Gudrun Schyman at the party congress 2002. The idea behind choosing this text is to elucidate how the message of the speech has been misinterpreted in public opinion. Vänsterpartiet derived from the Swedish communist part; nowadays it is a left-wing social democratic party, which declares to be a feminist one. The speech came to be known as the "Taliban speech" to the general public due to a remark Schyman made in which she compared Swedish men with the Taliban, claiming similarities in the two groups patriarchal notion of women (Schyman 2012).

**What?** The Vänsterpartiet 2002 congress main theme was *Mission: Social Justice*. Schyman talked about how to interpret justice in relation to the social conflicts she identified in the world at the time when she held the speech. Her discussion included the conflict between men and women. She claimed that all social life generates conflicts, but these conflicts provide a chance to create change and fight injustice. Politics is to bring to light these conflicts, to take a position and to make changes.

**How?** The speech has a rhetorical form and is not constructed in the manner typical of scholarly texts. To underline her view of equality/injustice, she brought up examples that identify conflicts related to the unequal distribution of different kinds of resources: September 11 2001, America's "War on Terror" and the warfare in Afghanistan, the Palestine-Israel conflict, and the EU summit in Gothenburg 2001. All these conflicts have given rise to violence, and men have been the perpetrators of the outrages. Subsequently, she gave another example, the conflict between men and women, which she considered to be universal. In consequence, she saw no fundamental difference between the situation of women in Afghanistan or in Sweden. Schyman claimed that women in the two countries are subordinated to the same system of gender relations. She described the violence perpetrated against women and how women's paid and unpaid work – in the educational system, in the health

and social care sector as well as at home – is undervalued and unrecognised. Schyman also pleaded for *love* to be incorporated into political analysis, and to form the foundation of political change and promote gender equality. Her concept of love, taken from political scientist Anna Jónasdóttir, highlights how women's work in everyday life aims to reproduce human beings. According to Jónasdóttir, love constitutes the material basis for the oppression of women.

**Purpose?** Schyman's role was to set the agenda for the party congress of 2002, but her unspoken aim was to sway the party in a more feminist direction – a process started in 1996 with a new party programme. The speech also raised feminist claims within politics in general by including feminist demands as an obvious part of the politics of social justice. Social justice, according to Schyman, must not be restricted to the economics issues (class) but must also comprise equality between men and women (gender). The speech broke with the established Swedish policy of gender equality which is based on the notion that man is the norm to which women shall adjust. Also, the policy disregards existing power relations between men and women and fails to politicize the social construction of masculinity. Hence, in her speech, Schyman identified men as a problematic social group and claimed men and women to have different political interests, which generate conflicts.

**Context?** The speech was held in a specific situation, a Swedish party congress, and must be understood in relation to the Swedish public discussions of the 1990s about feminism. Over the course of a decade, feminism had been highly visible in the political landscape, and the majority of leading politicians, both men and women, described themselves as "feminists". This paved the way for a change of what should be understood as "political". Typical of the time, Schyman based her speech on a researcher, Anna Jónasdóttir (Jónasdóttir 1991), in order to underline her argumentation for an expansion of the concept of social justice. Swedish politicians, liberals, social democrats and leftists, have since the 1970s formed their policy of gender equality on research results from women's and gender studies. However, society at the time was not ready for a feminism that emphasized men's oppression of women and associated masculinity with violence. As a consequence, the reactions to the speech were overwhelming negative (Eduards 2012).

**Who?** Gudrun Schyman (1948-) is a qualified social worker and a Swedish politician known for her heavy commitment to feminist issues. She was a member of the Swedish Parliament from 1988 to 2006, and the party leader of the Vänsterpartiet during the period 1993-2003. Under her leadership, the party received 12 % of the votes in the 1998 election, and as a result became the third largest party in Parliament. In 2004 she left the party to work with setting up a Swedish feminist party, Feministiskt Initiativ, which was founded 2005. Schyman is one of the party's spokeswomen and since the election 2010 a member of the municipal council in Simrishamn where she lives.

**Further?** With the question *further*, the student is provided with the possibility to reflect on the text. However, the aim of this article is to describe the reading method. For this reason, I will not offer my opinion on the Schyman speech.

At the Umeå Centre for Gender Studies, we have mostly used the reading method in an undergraduate course in feminist theory. The students begin by learning the method by reading some texts and putting together written assignments. After mastering the method, we move on to reading classic texts in feminist theory. At that moment, the methods have been used to assist the students' understanding of the theories. First, they have read the texts individually, and then written the assignments in groups. Finally, the assignments have formed the basis for seminar discussions.

What is the students' opinion of the method? Those who have already studied university courses appreciate the method, and have asked why they have not been taught close reading at other courses. This would have saved a great deal of trouble for them. First-year students are sometimes more critical, mainly because they find the work boring. The course in feminist theory is approximately five weeks, which means reading texts and writing assignments during a month. This gives the students time to learn the method thoroughly and deepen their reading comprehension, as well as develop their reading skills. In my opinion, today's students are impatient with slowness and do not understand the point of repetitive work, both of which are necessary in order to develop proficiency. Our students are often dedicated to the subjects treated by the texts, and they often have a strong view of the topic. For this reason, it may be troublesome to be forced to problematize oneself as a reader, to give up part of one's beliefs, to open oneself up to new arguments, or alter or nuance one's own opinions.

As a teacher, it can sometimes be challenging to keep students' on track and to stick to the question of "what is the statement in the text"? But my experience is that students greatly benefit from the method at a later stage. When they write essays, I have noticed that they present better research reviews, since they are able to quickly find the point of a text. They also read other students' texts in a more reflective manner, since they can focus on the essential. Moreover, they write better texts themselves since reading and writing are mutually supportive. To sum up, I can see that the reading skills have been integrated into the students' academic competence and have strengthened their capacity for reflective and analytical thinking. Consequently, the method of empathetic reading is a pedagogical tool that helps students in gender studies to read, think and write with consideration. They acquire both meticulousness and ability for providing constructive and well-founded criticism on scholarly texts.

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# Intersectional gender pedagogy

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*Nina Lykke*

Intersectionality has become a key concept in feminist research. When feminist researchers work intersectionally, it means that they view gender, gender relations and gender identities in interplay with other sociocultural categorizations, norm-producing discourses and power relations such as ethnicity, racialization, class, nationality, sexuality, dis/ability, age, etc.

In order to understand the concept of intersectionality, many feminist researchers believe that it is important to view the categorizations and the interplay between them as *doings*, i.e. as phenomena which are given meaning in interpersonal communication and not as phenomena with fixed, eternally valid meanings. Rather than understanding, for example, gender, ethnicity and the intersections between them as something we "have" or "are", many feminist researchers understand the categorizations as something we do.

In this chapter, I want to discuss what an intersectional understanding of gender can mean for gender pedagogy and for learning processes in the classroom. Firstly, I shall present a working definition of intersectional gender. Secondly, I will discuss intersectional gender pedagogy. Finally, I shall conclude suggesting ways to work with intersectional gender in the classroom.

The aim of intersectional gender pedagogy is to make students and teachers more conscious about power relations, excluding norms and differences in the classroom. An intersectional gender pedagogy should inspire the development of tools aimed at counteracting processes of exclusion; tools that instead treat differences constructively. How can we break, for example, norms of whiteness and Swedishness, middle class norms, heteronormativity and norms of bodily ability? How can we create an "including" rather than "excluding" classroom?

## *What is intersectional gender?*

Many feminist researchers are currently in agreement that gender should be understood intersectionally. Gender interacts with many other categorizations. The term "intersectionality" was coined by the US-based feminist and critical race theorist Kimberlé Crenshaw (1995). In Sweden, it has been discussed since the beginning of the 2000s (see for example Lykke 2003, 2009; Reyes & Mulinari 2005; Reyes & Martinsson 2005). To use an intersectional approach means that the specific manner in which individuals "do" gender cannot be separated from the manner in which they "do" ethnicity, class or sexuality, for example. Our identity is not divided into different compartments: gender, ethnicity, class, sexuality, etc.

At the same time, many feminist researchers agree that various types of power differentials related to gender, ethnicity, class, sexuality, etc. should be understood as results of unequal societal relations. Inequalities based on gender emerge from different kinds of dynamics compared to inequalities based on class, ethnicity or sexuality, for example. That various difference-producing dynamics and norms are in interplay does not mean that they can simply be reduced to one another. For example, unequal class relations are not the same thing as unequal gender relations. Therefore, when feminist researchers take a point of departure

in an intersectional understanding of gender, it means that they look at:

1. complex and mutually transforming interactions between different power differentials, dynamics and norms of gender, ethnicity, class, sexuality, etc.
2. complex and mutually transforming interactions between the manners in which individual subjects do gender, ethnicity, class, sexuality, etc.

### *The concept of 'intersectionality'*

The term "intersectionality" comes from the American English word "intersection", which denotes crossroads. The image of crossroads requires that we pay attention to the interplay that is created when a "gender road" meets, for example, an "ethnicity road". However, quite a number of feminist researchers have problematized the crossroads metaphor. For if we take the logics of the metaphor literally, the roads separate further on. The crossroads metaphor is therefore not so apt for depicting an interplay which goes on *continuously*.

In the textbook *Feminist Studies* (Lykke 2010), I suggested that feminist researchers may use the term "intersectionality", but that we, rather than imagining roads crossing each other, should use the concept "*intra-action*" as our frame of reference. Intra-action is a term coined by feminist researcher Karen Barad (2007); it refers to the manner in which unbounded phenomena pervade and mutually transform each other. Imagine, for example, what happens when different kinds of paint are mixed to create new colours. Mixing paints makes it impossible to recover the "pure" form of the base colour or the mixed-in pigments. Or in other words, an intra-active understanding of intersectional gender means that we understand the manners in which individuals do gender as a "tinting" of the ways in which they do ethnicity, class, sexuality, etc., and vice versa.

### *Intersectional gender pedagogy*

Gender pedagogy reflects on meanings of gender in the classroom. *Intersectional* gender pedagogy focuses on differences, power and inequalities in the classroom, based on an intersectional understanding of gender. Seen from an intersectional gender perspective, the classroom is populated by individuals doing gender, ethnicity, racialization, class, nationality, sexuality, dis/ability, age, etc. in many different ways. An intersectional gender pedagogy asks questions regarding the consequences of these differences for learning processes in the classroom. It reflects on the ways in which knowledge of intersectionality and intersectional gender may be used in order to improve communication in the classroom. Rather than viewing the students in the classroom as a homogeneous group, an intersectional pedagogy focuses on critically making differences visible, while counteracting norms that create inequality and exclusion.

Intersectional gender pedagogy may be done in many ways. For example, inspired by Black Feminism, US based feminist theorist bell hooks discussed how learning from an intersectional perspective may be critically liberating and may give rise to processes of transformation that challenge hegemonic norms and power relations (hooks 1994, 2003). A related tool used in intersectional gender pedagogy, which I have personally used in university classrooms, is "transversal dialoguing".

### *Transversal dialogues – a tool for intersectional gender pedagogy*

Transversality means that you take cross-cutting approaches to boundaries and differences. Transversal dialoguing is a tool created to cross-cut boundaries between differently positioned members of groups. The tool was developed around 1990 by

Italian feminist groups working with peace processes together with women from various national groups in conflict (among others Israeli and Palestinian women). The tool has later been adopted and further theorized by feminist researchers. Two UK-based feminists, Nira Yuval-Davis (1997) and Cynthia Cockburn (1998), have both, in different ways, theorized transversal dialoguing as a tool to create democratic alliances across intersectional differences and conflicts in political groups, i.e. alliances based on acknowledging *both* what unites *and* what separates group members. I suggest that transversal dialoguing may also be used as inspiration for working constructively with intersectionality in the classroom.

Transversal dialoguing, as the tool has been defined in relation to political groups, is built on two elements: "rooting" and "shifting". Rather than allowing intersectional differences to lead to conflict, the goal of transversal dialoguing is that the group members commit themselves to move between different positions. First, everyone must reflect on their intersectional rooting. How are each group member positioned in terms of gender, ethnicity, racialisation, class, nationality, sexuality, dis/ability, age, etc.? Secondly, in addition to this, everyone must also try to put themselves in another's position, i.e. try to see what it is like to identify with the intersectional rooting of others and reflect on which power relations, hegemonies, norms, inequalities and exclusions may become visible as a result of the shift of position. What does it imply to do gender, ethnicity, racialisation class, nationality, sexuality, dis/ability, age, etc., based on positionings other than your own? What does the landscapes of power and norms look like from other intersectional positions?

The aim is that the group members enable themselves to act collectively based on a clear understanding both of that which unites them and that which separates them. The purpose is to find ways to collaborate democratically that do not suppress differences in order to create a false homogeneous identity in the group, but which, at the same time, ensure that the group is not locked into an exclusive focus on individual differences that make cooperation on joint projects and goals impossible.

### *An exercise in transversal dialogue and intersectional learning*

I would like to present an exercise which I have used in university classrooms, but which may also be used in other contexts. The exercise is meant to inspire teachers and students to create their own exercises in transversal dialoguing. It is important to note that the exercise should be understood as a framework: it may be done in many different ways. The person/s in charge of the teaching session should consider in advance how the exercise relates to the goals of the specific teaching context; its contents as well as its form.

The exercise is divided into two steps:

#### 1. Rooting.

First all group members are asked to reflect on meanings of gender, ethnicity, racialization class, nationality, sexuality, dis/ability, age, etc. What role do these categorizations play for the group members' identity and position inside and outside the classroom? The reflections should be written down, and in so doing the participants should be encouraged to use specific examples and think about concrete scenes, for example, situations where they experienced that gender played an important role. They should also be encouraged to consider if there were other categorizations that played a role in the situation than the one they first thought of.

#### 2. Shifting.

Secondly, the group members are asked to form pairs (person A and B) and to read

their texts aloud to each other. First, person A reads his text to person B. While person A reads, it is person B's task to listen attentively and to ask committed, elaborate questions aiming at a deeper empathic understanding of the meanings which person A ascribes to the categories brought up in his text. It is important that there is plenty of time for both parties to concentrate on person A's text and that person B really makes an effort to try to identify with and understand person A's points of departure. After person A has been in focus for a while, person A and B switch roles. It is now person B's text that is in focus. It is important to emphasize that persons A and B should not switch roles indiscriminately. Person B should not bring up his own experiences while listening to person A, but actually try to concentrate on person A – and vice versa.

The exercise may be carried out in larger groups and group members could switch and meet new partners until all members have met each other once. It is important to ensure that all group members are given the same amount of time both when giving and receiving comments. One group member, i.e. the teacher, should, therefore, act as timekeeper and not participate in the exercise. However, it is also important that the timekeeper positions himself. If the teacher is the timekeeper, s/he may carry out the exercise in advance, for example, with a colleague. The teacher should, if possible, try the rooting and shifting process together with another person on beforehand, and could then introduce the exercise to the group by using his own texts on rooting and shifting as an example.

### **Conclusion**

Transversal dialoguing can, I suggest, be used as a method for mobilizing intersectional differences as a basis for constructive learning processes. However, it should be emphasized that a prerequisite for the tool to work is that it is used in a classroom context where the group has a collective ambition to establish a shared project. The shared project may be more or less binding and more or less long-term. But regardless of whether it is a large, joint examination or a short-term group project, the transversal dialoguing may, in my experience, be used to create constructive group cooperation. However, it is also important to take into account that conflicts based on intersectional differences may be so large that the group cannot agree on a shared project - neither in the long-term nor in the short-term. In situations of deep conflict in groups, the tool should perhaps be used for re-forming and adjusting the group compositions, rather than forcing too large compromises on shared project choices. Intersectional gender pedagogy is about observing and raising awareness of differences, power inequalities and excluding norms in the classroom – not about creating new norms through forced consensus.

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# Integrated gender teaching

Within subject courses in teacher education

*Anita Hussénus, Kristina Andersson & Annica Gullberg*

To integrate knowledge of gender into other academic discipline courses than gender studies is a special challenge for the teacher, not only in terms of teaching but also in the choice of course literature. Students in such courses have not chosen “gender studies” themselves and therefore, may perceive and express a feeling of being forced into something they do not consider relevant for their major disciplinary studies, of which the course is a part.

“Here we don’t do gender, we do science!” is a comment given to a teacher student by a local supervisor at the school where she carried through her placement. Teacher education consists of several such placement periods. They are usually included as elements in compulsory subject courses and students bring assignments to be carried out during the period when they are working at the school. The comment in question was made in connection with the student telling the local supervisor about her assignment, which was to observe, describe and analyse situations in which gender is of significance. These situations could be interactions between pupils, between pupils and adults, between pupils and materials or interactions between adults. The comment is illustrative of a quite common idea that issues of gender are not relevant for certain subjects, regardless of whether the subject is taught at pre-school, primary school, secondary school, upper-secondary school or at university. Mathematics, chemistry and physics are subjects where it is not rare to hear such arguments; according to this type of argumentation, there are no gender aspects to study at the molecular level, quantum physics is gender neutral, and the solution to a mathematical problem has nothing to do with gender, etc. Gender issues are reduced to possibly trying to ensure that the opportunity to contribute is divided up somewhat fairly between pupils/students. Feminist philosophers of science have criticized the claim to objectivity and truth made by the natural sciences and believe that knowledge production in the natural sciences is a human activity that must be studied as the social and cultural activity that it actually is (Haraway 1988, Harding 1986, Fox Keller & Longino 1996). One problem that is often highlighted is the elitist image of natural science subjects. There is a hidden message in the subjects that they are especially difficult and require special talents. According to such elitism, not everyone can pursue these disciplines and this excluding practice affects mainly women, but also men. The teacher may be an aware or unaware carrier of such notions and values, but regardless of awareness level, the notions will always affect the teaching and the students.

This chapter deals with experiences from a research project within a teacher education programme where gender had been integrated into natural science courses.<sup>1</sup> The chapter briefly describes the gender theory that was used, how the integration was carried out, which methods were used and, finally, a few conclusions. The project was conducted as part of the teacher education programme’s specializations in pre-school

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<sup>1</sup> The project was conducted at the teacher education programme at two different higher education institutions (HEIs), involved approximately 120 students and was conducted during the two semesters when students first encounter studies in natural sciences (which semester this equates to in the programme varies between the different HEIs and the different specializations of the teacher education programme).

and early school years, specializations which lead to occupations with low status, and low salaries, and to positions which are rarely or never publicly represented. These specializations are also dominated by female students. The project has its feminist starting point in the assumption that knowledge of natural science culture and power structures, and of how women have been marginalized in this, may, together with gender theories, lead to the prospective teachers working with natural sciences in a new way. We have been inspired by e.g. Jill C. Sible et al. (2006) who, in their study, integrated feminist perspectives into a course in cellular and molecular biology. The researchers found that the increased knowledge of cultural aspects was favourable to the acquisition of knowledge and subject contents, and that it was primarily the female students who performed better at tasks that required logical thinking and problem solving, compared to a traditionally conducted course.

### *Gender knowledge in relation to natural sciences*

Our society is permeated by notions of gender. These notions are intimately linked to and associated with subjects like mathematics and natural sciences, which affect teachers, students and researchers in a complex way. Cultural anthropologist Cathrine Hasse studied several examples of this in her doctoral dissertation, where she followed the teaching of physics at a university. She participated in lectures, lessons and laboratory sessions as a student and simultaneously collected her empirical material. When teachers and students were asked to describe a successful physics student, this student was described as ambitious and studious if it was a woman, but as smart and intelligent if it was a man (Hasse 2002). There is a clear value difference in the choice of words which in part mirrors a notion that physics is a subject more suited for men and in part that physics is a *difficult* subject that requires a high intellectual capacity, or hard work. When girls/women succeed, it is interpreted as a result of them having put a great deal of time into their physics studies, while it is considered a proof of high intelligence when boys/men perform well in the subject. He has got it in him, as if it were something natural; she can acquire it through great effort. A subject culture which explicitly and/or implicitly conveys those values and notions and others like them, naturally has an excluding effect on girls/women.

In the courses at the teacher education programme at two Swedish HEIs, we wanted the students to observe the culture of natural sciences and the way in which the historical gender coding of the subjects is visible today; we wanted them to assume a position so as to examine the subject and the activities they take part in, whilst studying the subject from an external perspective. Through the course literature and teaching, they were introduced to and applied the gender theories of Sandra Harding and Yvonne Hirdman (Harding 1986, Hirdman 1990), which note that gender is constituted at different levels in society. The choice of gender theories was limited, and was determined on the basis of competences which are important in terms of the students' future occupational role. A teacher must be able to reflect on different levels, see structures and understand what it means to be a girl or a boy in the various contexts that exist in parallel in school. For example, there is much research that adopts an individual perspective on the performance and ability of pupils/students to succeed in a subject, where their difficulty in assimilating a subject's content is viewed as a problem on an individual level. The individual perspective also permeates large parts of the education that students face in the teacher education programme, where there is a rhetoric aimed at "consideration of the individual". The individually centred view of children also appears in the curriculum (Lpfö 98 revised 2010: 9) and has been seen as an expression of a modern idea of the "competent child": a child that with support, but without steering, is capable of developing abilities and skills, something which has

been criticized by Fanny Jonsdottir (2007) and Angerd Eilard (2010). We believe that when the individual perspective is allowed to dominate as a model of explaining the actions and performance of pupils as well as the (re-)actions of teachers, this becomes a smoke screen that prevents factors that exist on a structural or symbolic level – for example, factors related to gender – from being observed.

### *Integrated gender elements*

Problematizing and making the culture of natural sciences visible, whilst at the same time teaching its contents, is in itself a way to conduct feminist, pedagogical teaching. This teaching provides teacher students with tools that enable them to make a conscious choice of how they want to relate to the natural sciences. We wanted the students' own experiences and ideas to be central, and this affected the structure of the teaching. Initially, the students were asked to write an essay on their experience with the natural sciences. After an introductory theoretical overview of natural science history and culture, the essays were followed up with an individual observational task aiming to try to “spot” the culture of natural sciences and thus get to the stories that are told in parallel with the knowledge content being conveyed. For example, a teacher may provide a view of the DNA molecule as governing and being hierarchically superior to cell functions, despite the fact that cell mechanisms are much more complex than that. The culture of the natural sciences was then discussed in groups. The following quote is taken from one of those discussions:

I found it very easy, like chemistry, maths, things like that. But that wasn't something you'd say in the last few years of compulsory school. You would moan more about it being difficult, even though it wasn't. Because that's what the culture was like.

This quote, from a female teacher student, can be interpreted as her pretending that studying natural sciences in compulsory school was difficult, in order to fit the norm of what a girl should be like. In doing so, she adapted to the expected identity for a girl where finding mathematics, physics and chemistry easy is not included. Rather than opposing and criticizing the prevalent image of natural sciences, she avoided doing anything that would be viewed as different. Today, when she as an adult looks back on and problematizes her experiences of her school years, she pays attention to the cultural coding of the natural sciences, something which may also affect her feelings for the subjects and her prospective role as teacher.

Another important element of the project was the use of “cases” (Andersson, Husénius & Gustafsson 2009), which were often descriptions of real teaching that the students reflected on in writing and then discussed in groups and analysed from a gender-theoretical perspective. Several studies have shown that when teacher students are given the opportunity to discuss classroom events, their devotion comes to life; they see the connection between theory and practice more easily and they find it easier to analyse their own practice once they start working (see e.g. Whitcomb 2003). In connection with an extended practical placement at a school, the students were given assignments to conduct an investigation to discover situations where gender was of significance. They then gave written and spoken presentations of the results.

### *Some conclusions*

For many students, creating awareness of the culture in natural sciences became a way of confirming their own experiences and the feelings they had in relation to the subjects during their school years. In essays and seminars, many claimed to have felt stupid, mainly during physics and chemistry lessons, which resulted in low self-

confidence and a negative attitude towards the subjects. When they manage to spot the subject culture, they can externalize these feelings, relate to the subjects in a different way and strengthen their role as prospective teachers.

Knowledge of gender can challenge stereotypical notions, of which many students are carriers. Making the gender coding of natural science subjects visible and highlighting its effects on women means that we specifically pay attention to and focus on women and girls. This is something that many students are uncomfortable with and not used to, and it is therefore perceived as provocative by some students. This also creates more resistance, most often in the form of comments such as “it is just as bad for boys” but also through explicit protest against certain assignments that are perceived as “pure” gender assignments with no connection to the content of the subject. For some students, the resistance is broken when they are out on teaching placements and observe several examples that contradict this, despite their preconceived notions of students being treated equally.. They have observed how teachers consciously or unconsciously present, expand or make subject areas invisible to children/pupils based on gender stereotypes, and they reflect on the consequences of this. Others claim that they have not found any examples of this, but upon listening to the observations and analyses given by their fellow students, they realise that similar events also took place during their own placement. In addition to this, others cannot see beyond notions such as “gender is to let children be as they are, without influence from adults”, they struggle to take their eyes off the individual level and see how we are affected by what goes on and what is communicated on a structural and symbolic level.

In order to reach the objectives stated in the curricula (Lgr11, Lpfö98 revised 2010) concerning the responsibility of schools to counteract traditional gender patterns, a theoretical understanding of how gender affects us on different levels is required. At the same time, the same curricula have put strong focus on individual perspectives, something which has had an impact on Swedish teacher education programmes. This creates a “conflict of levels” to which the authors of the curricula have paid no attention, and we believe that it is important to highlight and problematize this paradox in education programmes, not least if we want to reach and affect the traditional gender patterns that permeate natural science subjects.

The intervention briefly discussed in this chapter is an example of feminist gender pedagogy, where gender theories are applied to subject contents and activities in the teaching of subjects other than gender studies. The teaching described trains students to spot hierarchies, adopt power perspectives and, most of all, to analyse and understand situations from a gender perspective. The pedagogy means moving alternately between different points of observation: the distanced, the more impersonal versus the close and personal points of observation. The culture of the natural sciences is presented to the students based on both a historical understanding and on the students’ previous experiences, mainly from their time in school. The teaching of natural sciences has been studied partly by using descriptions of real situations in the form of “cases”, which are interesting but distanced from the students’ own experiences, and partly by observing the activities they are part of themselves. Our conclusion is that all teaching, regardless of subject, contains gender aspects and that gender concerns issues of the personal and private. For a teacher education programme to produce gender conscious teachers, it must therefore contain elements where the subject contents are reflected in the personal experiences of the students, whilst at the same time making cultural and structural influences visible.

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# Norm-critical pedagogy

An opportunity for a change in teaching

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How can an intersectional norm-critical effort in teaching be used within the field of gender studies in a higher education context? Or, more specifically, how can the structural and pedagogical aspects of teaching be analyzed and investigated as a collective process? In this text, we will show how norm-critical pedagogy may be used as a part of teachers' reflexive work with teaching, and discuss how power is created and negotiated in the classroom as part of teaching practices. This will be done by describing how pedagogical and norm-critical work has developed from working with the subject of gender studies at Stockholm University.<sup>2</sup> The text demonstrates how norm-critical pedagogy may be used in relation to experience-based learning in university teaching to challenge dominance and discrimination, and to create a more inclusive teaching and learning environment.

## *Feminist and norm-critical pedagogy*

Feminist pedagogy emerged as an international field of knowledge in the 1980s and was developed by both social movements and feminists within academia. Inspiration was taken partly from the liberating pedagogy (established by Paulo Freire, amongst others). Creating a learning process that challenges and changes power relations both in the classroom and in society, whilst simultaneously building on equality and respect, has been a central issue for feminist pedagogy. Based on feminist critiques of science, the purpose of the pedagogy was to challenge both the knowledge ground and the power relations in the classroom: challenging what could be considered knowledge and who is the authority on knowledge. Feminist pedagogical perspectives have contributed with developing a theoretical frame for and method for teaching that aims at reducing the strict hierarchical relation between teacher and students, in order to empower the students. It is a view of teaching where personal experience is also of significance for knowledge.

However, feminist pedagogy has itself been subject to criticism over the years; at an early stage, Black feminists pointed out that the established feminism was based on a Western middle class position, which excluded other perspectives (Lorde 1984). Furthermore, bell hooks (1994, 1997) also made this critique clear, in contrast to her own quest to formulate a critical pedagogy which is feminist, anti-racist and class conscious. Pedagogy researcher Elizabeth Ellsworth (1989) has problematized the knowledge position that feminist pedagogy has aimed to assume (along with critical pedagogy as a whole); the vision of the teacher in sympathy with the students contributing towards liberation by 'giving them a voice' and being on their side. Ellsworth and others in the post-structuralist wave point to the impossibility of holding a teacher position (which is often privileged, as white, middle class) whilst not admitting to holding a position of power. As Jocey Quinn writes, also feminist research must be acknowledged as a normative field of knowledge, where certain knowledge is considered more legitimate than other knowledge; the student

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<sup>2</sup> This text mirrors the authors' view of the going on work with norm-critical pedagogy in gender studies at Stockholm University; it is possible that other teachers would hold different views.

is expected to conquer the normative knowledge (the teacher is not expected to conquer the knowledge of the student, unless it does not fit in with the feminist field of knowledge) (Quinn 2003). Another well-known critique concerns the view of subjectivity, where early feminist pedagogy tended to be based on a female subject as white, western, heterosexual and middle class, which restricted and marginalized other women (Bryson & de Castells 1993).

Queer pedagogy is based on queer theoretical perspectives and, to a certain extent, feminist and critical pedagogy, but within queer pedagogy, the post-structuralist critical theory is prominent. The lack of sexuality perspectives in feminist and critical pedagogy, as well as within the pedagogical field of research, is subject to criticism. In comparison with previous criticisms of feminist pedagogy as white and middle class, queer pedagogy highlights how sexuality discourses form our lives in various ways, where the main objective is to challenge heteronormativity and make LGBTQ persons visible in education (ibid.).

In Sweden, queer pedagogy was introduced in the early 2000s as queer resistance to a tolerance-pedagogical tradition in equality and identity politics, mainly through the methods book issued by RFSL [The Swedish Federation for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender Rights] Stockholm, *Någonstans går gränsen* [The line has to be drawn somewhere] (Edemo & Rindå 2003). Queer pedagogy (but also feminist pedagogy) has increasingly adopted an intersectional perspective. At the end of the 2010s, the concept 'norm-critical pedagogy' was established in order to encompass a wider area than queer pedagogy. In the anthology *Normkritisk pedagogik* [Norm-critical pedagogy], we as authors present an argument for this: since both gender pedagogy and feminist pedagogy have come to be associated in different ways with gender as a power relation in the Swedish context, and have often been used in a heteronormative way, we wanted to make an intersectional quest visible in a power-conscious pedagogy (Bromseth & Darj 2010). Discussions of other power relations are hardly something that permeates all feminist activities (de los Reyes 2010). Thus, using a new concept was more about pointing in a desired direction than defining it as something fixed and complete (Bromseth & Darj 2010). The norm-critical pedagogical focus in Sweden has been developed further in various places where learning activities take place, such as schools, universities, museums, in work towards equal opportunity and within youth organizations. Since the concept has been popularized, it is important to pay attention to the content it is filled with in different contexts. As with the queer concept, that has been established in public discourse in Sweden, there is a risk that the radical power critique will be replaced with a more liberal version.

### *The pedagogical development work*

When the subject Gender Studies was introduced at Stockholm University in 1997, the teachers based their work on feminist pedagogy. As part of the introduction of entry-level gender students to academic writing and thinking, tutor groups were developed as a particular pedagogical form. The tutor group as pedagogical form is built on students discussing their own questions related to the literature and lectures during eight weeks, supervised by a tutor. In addition to this, they write a paper for each group meeting which the tutor comments on extensively (Ney et al 2006). This provides the students with training in academic culture, seminar culture, linking the theoretical with the empirical and asking their own questions in relation to texts. The tutor group technique has been modified over the years, but it has mostly stayed the same and works as the feminist pedagogy in practice as it strives towards allowing students to own their knowledge process, to take up space in small groups and to have written dialogue with their tutor. The role of tutor has more of a guiding than a teaching nature.

Pedagogical development and the ambition to create learning opportunities have been ever present in the gender studies teaching group, something which is reflected in, for example, recurring pedagogical half-days where current themes in the teaching group is discussed. These small but important ways of highlighting aspects of the pedagogical knowledge process were considered by many teachers to be too few and too short. Over the last years, the teaching group has discussed the formation of a shared pedagogical platform and a process where it would be possible to make use of the experience-based knowledge we develop through our work as teachers. In addition to this, we wanted to address the situation that teacher duties are made more difficult by higher education terms of employment; since a large number of teachers are employed on limited or hourly contracts, it is difficult to form a shared pedagogical platform. By gathering the teachers who worked more regularly, with a limited employment contract of at least 20 per cent, we wanted to form a pedagogical platform which could be used by all teachers.

As a way to start the process, our colleagues asked us (Janne and Renita) to oversee the development of the pedagogical platform. Many believed that a more clearly-stated norm-critical pedagogical effort could constitute a pedagogical platform. We had both worked previously with a project on norm-critical pedagogy outside the university sphere, with the ambition of connecting gender and sexuality norms to anti-discrimination strategies (Bromseth & Wildow 2007, Brade et al 2008). An intersectional effort focusing on gender, sexuality, race, ethnicity and bodynormativity was incorporated in the method materials that was produced as part of the project (Brade et al 2008).<sup>3</sup>

Inspired by our project, we also saw opportunities to develop university pedagogy. Due to the character of traditional science methods critique in gender studies, most teachers already work with experience-based learning, but this is something that can be developed further, and can be especially based on intersectional efforts. The basic theoretical and empirical ambition of gender studies is to examine traditional methodology, particularly its aspects of addressing the male, Western, middle class and heteronormative, as it normally claims to be objective, despite its lack of taking into account the various conditions that apply to the lives of people other than white, western, heterosexual males. As Quinn (2003) notes, norms that need to be examined are also found in the feminist field of knowledge.

### *Starting the process*

Teachers need to use both theoretical and experience-based knowledge to be able to create good conditions for rewarding and challenging knowledge processes in teaching. For this reason, teachers need time to acquire knowledge and to exchange experiences as well as time for reflection (Sörensdotter 2010). Experience-based knowledge is created by discussing and reflecting on experiences. In the knowledge process, we need to be made aware of the experiences and to make them visible before strategies can be formed (see e.g. Josefsson 1991, Eliasson 1992, Sörensdotter 2003, 2010). A central part of knowledge development is learning from one's mistakes (see e.g. Kumashiro 2002, Björkman 2010).

As a way of developing our experience-based knowledge and formulating a shared pedagogical platform, we introduced regular seminars where the participants were

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<sup>3</sup> In that knowledge process, we were assisted by a queer-pedagogical literature circle composed of persons from different areas of activities whose common interest was to form an anti-oppressive, inclusive pedagogy based on queer and intersectional theory.

teachers active in the area of gender studies at Stockholm University. We read texts about norm-critical perspectives on university pedagogy and studies on norms in the gender studies environment (Kumashiro 2002, Bromseth & Darj 2010, Brade Haj 2010), after which we discussed them in relation to our own teaching. We focused both on norms that exist in the study culture and on explicit and implicit guidelines and frameworks in our own pedagogical work, as well as on the notions held by the teachers. Even though many themes and challenges are similar within the social sciences and humanities, there are specific norms connected to the feminist grounds of gender studies. The norms are not the same as in the surrounding community, or in those subject disciplines that do not explicitly theorize power hierarchies in relation to gender, sexuality, class, ethnicity, age and bodynormativity. The starting point of gender studies is that the norms and world-views we live with in society in different ways exclude and discriminate against those who do not fit the image of the white, western, heterosexual, middle class male - socially, economically and culturally. Those who study gender studies do not always fit into that norm, and they often already have a critical view of it. Therefore, we do not need to work towards the societal norm to the same degree as when we educate in other contexts. As Lovise Brade Haj (2010) indicates in her study of gender students' constructions of identity, it is rather considered an advantage to, in some sense, claim to be feminist and queer.

Our work on the pedagogical process was based on Kevin Kumashiro's texts (2002) on anti-oppressive pedagogical work. His texts are built on a critical pedagogical tradition and are based on feminist, queer-theoretical and intersectional theory. In the norm-critical pedagogy, mistakes are viewed as a resource in the work to draw up strategies aimed at managing and preventing problematic situations, since the mistakes indicates our participation in the creation of norms. We were careful to create an open environment where no-one was judged for their mistakes. The mistakes were to be used as a resource to understand and reflect on our practices.

The critical science practice we are part of means that what is considered true and important is always a question of power and perspective, and where the individual's experience of the world, along with the feelings this entails, is inextricably tied to the positions we occupy. Adopting critical knowledge does not just mean understanding reality in a new way, but also means viewing the experience of oneself and one's relation to others and the world in a different way. It may be perceived as strengthening, particularly if one often finds oneself in a marginalized position, or it may evoke feelings of anger and resistance if one is in a privileged position, since privileges often created at the expense of another person's marginalization are made visible. This leads to a type of crisis, where the interpretation of the self, of others and of reality is questioned by new knowledge. If I, as a man, have received privileges at the expense of women, how do I relate to that – who does that make me? Or if the world were not heteronormative, who would I be – who could I be? Thus, the crisis is not a breakdown, as the word may infer, but an experience, positive or negative, where new knowledge disrupts an integrated world-view and self-understanding. A core issue is which pedagogical consequences our inquiries and didactic methods create for the students' learning process and the environment where it takes place. For this reason, we as teachers asked ourselves the questions:

- What happens to the students' self-image in the learning process when learned world-views – and the students' place in them – are turned upside down? How do we handle these experiences, together with other students and with the teachers?
- How do we relate to the hierarchies and norms in our student culture which

have been turned upside down and where, above all, a queer norm has gained prominence? How do we relate to these norms being negotiated in the classroom? How do these norms affect us as teachers and the way in which we choose to present ourselves?

- How do we deal with conflicts of power in our power-conscious classrooms, for example when group stereotyping or normative opinions lead to discussions?

### *What “baggage” do we teachers have?*

In addition to reading texts, the teachers conducted different types of reflective exercises and thus tried to put practice and experiences into words. We asked ourselves how we as teachers are characterized by power structures in the way we view and treat students. We conducted two exercises which in different ways aimed to reflect on and make norms visible in the environment we are active in and how we as teachers act in it. We did an exercise aiming to make visible the person who appears to be the “status student” in gender studies. What experiences and values does the status student have? How does the creation of norms between students affect us as teachers in our actions? Here, we based our work on both our own observations and on Lovise Brade Haj’s (2010) study of gender students’ experiences of their identities. We agreed that it is considered highly valued to be ‘just the right amount of queer’, preferably a white female, 20 to 30 years old, or to have a transidentity or to be a non-heterosexual white male. It is essential not to perform a heteronormative gender, and it is essential to demonstrate a commitment to (queer)feminist and left-wing political activism. How do we relate to these hierarchies of power in the classroom; for example, how do we relate to the amount of space that is taken up and given by students and us teachers? Whom do we validate, explicitly and implicitly, through the way we treat each other? How do we distribute the opportunity for speaking? The teaching team also discussed their own images of the “dream student”. Who do we – consciously and unconsciously – reward (or punish) for performances, experiences and values, based on our own positions? For example, do we validate students more if they approach gender in a manner similar to ours? How do we relate to a homosocial reproduction, where we reward those who are similar to us? This is a practice which feminists have criticized men for in academia.

Our second exercise was the “teflon test”, which is a self-assessment test that may be used both individually and collectively (Andersson 2010). The point of self-assessment exercises is to spot one’s own baggage and to place the spotlight on the manner in which we as pedagogues are characterized by our experiences and knowledge, both professionally and in our everyday lives. The test was developed by the museum pedagogue Louise Andersson and it aims to examine experiences and knowledge of power relations and norms that a person has now and has had previously in their own life, and how these have potentially changed over time. Teflon refers to something that is perceived as “friction-free”, i.e. those areas where a person does not meet much resistance. The purpose is to create awareness of the various ways in which one can be privileged. This is experience-based knowledge, which often remains invisible in contrast to experiences of othering and discrimination. How seldom or how frequently does a person experience friction in relation to gender, sexuality, skin colour, ethnic background, class, body size, functional ability and age? By using the test collectively, we were able to create awareness of the experiences and knowledge that exist within the teaching group and the experiences that we are lacking. The position of adult, middle class female born in Sweden was the predominant position in the group. We discussed what this may mean for the choice of course literature and perspectives, as

well as for our ability to see and relate to norms and norm breaking in areas which for us are areas without much friction. One of the reflections we considered useful is that we as gender studies teachers can use ourselves as examples when bringing up issues of power in our teaching. We have both privileged and marginalized positions on which we can base our teaching.

### *Intensifying the process*

We found the seminars developing us both as individuals and as an entire teaching group. We therefore decided to have a two-day seminar to work in greater detail with pedagogical tools. For the purpose of this seminar, a process leader was called in. As an assignment for the seminar, all participants were asked to think of concrete situations which they had experienced as teachers of gender studies where a dilemma in relation to classroom conflicts had arisen. Preferably, the situation would be one that the teachers considered they had solved in a non-satisfying manner, using failure as an entrance to investigating and changing our practices. At the seminar, we told each other about experiences we had had. We jointly selected a few cases to work with in the form of *forum play*. A forum play is a type of role play based on a self-experienced situation, where persons who experienced a particular episode can never play themselves (see e.g. Byréus 2001). First, the original situation is played out in the form of role play. Following this, the situation is played out again, but this time, the viewers are allowed to interrupt by yelling “stop” and to come up with suggestions regarding how the teacher can solve the situation in another way. The viewers may also change places with the teacher and play the role themselves to demonstrate an alternative solution. Then the situation is played out until all participants are satisfied with at least one of the suggested solutions. We chose to change the teacher, since we as teachers are responsible for the classroom situation. We can also influence the situation through our actions, since the position of teacher is associated with more power than the position of student - a position of power which may thus be used to create inclusive teaching by finding ways to deal with situations that may be offensive to students.

A few recurring problematic situations concerned gender identity, class and ethnicity. A surprisingly large amount of these were about white, middle class males being dominant in seminar discussions – a position that usually entails an assumption of a self-evident right to begin and keep talking to a larger extent than others. We were able to see that we as teachers sometimes allowed single students to dominate the classroom at the expense of fellow students, without dealing with the situation in a satisfactory manner.

One forum play dealt with Kalle<sup>4</sup>, a white middle class male close to retirement age who, during a lecture with approximately 60 students, took up most of the allotted discussion time by conducting lengthy monologues where neither the teacher nor the fellow students were able to interrupt speak. Rather than listening to what Kalle had to say, the teacher became annoyed with Kalle’s monologue, but she did not interrupt him. Instead, she waited impatiently for him to stop. Through repeated attempts and reflection on various courses of action we came closer to strategies that felt like they reinforced the teacher, Kalle and the fellow students. By playing all roles we could also imagine the situation of being both the teacher, Kalle and our fellow students. The person who played Kalle felt that the teacher was not actually listening and therefore he continued talking. The fellow students, who also wanted to ask questions, were annoyed, they kept their hands in the air and waited for the teacher to interrupt; they

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<sup>4</sup> The names used in the examples have been changed.

felt more and more invisible when this did not occur. The teacher felt it was difficult to interrupt the monologue, but could also not listen attentively since her patience ran out and her level of irritation rose. The situation was made worse by Kalle deviating from the rest of the student group as a male person approaching retirement age, and the teacher did not want to contribute to this deviation by being too strict. Several participants in the teaching team tried the role as teacher and we finally arrived at a strategy that all participants deemed satisfactory. We came to the conclusion that the best course of action would be to listen to what Kalle actually had to say and to answer it directly, even if it meant interrupting him several times, since he always continued with his monologue afterwards. Furthermore, it would be best to explain that more people want to speak – even if he persists and says ‘I only have one more thought, and that is...’ – and let one of the other students speak. Another variation was to use Kalle’s questions to open up the room and bring in the other students by highlighting the question and reformulating it so that it becomes relevant to the teaching and then pass the new question along to the fellow students. The fact that the teacher dared to interrupt quite brutally, as we had practised, worked best for all parties when we could validate Kalle by listening and answering and simultaneously letting the other students speak.

We based another forum play on a situation from a tutor group where the theme was queer theory and heteronormativity. A female Muslim student, Aisha, made a comment in the discussion by saying: “In Islam, homosexuality would never be tolerated”. Some students, identifying themselves as queer, became upset and questioned the comment in a sharp tone of voice. The teacher reacted instinctively and smothered the discussion by saying “this is not our theme today, let us move on”. We played out the situation several times to try to find appropriate ways of addressing it. In this situation, the queer students are in a position of power, both because the claim in contemporary western culture that Islam is the greatest enemy of homosexuals is perpetuated and used for racist purposes, and also because Muslim students are the minority. At the same time, students who identify themselves as queer are often subject to discrimination in society and these students probably perceived the statement as a form of violation. We tried to see if it would be possible as teachers to lift this up to a structural level by differentiating the statement. One way of doing this is to bring up the fact that there are many Muslims who are not homophobic and that some Muslims are homosexuals themselves. An additional way is to show how discourse concerning homophobia often creates a problematic image where the homophobia is placed with the non-western ‘other’. At the same time, this was an observation made by Aisha; we do not know what she believed herself. Was the teacher supposed to contradict the experience the student had had by trying to disprove it? Which discussions would be made possible if the teacher chose to go further with the subject? What strategies and knowledge would be required in order to not risk violating Aisha in this situation? In assessing the risk of a possible racist violation, we, somewhat fumblingly, arrived at the suggestion that it is best to put the lid on a situation such as this one. If a white student born in Sweden had tried to initiate a discussion of ‘what we think of the veil’, which is more common, the starting point would have been different, since that student would be speaking from a majority position. In that situation, an analysis of the structural conditions of the statement would have been less risky and completely necessary.

The forum plays created an experience-based understanding where the positions held by both teachers and students could be explored. A teacher needs to work with all student positions, both the problematic positions and those of the fellow students, and, if possible, lift the discussion and relate it to what is being taught. Creating an

environment where everyone wants to continue learning and where no one feels violated is a balancing act. The interpreted roles created knowledge that no theoretical discussion could have achieved, since we could “feel” the consequences of different ways of dealing with the situations. There are no given recipes to address all situations, but through reflective work we could still identify patterns and create alternative solutions. Most of all, the process gave rise to an awareness of our own teacher positions and the power relations in the classroom. We have brought this awareness with us as a resource in our individual work to plan and conduct teaching, and as a shared point of reference for discussions in the teaching team.

### *Conclusion*

Working with norm-critical pedagogy in a team of teachers not only has the purpose of dealing with difficult situations that may arise, but also promotes and prevents aspects in order to create an inclusive environment for knowledge processes. This work is conducted simultaneously on different levels. By working with our way of teaching and the kind of learning environment we are creating, we can strive towards providing space for critical thinking and differences. Naturally, it is not possible to prevent us as teachers from making mistakes or to keep situations characterized by racism, sexism or homophobia from arising. But by learning from our mistakes, both as individual teachers and as a team, we can become more prepared and find a constructive context in which to both support and develop the individual teacher.

At the time of writing, we are working to develop a clear pedagogical platform not only aimed at teachers, but which will also be provided to our students to clearly share the values and power on which our work is based. The platform will be tied to our field of knowledge and to our ambitions to create a democratic classroom. Furthermore, it will be used as a way to work with the demands and rights that the equal treatment legislation places on education. We believe that equality is not about “equal treatment”, since students’ starting points are anything but alike, in relation to societal power relations and local norms. Our work as teachers is concerned, rather, with creating opportunities for knowledge, regardless of what the students in question have in their baggage.

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# The focal point of gender studies teaching

– Transgressive teaching and (self-)reflection

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*Berit Larsson*

Gender is a key dimension of personal life, social relations and culture. It is an arena in which we face difficult practical issues about justice, identity and even survival.

(R. Connell, *Om genus* [Gender] 2009: 9)

This quote illustrates the complex position held by the field of gender studies education and teaching at the points of intersection between “objective” knowledge and subjective perspectives, and between the political and the personal. Connell also touches one of the most commonly recurring themes in gender studies: the meetings between lived life and scholarly dialogue taking place in the classroom.

Based on the meeting between what Connell calls personal life, identity, justice and survival, I would like to pose the question: What is gender studies for?

I believe that the relevance of the discipline in both society and research is obvious in an unjust and unequal world. If I then look to my duty as a university teacher, gender studies has several dimensions: it qualifies gender students to be employable and usable on the labour market; it socializes them into academia and professions as researchers and teachers and it enables them to become more autonomous as subjects and independent in both thought and action. Even though these three dimensions overlap, their motives are separate (Biesta 2011:) 31). In the following text, I will concentrate on the third and final dimension. As a feminist and critical pedagogue, I believe that university teaching, like other teaching, not only produces knowledge but also produces political subjects. I will not be describing various working methods in this text. Instead, I will focus on the educational situation and its teaching as an opportunity to, time after time, become a subject in itself. I have chosen to term these learning processes *critical self-reflection* and a *crossing of boundaries* – something I consider as the focal point of gender studies teaching.

## *Gender studies – a challenging subject*

Since gender is a key dimension in people’s lives, students as well as teachers will approach teaching with gendered experiences and different notions. To be new to gender studies and to spot one’s own attitudes and norms, and to have accepted truths questioned, may by some be perceived as validating and satisfying, while others may perceive it as threatening and problematic. The development of concepts and theories within the field may even disrupt the identity and self-image of the gender students. This may certainly lead to new knowledge and insight and to changed notions of oneself and the world, but this rarely occurs without resistance, and sometimes it occurs with a certain degree of aggressiveness. In addition to this, students who choose gender studies run the risk of being confronted in different contexts both within and outside the university, and may then end up on a collision course with surroundings that are often prejudiced and unaware of gender biases. The fact that gender students may become the targets of gender prejudice, myths

and, occasionally, –pure lies must be observed when teaching is planned. One way of dealing with the situation may be to give gender studies students the possibility of forming smaller working groups, and that course planning provides ample time for discussions in connection to lectures.

### *Using the gender studies student's knowledge as a starting point*

Most things we have learned in life have probably not been acquired in lecture rooms or classrooms, but from entirely different contexts. Consequently, there are no students who know nothing, and since students (and teachers) move into, through and out of various contexts, gender studies teaching should observe the different conditions in which students and education are embedded, and focus more on what happens in the relation between the university as a learning context and the students' other learning contexts. I believe that there is a dialectical relation between different sources of knowledge and a student's own creation of knowledge or ability to create knowledge.

My pedagogical interest is mainly directed at students' knowledge development in and through active relations. Based on the framework of teaching, I, as a teacher, have the opportunity to help create teaching relations that challenge and inspire students' activity and responsibility for their own knowledge development and that of others through curricula, seminar discussions and varying types of lectures and assessment. For example, it is possible to choose literature that inspires reflection, to invite lecturers from other institutions, to discuss films and popular literature and to let the students' gender analyses of current relevant exhibitions/theatrical performances/films, etc. form the foundation of assessments. Students could survey and analyse gender "doings" in environments outside of the university and apply new knowledge and theories to gender-relevant phenomena in the surrounding community. It is important to plan teaching based on what the students can do with their knowledge, so that this doing leads to a development of their knowledge. Any obstacles to active and challenging teaching relations arise mostly from the teacher's (and students') pedagogical imagination.

As I see it, knowledge does not originate from a homogeneous starting point, but it rather grows from all different points in all different directions. Furthermore, students are not perceived as empty vessels that need to be filled, as objects for teaching, but rather as co-creators of new knowledge. Consequently, both students and teachers are viewed as intellectually equal and as learning subjects.<sup>5</sup> In adopting such a view on knowledge, my duty as a teacher is not to simplify and assess, but to create situations where students hone their abilities to handle an abundance of perspectives and conflicts of interpretation. The interesting question is thus not *what* the students know, but rather what *may be done* with that which they know. How can they develop their knowledge within the framework of their gender studies, and what can they do through the application of their knowledge in the surrounding community?

### *Choosing the focal point of education as a teacher*

In other words, we cannot disregard the memories, experiences and knowledge of gender identity and gender attributions carried by the students; rather, these must form the basis of the teaching. This is of great significance regarding where we as teachers choose to place the *focal point of the education* and *how* we choose to formulate the teaching.

In my teaching, I place the focal point on the critical ability for reflection that the

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<sup>5</sup> 'Intellectually equal' must not be misinterpreted as being equal in terms of knowledge.

gender studies students possess. Through the ability to change perspectives and to “bounce” them off each other, students are exposed to various situations and are involved in activities and “affordances” which challenge their thinking (Englund 1997: 142). In this context, we should make concepts visible, relate phenomena to the interplay of power structures in interplay, and demonstrate the ambiguity of phenomena and the importance of practicing one’s ability to change outlooks. Variations in outlook lead to various conflicts of interpretation being made visible. When varying webs of relations, such as those of students, teachers, universities and the stories in the surrounding community are in this way made into a part of the teaching content, this contributes towards the creation of distance to one’s own thinking, which is a necessary condition in order to be able to reflect on things.<sup>6</sup>

In this context, I focus on the knowledge development, the process of education, that occurs between students and between students and teachers, but also in meetings with institutions in the surrounding community. Those who participate in the practice of teaching are consequently there as actors – acting-doing – and not as observers or imitators.

### *Teaching as (self-)reflection and boundary-crossing*

I thus do not place the focal point of education outside or within people – I place it between them. The ability of students to manage similarities and dissimilarities within themselves and in relation to others, and to think and convey ideas about the world in terms of power relations and differences, then becomes central. For this reason, when students say something controversial in a teaching context, I, as a teacher, should refrain from directly affecting norms or values and rather choose a more dialogue-oriented strategy: a strategy that uses negotiation, dialogue and the mutual understanding of different outlooks in order to provide the student with the opportunity to practice what I would like to call political thinking.

The democratic and pedagogical duty referred to here is consequently not mainly concerned with creating consensus, but rather with enabling deviating or marginalized groups to tell their own stories and to be a part of respectful dialogues with others.

In meeting with the as yet unknown, the unfamiliar or “the Other”, students are confronted by both their own boundaries and the boundaries of others.<sup>7</sup> This process can be compared to work that is based on the student’s existing experiences and identity, whilst this identity is concurrently being challenged by what is not yet known. This confrontation or meeting may result in questioning what constitutes the boundaries of one’s own identity.

I would like to call this ethical-political dimension of education (transgressive teaching) both a work of memory, where students in their educational context use and reflect on their own and others’ lives and experiences, and a crossing of boundaries, where students in the same context challenge the foundations of their own identity and that of others.

Placing the focal point of education on a crossing of boundaries and subjectification, and not on repeating and validating a specific way to speak about and relate to the world, probably opens up the basic weakness of the educational setting. Adhering

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<sup>6</sup> I am critical of the idea of the modern, sovereign subject as an autonomous, self-sufficient, narcissistic and logocentric entity. I agree with the feminist theorists who, in opposition to a western notion of an omnipotent individual subject, have presented ideas of how the subject is performatively constituted in relation to others.

<sup>7</sup> In meeting with the unfamiliar or the Other, the Other’s “otherness” is also constituted. Regarding the misunderstanding, the admission of and the acknowledgement of “otherness”, see e.g. Victoria Fareld, *Att vara utom sig inom sig: Charles Taylor, erkännande och Hegels aktualitet*. Göteborg: Glänta Produktion, 2008.

to the importance of thinking critically, crossing boundaries and reflecting on one's own subject position entails a process which does not allow students to become immune to what could affect, disturb and worry them in meeting otherness and difference. It also entails an educational setting in constant motion. The basic weakness of education is consequently not about its qualification or socialization, but rather about what we have called subjectification. Gert Biesta talks about a *pedagogy of interruption* as "a pedagogy aimed at keeping possibilities of interruptions from the 'normal' state of affairs open" (Biesta 2011: 94).

### *The political dimension of gender education*

As I have mentioned previously, education not only generates knowledge, but also creates political subjects. In this context, I also want to stress the importance of differentiating between feminists engaged in education and learning and a general idea of a "feminist pedagogy" in terms of a set of methods. As a teacher, I can choose to keep the existing power structure, but as a feminist and a teacher, I choose to engage in a counter-power together with subordinated and marginalized individuals. This way of thinking and these political ideals have not least been advocated and developed further by feminist theorists such as bell hooks, Gayatri Spivak, Nira Yuval-Davis and Iris Marion Young, who have linked education and learning with political change (hooks 1994, Spivak 1993, Yuval-Davis 1998, Young 2000).

In order to not take part in reproducing naturalized notions, it therefore becomes important to also see the teacher as a co-creator of norms. Apart from calling for courage, this also requires me, as Gayatri Spivak expressly put it, to engage in the unlearning of my own privileges (Spivak 1993). Certainly, this is nothing that would normally be required or part of the job description for teachers at Swedish universities. Nevertheless, I view it as a fully central starting point in the effort to create democratic and equal higher education.

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# Participants

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**Kristina Andersson** publicly defended a doctoral thesis in the Didactics of Natural Science in 2011 entitled *Lärare för förändring – att synliggöra och utmana föreställningar om naturvetenskap och genus* [Teachers for change – Visualizing and challenging conceptions of science and gender]. She is a visiting research fellow at the Centre for Gender Research, Uppsala University and will take up her employment as senior lecturer in Didactics in the new year.

**Janne Bromseth**, Ph. D., is a teacher and researcher in Gender Studies at Stockholm University. She has explored feminist and norm-critical perspectives of pedagogy in various projects since 2006, in an organizational context as well as at Uppsala and Stockholm University. She edited the anthology *Normkritisk pedagogik – makt, lärande och strategier för förändring* [Norm-critical pedagogy. Power, learning and strategies for change] (2010, with Frida Darj).

**Annica Gullberg** publicly defended a doctoral thesis in the subject of Genetics in 1996 but has been active as a researcher in Didactics of Natural Science during the 2000s. She is a senior university lecturer in Biology at University of Gävle and a visiting research fellow at the Centre for Gender Research, Uppsala University.

**Anita Hussénus** publicly defended a doctoral thesis in Organic Chemistry in 1990 and is currently a researcher and head of the Centre for Gender Research, Uppsala University. Her research revolves around scientific activities and education from feminist and gender scientific perspectives.

**Berit Larsson** has a Ph.D. in Gender Studies and is a retired senior university lecturer. She is currently employed as an Educational Developer at the University of Gothenburg. She is one of the initiators of Kvinnofolkhögskolan where she has worked since its foundation in 1985. An important task over the last 20 years has been to convey knowledge about gender research through popular education.

**Anna Lundberg** has a Ph.D. and publicly defended a doctoral thesis on comedy in 2008; *Allt annat än allvar. Den komiska kvinnliga grotesken i svensk samtida skrattekultur*. Lundberg is a teacher and researcher in Gender Studies, Linköping University. Her current research project deals with the performing arts and intersectionality. She is also the editor of the publication *Tidskrift för genusvetenskap*.

**Nina Lykke** is a professor of Gender Studies with special reference to Gender and Culture at Linköping University. She has extensive experience of building up educational programmes in gender studies. Her research over the last few years has been focused on feminist theory and, in this area, she has published the book *Feminist Studies* (2010), which is also available in Swedish, under the title *Genusforskning* (2009).

**Kerstin Norlander**, Dr. in Economic History and senior lecturer in Gender Studies at Umeå University. Her main research interest is in gendered socio-economic relations; see for example her dissertation *Människor kring ett företag* [Men, women

*and the company*] (2000). She is currently working on a feminist diary project called *Vi lämnar spår!* [*Our traces!*], and a study of Swedish author Maja Lundgren's novel *Myggor och tigrar* which caused a scandal 2007.

**Renita Sörensdotter** has a Ph.D. in Social Anthropology and works as a researcher and teacher in the subject of Gender Studies at Stockholm University. Sörensdotter's research is primarily focused on the body, sexual practice, sexualities, knowledge and the creation of identity. She previously worked at the Friends foundation, in order to develop methods to create norm-breaking education. Renita also runs her own company, where she works with organizational development.

**Ann Werner** is a senior lecturer in Gender Studies at Södertörn University and conducts research on music, gender, race, the body and media. She publicly defended a doctoral thesis at Linköping University in 2009, entitled *Smittsamt: En kulturstudie av musikbruk bland tonårstjejer* and is currently working on the research project "Music use in the online media age".



