**The 8th International Gender and Education Association Conference 2011**

**Book of Abstracts**

1. **The Black Female Symposium**

**(1)Deborah** **(2)Marlene Ellis** **(3)Patricia Alexander**

**Negotiating the lived experience of being classed, black and female in the face of post-structuralism**

How do we live despite the death of binary oppositions in post structuralism? This symposium explores the limitations of post-structural theory to account for the lived experience of the back female from a classed position. We will look at ‘moments of becoming’; how each girl negotiates their gender, race and class at poignant moments in their lives. We are concerned about how she uses these categories to resist or validate herself as well as, the maintenance and costs involved in the decisions she makes. If a shared experience is an illusive “something” and deemed to be inauthentic, then how can we think differently? Where do we go from here?

The three papers in this symposium focus respectively on the experiences of Black schoolgirls, students in further education and teachers. They draw upon Cultural Theorists in Stuart Hall as well as, Bourdieu and social class, in order to examine and resist the subsuming of race and gender whilst situating the analysis from a classed perspective. This is not an attempt to place class back on top of the hierarchical tree nor are these terms used to signal a return to hegemonic categories. Our intention instead is to review the impact of post-structuralism upon the continued lived experiences of ‘the black classed girl’. As a consequence, we will engage with grand meta-narrative arguments from post-structuralist theory whilst challenging the impact of post structuralism upon the lived experience of our subjects. Our desire is to examine whether there is a possibility for convergence between frameworks and to forge a way forward.

We intend to address gaps in the literature relating to concepts of resistance resilience and success in the development of African Caribbean girls school identities. The presentation will identify key themes to be explored in order to make sense of the ways in which African Caribbean young women experience and construct their identities within the institution of the school.

We are interested in the work of class theorists in Bourdieu and Hall who accept in addition, the significance of class whilst balancing the importance of ‘particularity’ with regard to race and gender for example. His explanation of discursive practices found in discourse is helpful for looking at both class, race and gender in the same moment. The exploration of agency and identification in Post Structuralism is to allow for an examination of identity formation in black teachers as role models, whilst accepting simultaneously, a lack of authenticity in identity itself. We are challenged to look at the de-racialised and de-gendered subject as if she was not there, accepting theoretically that she is not, whilst knowing in the lived experience, that she very much, is. We shall rely upon Foucault and Fisher for understanding how sets of practices influence our own responses in the shaping of the subject. An examination of agency along side identification perhaps describes the precise crossroads or intersection at which we seek a way forward. Can the subject and through agency be reconciled or is this oxymoronic?

**Transitions: Discourses of success resistance and resilience, African Caribbean girls friendship networks.**

**From a Black Girl Perspective (1)**

In this presentation I will be outlining the focus of the research I am embarked upon. My research focuses upon factors that support achievement amongst African Caribbean girls. The research shall involve girls in their transition between primary and secondary schooling. It, the research, will specifically consider how these girls construct individual and group identities in the context of race and gender, exploring racialised gender and gendered race. I have a particular interest in how girls friendship networks operate to impact upon intra group relationships, girls falling into and out of friendships and how these in turn impact upon the development of African Caribbean girls school identities.

The literature concerning the lives and experiences of African Caribbean young girls is somewhat sparse. The discourses surrounding the schooling experiences of African Caribbean young people, has been framed by explorations of the experiences of African Caribbean boys and is laden with issues of underachievement, increased exclusion and low aspiration. This focus has meant that the relationship between investigations of “race” and education in gendered male in particular ways. There are currently very few studies of

African Caribbean girls friendships, what is known about the cultures of female friendship behaviours stems largely from research focussing on the experiences of girls from other racial groupings.

This research intends to address gaps in the literature relating to concepts of resistance resilience and success in the development of African Caribbean girls school identities. My research will add to the growing body of literature in this area.

The presentation will the identify key themes to be explored in order to make sense of the ways in which African Caribbean young women experience and construct their identities within the institution of the school

**The Black Female Symposium**

**From A Class Perspective (2)**

The challenge in theorising a study based upon Black Students in Further Education is to find a theoretical approach that meets at the intersections between race, class, gender and sexuality, as well as across their ages between 16 – 18 years.

I have chosen FE as representing an educational institution that traditionally accommodates, though not exclusively, students making second attempts at education (Modood, 1997, 76). Arguably, this has lead to a disproportionate amount of black and other perhaps ‘disadvantaged’ students, attending FE colleges though it is far from certain as to whether FE can be described as a beneficial alternative. Are students satisfied with their choice? Interestingly, since FE has frequently been regarded as the ‘poor educational relative’ to schools and universities, a paradox may also exist between a possible ‘disadvantaged educational institution’ and a ‘disadvantaged group of students’. Disadvantage is used in its widest sense here to suggest only that the notion of *difference* in being black, working class or female for example, are assigned negative social-values (Memmi,…..) though individuals may not necessarily experience themselves as being disadvantaged.

Against this background, the intention is to analyse the modern day experiences of young black males and females in FE in order to measure the influence of their social environment from inter alia, a neoliberal class standpoint that argues we are living in a classless society (Cannadine, 1998,163, George, 2007, 21). The lack of visibility in class, suggests it is somehow more illusive than that in race and gender and yet social class continues to be the greatest key determinant in measuring achievement gaps in education.

This paper will look at notions of class as being ever present though fragmented in material respects (George, 2007, 803). Because class is inextricably linked race and culture (McGlaughlin, 2007, 71) I will also explore class and its expression of power through the use of nationhood and its associations with Englishness and Britishness in contrast to that of Welsh or Irish for example (Brah, 1992, 143). It will look at class through Race, Ethnicity and National categories such as that of Black Britishness. I argue, that because identities in Black Caribbean, African, Indian and Bangladeshi fail to disclose conflations with class positioning, they distort the ‘appearance’ of race and nation arguably to the advantage of the dominant but less visible class groups in white, middle class and male.

I shall rely upon Bourdieu (1977) to reinforce the position that students are constantly interacting with power through their racialised and genderised positions although as Bourdieu argues, these standpoints are primarily rooted in social class. This is not to deny any specific experience by race or gender though it is to affirm the impossibility of social severance between class, gender and race. Like Bourdieu, I accept the relevance of class background and how that might impact upon any student as well as the importance of how the middle-classes relate to ‘other’ races. Hall (1992) has an important role to play for developing a deeper understanding of race yet resisting a hierarchical urge. How to understand discursive practices in race from a class perspective, opens up the possibility for new understandings and our contradictions, in the being of black. Arguably, social class offers the widest framework with which to examine ‘social differences’ and yet we must resist the very idea of class returning to the top of a mythical hierarchical tree.

**The Black Female Symposium**

**Do we need Black Heroines?: Teachers as Role Models**

**A Post-Structuralist Perspective (3)**

In this paper I will explore two inter-related concepts – agency and identification which have troubled my thinking about how we give account of the lived experience of black women. My interest in this area arose out of discussions with Black and Ethnic Minority (BEM) teachers. In particular their accounts of some of the reasons why these BEM women teachers choose to ‘position’ themselves as role models to pupils in schools.

Like Fisher (1988), I will argue that we should not only question why counter-normative models are of importance to our children, but be attentive to our assumptions about why such notions have come into existence. Furthermore, since the meaning of role model itself is arbitrary, this allows the BEM teacher a constellation of possibilities for ‘being’ a role model to appear within the spaces of their discursive practice.

The data used for this paper is drawn from a wider research around BEM teachers’ positioning of themselves as role model. This study involves two in-depth qualitative semi-structured interviews with each of six teachers. I have analysed the data discursively. In this paper I will draw on interview with two of the respondents. I understand the post-structuralist conception of the duplex (de)racialised, (de)gendered ‘subject’ through the foregrounding of discourse.Foucault (1980) insisted that discourse is thought of as existing as a set complex set of practices which are keep in circulation some statements at the exclusion of other statements. Such a view suggests that it is the meaning systems of discourse that produce what counts as ‘black women’. To some extent both BEM teachers and their pupils’ self-perceptions are *shaped* by the intensity of the normative messages they receive.

Although discourses structure the way in which our reality is interpreted, they are nonetheless vulnerable to resistance and reconfiguration. The BEM teachers choice of identity positions is contextualized within socio-political/historical relations of power. I will suggest that aspects of their knowledge claims hold to a ‘truth’ that for BEM pupils to survive they need to be schooled in strategies of resistance. This paper, in an attempt to give an account of their lived experience necessitates grappling with the interplay of truth claims and strategic positioning, to ask what is ‘agency’ for black women teachers?

1. **Rachel Brooks, Brunel University**

**The construction of ‘student-mothers’ within higher education: a cross-national comparison**

During its time in office, the UK’s Labour government gave a strong message that having caring responsibilities for a young child should not be seen as a barrier to engaging in education and training. Its widening participation strategy (DfES, 2003) included a specific commitment to increasing the number of mature students in higher education – students who are more likely than their younger peers to have caring responsibilities for dependent children. Furthermore, considerable resources were devoted to encouraging teenage mothers to return to education and training soon after the birth of their child (SEU, 1997). Nevertheless, despite this policy focus, there have been relatively few studies of the experiences of ‘student-parents’ within higher education. This paper draws on initial findings from a cross-national study (funded by the Nuffield Foundation) to explore the support currently offered by UK universities to students who have parental responsibility for a child under the age of 16. It compares this support to that offered by Danish institutions, to explore whether differences in welfare ‘regime’ (Esping-Anderson, 1990; Gaille and Paugam, 2000), the structure of the higher education system, and pervasive assumptions about gender relations have any discernible impact on the way in which student-parents are both constructed within institutional policies and assisted by institutional practices.

1. **Dr Jayne Osgood, IPSE, London Metropolitan University**

**Negotiating maternal subjectivities: the impact of neo-liberalism on normative forms of female subjectivity**

Drawing upon recent empirical research from two separate, but interconnecting studies (Allen, 2008; Osgood, 2008) we place a critical focus on ‘the maternal’. We explore how young women negotiate and position themselves in relation to dominant, post-feminist discourses of ‘choice’, ‘success’ and ‘potential’ through/within education and work. We argue that the meanings and identities associated with 'the maternal' have been transformed by the impact of neo-liberalism on normative forms of female personhood, oriented around the economic, rational, independent, self-regulatory subject (Mc Robbie, 2001; Walkerdine, 2003). We highlight that the identification with normative constructions of the ‘worthy citizen’ (Rose, 1999) inculcates a problematic repudiation of motherhood as its 'other' or non-ambition. However, highly ambivalent/ ambiguous processes of dis-identification are debated and resistance to these discourses explored.

1. **Maria Ash, Cardiff School of Management, UWIC**

**Considering Gender Equality Policy in Higher Education: Reflections on strategies of practice and the ‘double-bind’ of female academics**

Many studies point to a disparity between the rhetorical ‘promises’ of gender equality policy and the reality of implementation in terms of providing beneficial outcomes for female academics[[1]](#footnote-2). This paper explores “that mysterious gap between hope and happening” (Kenway and Willis 1998:1) through presenting a fictional narrative on the practices of six academics in response to a particular equality initiative, namely a compulsory ‘equality assessment exercise’ for all members of staff to complete online. In presenting this narrative, I draw upon Bourdieu’s relational analysis of ‘the field’(Bourdieu 1977; 1992; 1998) complemented by Mouzelis’ contribution of figurational structures and forms of strategying (Mouzelis 1992; 1995; 2000; 2008), to put forward a conceptual framework mapping the influences underlying the process of policy formulation.

Through interrogating this framework I put forward two proposals. First, I suggest that the complex interaction between cultural and structural processes within higher education institutions create a ‘double bind’ for female academics. The one side of the ‘double bind’ is that of figurational power (as exercised through the academic habitus) which excludes ‘the other’ and is reproduced through interactions, debates and negotiations. The other side of the ‘double bind’ is that of the institutional power routinised politically through management decision-makers when setting policy agendas. Hence the interplay between the traditional masculine hegemony of academic cultures and the new paradigm of managerialism and neo-liberal discourses pervading higher education effectively constrains the ‘potentialities’ of implementing gender equality policy and practice.

Second, I suggest that the co-construction of knowledge and interactions shape the behaviours (the ‘thinking and doing’) of academics through four particular ‘strategies of practice’. The four strategies result in specific practice determined by the interplay between the level of individual orientation towards the normative institutional arrangements of the organisation and the level of individual reflexivity during interactions in light of situational developments.

I conclude by suggesting that three of the four strategies of practice offer little transformative potential due to their lack of reflexivity or questioning of the ‘status quo’. Thus the ‘double-bind’ outlined above is exacerbated by ineffectual academic responses in terms of strategies of practice and the overall lack of opportunity to resist technocratic top-down equality initiatives. Such equality initiatives as that outlined in the fictional narrative do little to challenge the continuing problem of gendered practices and cultures or the unequal distribution of material and cultural resources within academic institutions. However, I also argue that within a certain context, when individual macro-level or collective micro-level decisions are made reflexively (i.e. without just relying on a ‘feel for the game’) and on the basis of questioning both the ‘rules of the game’ and the actual game play itself, then one of the four strategies of practice has the potential to *transform the game completely* and thus holds “creative possibilities for movement and change” (Dillabough, Mcleod and Mills 2008: 307).

1. **Dr Colleen McGloin, University of Wollongong**

***Reconfiguring Ethics: Women in Higher Education***

This paper is a précis of a collaborative work-in-progress by my colleague, Dr Jeannette Stirling and me. The project is a co-written book that is an attempt to grapple with what we see as prevailing concerns for many women academics in Higher Education in Australia. While we draw from an expansive literature dealing with this issue, both national and international ( see Leathwood, C. and Read, B. Davies, B. Morrison, T.), our book attempts not merely to itemise the litany of current concerns for women, or to theorise these in relation to prevailing power relations in academia. In the spirit of the conference, we also draw from notions of “troubling’, ‘reflecting’ and ‘imagining’ and we are interested in the many practical ways in which a new understanding of feminist institutional ethics can be theorised and incorporated as a set of practices. This is a focus in our research and is reflected in our forthcoming publication where we examine the ethics of cultural competence programmes in Higher Education. (Stirling, McGloin, in press, 2011).

There is a body of material raising issues of concern for women academics. These issues include increased workloads, loss of collegiality, the compelling nature of workplace competitiveness, maintaining a work/life balance, and, not least, how to preserve a sound pedagogical approach to teaching and learning. It seems to us that the demands of contemporary academia threaten women’s ability to work creatively, ethically, and where necessary, subversively. Subversion, we argue, is a form of dissensus that is capable of destabilising the discursive forces of neoliberal thinking that structure our working lives in competitive and often isolating ways. It is but one strategy that can be usefully deployed to address some of the issues that currently cause anxiety for many women academics.

This paper outlines our view of a feminist ethical practice that doesn’t blindly conform to the discourses of neoliberalism, but has at its core a dissenting ethics that is both subversive and productive, that both undermines and re-produces, and that deconstructs and reconstructs. I will define what we mean by a feminist ethics. I will also speculate on its potential for alleviating some of the concerns raised by many current practices that draw from a traditionally masculinist academic culture. While our work draws from a range of theoretical perspectives, from feminism, poststructuralism, philosophy, and from the field of contemporary Higher Education, we aim to develop in our forthcoming publication a way of re-thinking ethics that isn’t, following Badiou (2001), neatly contained by neoliberal discourses. Our concept of a feminist ethics develops along the lines of a dissenting practice that seeks to reconfigure existing power relations in academia. This reconfiguration will reflect more equitablythe interests of women workers in this field. In other words, we envisage a feminist ethics that regulates power relations, as opposed to being regulated by them.

1. **Claire Maxwell, Institute of Education, University of London**

**Challenging violence against women and girls in schools – a theoretically informed approach**

This paper will examine how the work of Butler, Bourdieu and Rancière offers different ways of understanding how the school as an institution can tackle deeply rooted issue such as violence against women and girls. Using findings from a two year study which examined how five secondary schools in the UK tackled the issue of violence against women and girls, the paper will examine a number of initiatives developed by these schools, position them within one of the three theoretical frameworks developed, and assess the potential impact for change that these examples offer.

Butler’s (1997) work suggests change can occur through performative utterances ‘misfiring’, which opens up the possibility for a politics of performative resignification. In our study, a number of schools developed initiatives aimed at peers challenging and supporting each other in relation to sexual violence and bullying. The paper will question though the degree to which these moments of discursive agency could potentially be sustained over time given that the over-arching structures within the school which reproduce heteronormative discourses remain unchanged.

Starting from the feminist-informed position that violence against women and girls is caused by gender inequality (Kelly, 1988 for instance), Rancière’s work may offer a more generative framework given his argument that ‘there is no means of achieving equality other than to assume it, to affirm it, to have it as one’s epistemological starting point’ (Pelletier, 2009: 142). One school in our sample arguably developed such a discursive framework through its emphatic commitment to a focus on ‘the individual’. However, presuppositions of equality in this school had the effect of viewing school life through a gender-neutral lens, which reduced a commitment to challenging violence against women and girls.

Finally, Bourdieu’s theoretical framework (1992) offers the opportunity to conceptualise the school as a ‘field’, which if deliberately altered at an institutional level, could help to ‘displace tendencies of habitus’ (McNay, 2000: 72) within the school and thereby offer an opportunity for change. Through a focus on ‘respect’ in one school, a number of initiatives were developed, which together point to the potential for change across ‘the field’ of the school.

We conclude by offering a tentative framework, which builds on the work described, on how schools may be encouraged to engage more effectively with violence against women and girls.

1. **Dr Vanita Sundaram, Department of Education, University of York**

**Young people and violence: understandings of violence and discourses of acceptability**

This paper reports on research which explored young people’s views on interpersonal violence. The specific research objectives were to:

* Explore how young people characterise violence
* Explore the factors (e.g. setting, relationship between perpetrator and victim, pattern and severity of violence, gender of perpetrator and victim) that influence young people’s views on what constitutes violence
* Examine whether some forms of violence are viewed as more or less acceptable and/or inevitable than others
* Investigate the reasons underlying the perceived acceptability of some forms of violence relative to others

**Theoretical framework**

Knowledge about young people’s views on different forms of violence has important implications for violence prevention initiatives, particularly those in schools. If young people’s acceptance of violence is linked to their understandings of appropriate gender behaviour then an inherent aspect of effective violence prevention will also be to destabilise existing gender norms and expectations, including those produced within the school context.

The majority of previous studies on young people and violence analyse intimate partner violence in isolation from men’s other violences. The theoretical framework used here posits that normative expectations of gender which underlie men’s use of violence towards women are the very same as those underpinning men’s use of violence towards each other. In order to fully understand young people’s understandings of violence, knowledge is needed about their (interrelated) perspectives on different forms of violence. The present study therefore attempts to move forward from previous work on violence and gender by explicitly analysing the common norms for gender which underpin all forms of men’s violence.

**Methodology**

The paper reports on a small-scale, regional study of 14-16 year-olds’ views on interpersonal violence. The sample comprised 65 pupils from 6 secondary schools in Yorkshire. Focus groups were used in order to uncover the ways in which violence is understood, rationalised and even justified by young people. Vignettes, statements and images about violence were used to stimulate discussion and many of these were constructed on the basis of previously tested models. Each scenario, statement or image was presented twice in different forms; once with a male perpetrator of violence and once with a female perpetrator of violence. This was done in order to elicit participants’ views on different levels of acceptability depending on the form, context and dynamic of the violence.

**Findings**

Preliminary findings indicate that young people do differentiate between different forms of violence between young people, as well as adults. Differential discourses of acceptability operate to constitute men’s (or boys’) violences against each other as ‘normal’ and as more acceptable than men’s violences towards women and children. Normative expectations of gender were invoked by young people in same-sex and mixed-sex focus groups to justify why some forms of violence were more or less inevitable than others and (sometimes therefore) more or less acceptable. However, links between gender norms and views on violence were very rarely made by the young people themselves. There were very few instances of gender difference in understandings of what constitutes violence. Discourses of inevitability pervaded the discussions about violence and the potential of schools to prevent violence was viewed as limited.

1. **Debbie Ollis, Deakin University**

**Gender and Violence Education in Australian Schools: How far have we come?**

A concern about the nature and extent of gender-based violence is not a new phenomenon and continues to be a theme in educational strategies for both developed and developing nations. Even so little change has occurred to improve the situation and implement sustainable approaches in schools. Twenty years ago in Australia as part of the *National Strategy Of Violence Against Women* (1991), a $1.5 million dollar project was funded in an effort to assist Australian schools to address current gender-based violence and take a preventative approach in schools (Ollis and Tomaszewski 1993). Recently, the Federal and State governments have again launched a number of policy frameworks and action plans designed to support the prevention of gender-based violence, including a focus in schools. This apparent cycle raises questions about why Australia like other countries, appears to be back at the same point they were in the early 1990s. It also raises questions about the success or otherwise of a new agenda called *Respectful Relationships,* an umbrella for teaching about and building respectful practices. Can this theoretical perspective make a difference in taking us forward and changing approaches to education about violence against women, or is it merely a way to make the agenda more palatable to those who struggle with the reality of violence against women?

A school-based demonstration project designed to prevent gender-based violence and build respectful relationships was trialled in four secondary schools in a large Metropolitan city in 2010. The approach taken was based on findings of a commissioned paper by the educational authority that argued preventing gender-based violence required a specific approach that differed to other violence prevention being undertaken. The paper argued the need for a feminist theoretical framework that addresses the link between gendered power relations, inequalities and violence against women (Flood, 2008).

This paper reports on interviews with the teachers and a sample of the students who participated in the trial. The paper focuses on the teacher’s experience of professional learning and delivering a 10-week classroom program undertaken as part of developing a whole school approach. It also reports on the students’ experience of participating in the teaching and learning program. Whilst the data shows that the professional learning had a positive impact on teachers’ sense of preparedness and awareness of the need to address violence against women, there were teachers who still lacked confidence to use a number of more explicit activities and found creative ways to avoid them. The data also showed that students enjoyed the activity-based nature of the program and the positive impact it had on their relationships with teachers. Some teachers struggled with the overt focus on gender, power and violence against women by men, a clear focus of the materials. So what have we learned from the past twenty years that can help us develop an approach for the future that schools can use in intervening to prevent violence against women?

1. **Gertrud Kasemaa, Tallinn University, Estonia**

**Paradoxes of Gender in Education in Estonia**

Behind the economic, financial and political success of Estonia in transforming from a Soviet state to a modern democracy, many fields of critical importance for sustainable social development have been either marginalized or neglected.

There is some public concern about the failing boys and the feminization of school. According to the Estonian Ministry of Education and Research, boys constitute about 70% of the basic school drop-outs, around 85 % of teachers are women. However, very little academic research has been done on gender in education. A picture of gender issues in school emerges from educational research on other topics (school violence, students’ values, coping strategies, etc.). In our presentation, we will discuss gender issues in school by analyzing all major studies on students and teachers carried out in Estonia over the past ten years (2000-2010).

Today’s school reality in Estonia tells a confusing story- a tale of norm-based and stereotypical thinking regarding gender roles, of hidden values and beliefs that limit the behaviour and coping options of both teachers and students. Based on our analysis, we have identified a number of paradoxes relating to gender in education.

1. While the school is considered a feminine place by the general public (mainly due to the absolute majority of female teachers), it is based and operates on values traditionally considered masculine (focusing on achievement, competition, intolerance for differences).
2. While the school is an arena for masculine values related to aggressiveness, domination and violence, positive qualities traditionally associated with masculinity (courage, activeness, independence, individuality, mobility, creativity) do not find the same space.
3. While the majority of teachers are women, they should, in theory, promote more feminine values at the school, but often it does not happen.
4. Besides teachers, students themselves participate in the reproduction of gendered norms. They evaluate their own femininity and masculinity in a distorted frame of reference and discipline those who differ.
5. While the value system prevalent at the school is masculine, boys feel and cope there much worse than girls.
6. While academic achievement as a measure for success is central in today’s school, it is nevertheless not considered by boys something to strive for. Boys put less effort into studying than girls and yet worry less about their future.
7. Being successful at school does not fit with the image of neither a masculine man nor a feminine woman. Thus, academic success needs its own coping strategies!

Given all the above-mentioned paradoxes, the biggest paradox regarding gender in education in Estonia is the fact that while research on students and teachers points to gender as a major category in the development of values, identities and behavioral patterns, there are almost no studies on gender in education. We hope to change it by evoking both academic and public interest in this field.

1. **Monika Bosa and Katarina Minarovicova, Faculty of Arts Presov University in Presov, Faculty of Education Commenius University in Bratislava, EsFem NGO**

**Gender equality in education in Eastern European Countries - an example of Slovakia**

Gender equality, as a precondition of democracy should be an integral part of all aspects of education. This is recognised (at least formally) across all EU countries. However, what is the situation regarding the promotion of gender equality in post-communist countries? What are the consequences of the „real socialist“ period and the communist "emancipation" of women to Slovak society? What strategies should be selected in an environment where the "communist" past and the "young democracy" presence (possibly) overlap so that the future is truly democratic, respecting human rights for all regardless of sex?

These are questions which are currently being discussed by theorists and activists, and also by motivated, gender sensitive teachers in Slovakia. Finding answers is not easy.

The paper presents the current state of perception of gender issues and feminism influenced by Slovakia’s problematic past. It presents main problem points, which need to be taken into account - the perceptions of modernity, traditionalism, nationalism, but also of the European orientation of contemporary Slovak society and its influence on gender equality as a human rights concept. The paper presents EsFem Association experience in the field of gender equality in education (from 1999), and on key challenges faced during its existence.

In conclusion possible strategies will be proposed to promote gender equality in school environments that require a change in social reflection on women's rights.

1. **The Gender Aspects of the Reform of Education in Slovakia**

**Adriana Jesenkova, University of Pavol Jozef Safarik in Kosice, EsFem NGO**

This paper was created in the framework of the project of CREdu: the gender equality in the secondary vocational schools. The aim of the project was to identify the possibilities of gender dissegregation in the perspective of teacher's profession. The gender analysis of the legislation context of the educational process at the secondary school was the part of the project. The reform of the educational system makes the part of the process of transformation of the society of postcomunist Slovakian society. The aim of the reform is to raise the quality of the education so that the Slovak economics can become the competitive. The paper is focused on analyse of the gender aspects of reform, in particular the teacher's law, which among the others, changes the status of the teachers. We analyze the conceptual prerequisities and the standspoints of the legislation change of the teacher' s profession. We have focused ont the identification of the barriers and limitations for gender equality, as well as the capacities for the development and support or the gender equality among teachers. In particular, we concentrate on the analysis of the status of the protected person linked to the execution of the teacher' s profession. We concen on the gender analysis of new system of continual education and career development. On hte basis of the reflec of the interviews undertaken in the framework of the qualitative research, which was the part of our project, we want to show that the basis of the concept of the reform is the gender stereotyped, masculine and not gender sensitive. The introduction of this reform disandvantages female teachers in many aspects – in continual education has in efect the disanvantages in career development and financial reward. This disantvage put in geopardy the level of social status and social prestige of female teachers. We consider the fact that the reform marginalise the care as the aspect of public and work life ot teachers, as the key disantvages factors, by unsufficient the care of the mental and psychical health of teachers.

1. **SYMPOSIUM :Problematising the sexualisation of girls discourse: beyond the moral panic?**

**Emma Renold and Jessica Ringrose**

The subject ‘girl’ and ‘girl culture’ has emerged as an increasingly visible problematic in late capitalist societies (Driscoll 2002) from educational discourses of over-achieving ‘successful’ girls and consumer oriented ‘girl power’ through to pathological representations of ‘girls at risk’ (McRobbie 2008). A significant luminosity in recent years is the anxiety and fear over what has come to be known as the ‘sexualisation of the (girl) child’. This contested discourse has gained hegemonic status and is framed by many academic commentators as a contemporary moral panic (Lumby and Albury 2010). For instance, the impact of ‘sexualisation’ upon children and young people has become the subject of high profile controversial reports and inquiries from a number of government and non-governmental bodies (Papadopoulos 2010). This symposium will offer critical commentaries from educational scholars who are exploring this discursive terrain in ways that pay critical attention to the myriad assumptions, silences and myths associated with this seemingly ubiquitous discourse and its effects upon diverse groups of girls within schools and beyond.

Charles sets the scene by contextualizing the sexualization moral panic through a nuanced class analysis. Her paper explores the proliferation of texts bemoaning the ‘sexualisation of girls’ as embroiled in a wider consumer culture that sells sexualization, but targeted at ‘concerned’ teachers, parents and health professionals. The following three papers develop this class analysis and situate the sexualization thesis in its postfeminist moment and across different public, domestic and institutional spaces (i.e. social networking sites, the ‘lounge’, streets, elite and state schools). Renold and Ringrose draw on three ethnographic case studies of girls living in urban and rural working-class communities. They develop a theoretical frame using Butler, Braidotti and Deleuze, considering the concept of ‘schizoid subjectivitiy’ to theorise the pushes and pulls of ‘new’ and ‘old’ sexual/gender regimes. Foregrounding the experience of white, middle class teen femininities, Holford examines how girls position themselves within discourses of indivdualisation, where they must balance sexual competency, as ‘knowing’ but ‘not too knowing’, within wider heterosexualised peer cultures where the gendered sexual double standard is an abiding presence. Drawing on ethnographic longtitudinal data, Allan’s analysis centres on privileged groups of young women in elite single sex schooling - a context represented as a ‘safe’ haven from ‘sexualisation’ – to problematise binaries of innocence/sexuality, vulnerability/risk in how girls navigate the sexualized spatialities of social life. The fifth paper, from Blaise returns us to the heart of the sexualisation moral panic. Exploring 3-4 year old’s understandings of gender and sexuality, Blaise applies Deleuze and Guatarri’s concept of ‘assemblages of desire’ to problematize the flattening out of social and cultural difference in child sexuality research, and to ‘re-imagine’ a politics of childhood sexuality beyond the white, middle-class driven panic of contemporary ‘sexualisation’ debates. The final paper by Emmerson addresses issues of sexualization from the perspective of non-governmental organizations (the Sex Education Forum). Drawing on the views of young people from on-line discussion forums and practitioner consultations, Emmerson critically examines the role of sex and relationships education (SRE) in discussions about sexualization and the potential for SRE to support the ‘healthy sexual development’ of children and young people.

Collectively these papers scrutinize the multiple, complex and often contradictory discourses that surround the moral panic over child, and particularly girl ‘sexualisation’. Importantly, they respond to calls for empirical research notably absent in this terrain with a range of inter-disciplinary, ground-breaking findings and new theoretical analyses.

**Selling sexualisation: popular feminist commentary on girls and sexuality**

***Claire Charles, Deakin University, Australia***

We are currently witnessing a renewed vigour to ongoing concerns about the sexualisation of young women and girls in western culture. In recent years several books on this subject, written by journalists and cultural commentators, have enjoyed high profile public visibility, resulting in radio interviews, as well as numerous media articles, exploring issues of sexualisation and pornification (Levy, 2005; Maguire, 2008; Tankard-Reist, 2009; Walter, 2010). In this paper I critique selected texts from this popular feminist response, exploring the extent to which they address the nuances of young women’s relationships to sexualised popular culture, and how these might be mediated by social class positioning, as well as the complexities around how education about sexualised popular culture for young people might be approached.

I take up Judith Butler’s theory of performativity, and her notion of ‘girling’ (1993, 1997, 1999), as well as feminist critiques of consumer culture (Genz, 2006; Heinecken, 2003) in order to explore how these texts, representative of the popular feminist response, are in fact powerful agents in the repetition of the discourse of sexualisation of young women and girls, without always drawing attention to inconsistencies and complexities in the way young women engage with this culture. These texts must iron out complexity, and obscure difference, in order to create coherent, simple narratives that will be palatable, and consumed by as many people as possible. In this sense I explore whether these texts are, in fact, part of the very culture they bemoan – a consumer culture that sells sexualisation – but targeted at an audience of concerned parents, educators, and health professionals, in addition to young women themselves.

I unpack the homogenisation of young women in the populist feminist response to sexualised popular culture, and consider the lack of attention to classed nuances in narratives about how young women engage with this culture. There exists a well-established connection, within academic feminist scholarship, between class and sexualized femininity. This literature suggests that sexuality and embodiment have long been an important feature of how class difference is regulated and imagined. Working class femininities are marked as vulgar and sexually excessive, within this literature, whilst middle and upper class femininities have been associated with respectability, sexual and embodied restraint and control (McRobbie, 2004; Skeggs, 1997). Drawing on examples of key icons in sexualised popular culture, such as Stefani Germanotta (aka: Lady Gaga), as well as research literature, I explore the possibility that young women’s engagements with sexualised popular culture, and sexualised embodiment, are not likely to have equal effects, depending upon how they are positioned in relation to class.

Education and ‘resistance’ are also constructed problematically within the popular feminist response to the sexualisation of young women and girls, often approached in reductionist, discredited ways. After exploring examples of how they are doing this, I conclude the paper with some thoughts about how education might be understood and approached differently, in ways that work toward a dialogical relationship with young people in the exploration and critique of sexualised popular culture, rather than a ‘top down’ authoritarian approach.

**Schizoid subjectivities?: Re-theorising teen-girls’ sexual cultures in post-feminist times.**

***Emma Renold (School of Social Sciences, Cardiff University)***

***Jessica Ringrose (Institute of Education, University of London***

Socio-cultural anxieties over girls’ sexual cultures have a long and enduring history. These anxieties have resurfaced recently via international governmental and media moral panics over girls’ ‘premature’ ‘sexualisation’ via a hurried erotics discourse of accelerated girlhood. The ‘sexualisation of girls’ discourse is, we argue, one discourse in a wider assemblage of contemporary and historical gazes upon the sexual girl-child-women. It is also a discourse which makes claims about ‘girls’ in general, in ways that flatten out social and cultural difference. However, there is little empirical research on how girls are differently positioned and affected by discourses of hyper-sexualisation (Atwood, 2009; Buckingham, 2009; Duits and Van Zoonen, 2006) or that foregrounds new debates on ‘sexualisation’ in relation to wider seismic shifts in recent representations of youthful femininity (Aapola et al, 2005; Kehily 2008).

This paper responds to these gaps, drawing on several empirical case studies from three ethnographic research projects with young teen girls in urban and rural working class communities across England and Wales. The first data set is from an ESRC-funded longtitutinal participatory research project conducted in a city in South Wales exploring children and young people’s everyday relationship cultures in public care. The second study is an ESRC/HEFCW-funded project, using a range of multi-media ethnographic and narrative methods to explore young people’s understanding and use of local public, institutional and private spaces in a small south Wales community. The third study, funded by NOSEB, explored teens negotiations of social networking sites in suburban London and rural Suffolk.

In our analysis we explore the complex sexual politics of ‘postfeminist’ femininities where presumptions of gendered equality, discourses of ‘girl power’ and the demand to perform new “technologies of sexy” produce contradictory subject positions which girls must navigate (Gill, 2008). We draw on theoretical resources from Deleuze, Butler and Braidotti, and introduce the concept of ‘schizoid subjectivities’ to explore how young women negotiate complex semiotic-social–material assemblages which blur generational, spatial and sexual binaries (e.g. adult/child, real/virtual, hetero/homo, local/global) and in ways that avoid the “usual hierarchical dualisms in studies of girls: subject-object, resistant-conformist, mature-immature” (Driscoll 2002:194). For example, our case studies include analyses of a girl navigating the innocent/sexy motif of a playboy bunny identity online and offline, a group of girls appropriating pole-dancing within the domestic sphere of a friend’s lounge; and a friendship pair who ‘reclaim’ and queer the identifications of ‘slut’ and ‘whore’ via their social networking sites. In each case ‘sexy’ must be performed within a wider intensification and normalization of sexual harassment across school, street and cyber-cultures, and alongside the ‘disavowal’ of sexism in popular cultural consciousness (McRobbie, 2008). The paper thus contextualises and complicates contemporary debates on young femininity, ‘sexualisation’ and sexual cultures. It also highlights the ways in which teen girls are regulated by, yet rework and resist expectations to perform knowing and desiring sexual bodies across new (virtual) and old (street, school, home) spaces of performativity.

**Middle-class teen femininities and the regulation of everyday heterosexualities.**

***Naomi Holford, Cardiff University***

The qualitative data presented in this paper draw on a study carried out with 14-16 year olds, investigating gendered power relations within heterosexual relationship cultures, which was carried out in a high-performing state comprehensive in an affluent and ethnically homogenous (white) area of the south-east of England. The paper focuses on girls’ performances and negotiations of femininities in the context of heterosexualised peer cultures. The visibility and publicity of sexuality within these cultures forms a regulatory framework within which girls’ sexual and gendered movements and choices are restricted and curtailed in varying ways, despite (and in some senses, because of) the privileges afforded by these girls’ class positions.

These young people seem to epitomise the having-it-all discourse of the successful girl; they are academically successful, articulate, and generally confident in their perceived ability to take charge in their sexual and romantic relationships. They position themselves within a discourse of individualisation, in charge of their own destiny. They own their “sensible”, “mature”, “right” and “good” choices, just as they own their “immature” or “bad” choices – often incorporating the latter as part of a developmental story. These discourses of individual agency, though, can occlude the many ways in which girls’ identities and actions are shaped by social and cultural ideas about teen sexuality, gender and class.

The paper will explore girls’ negotiations of competing and conflicting discourses of femininity. As successful academic achievers they are expected to perform a respectable, desexualized student femininity, embodying an “appropriate” classed/aged subject position. Yet simultaneously, they strive to be read as sexually competent, knowledgeable (but not too knowledgeable) and desirable, in a context of a culture deeply ambivalent about teenage girls’ sexuality. Teenage girls are positioned as objects of sexual desire and fascination, yet anxiety coalesces around their supposed over-sexualisation: a discourse in which girls are represented both as victims and as bearers of a morally problematic and potentially dangerous sexuality. They must also negotiate peer cultures which are heavily heterosexualised, in which sexual behaviour and attitudes – who does what, with whom, where, how and (perhaps most importantly) why – are entangled with wider relationship networks in and out of the school context. Talk is public, the gendered sexual double standard remains very much in evidence, and judgement, hierarchies and regulation of sexuality are bound up with classed prejudices and assumptions.

This paper will attempt to draw out some of the ways in which the conflicting discourses that circulate around the sexualisation of girls are mediated by class and cultural contexts, in exploring how these discourses are differently negotiated and lived out by English middle-class teenage girls in the construction of their classed and gendered identities.

**Sexualisation and the Single-Sex Girls School**

***Alexandra Allan (University of Exeter)***

Recent UK Governmental reports that have focused upon the ‘sexualisation’ of children and young people paint a picture of a dangerous new sexual world which poses particular risks for young girls. It is often assumed that this is a world where girls are forced to ‘grow up too soon’ and where their overt sexuality will lead them to the increased risk of academic failure and physical violence. In these supposedly ‘risky’ ‘sexual’ times it has become increasingly common for single-sex girls schools to be seen as the antidote to these problems; as safe havens from the toxic cocktail of binge drinking, social networking and sexual brainwashing which is believed to lead to these dangerous sexual liaisons and hyper- sexual identities. Indeed, in a recent newspaper interview, a head teacher of a renowned British girls’ school announced that single-sex schools were one the only safe spaces left for girls, offering them a rare place in which to prolong and protect the ‘wholesomeness of childhood’. In recent weeks the UK has also seen the launch of a new Girls’ School Association website, where teachers from the very best single-sex girls schools seek to offer advice to worried parents about how to best bring up their girls in light of these ‘new found’ (sexual) risks.

Drawing upon ethnographic data generated in two single-sex girls schools in the UK, this paper will seek to further examine this relatively under-researched and often taken-for-granted tale of the safe, desexualised space of the single-sex girls’ school. By exploring both the girls’ and their parents’ perceptions of the risks that the girls faced in relation to sexualisation, the paper will explore the possibilities for sexual subjectivity formation in these school contexts. In particular, the paper will address the question: what types of subjects are created through these risk discourses in these particular settings and at this particular historical moment? Taking up Massey’s (1994) challenge to explore the more ‘elaborated spatialities’ of social life, the paper will explore the multiple spaces in which the girls negotiated these risk discourses (e.g. in the classroom, in the locker rooms, at parties, in the city centre and through various forms of popular culture). It will challenge the notion of the singular and separate space of the single-sex school.

Using longitudinal data collected with these young women across a period of seven years the paper will also examine how these discourses were negotiated in relation to age; seeking to explore the girls’ experiences of sexualisation across time and in relation to wider developmental discourses relating to the processes of ‘growing up’. By looking at the multiple discourses that surrounded these girls and the myriad different spaces which they inhabited it is hoped that the paper will work to further challenge the simple notions of innocence, safety, vulnerability and risk which currently dominate the debates surrounding young girls’ sexualities.

**’Racing’ and classing gender and sexuality research in early childhood**

***Mindy Blaise, The Hong Kong Institute of Education***

Mentioning young children and sex or sexuality in the same breath provokes anxiety and controversy amongst adults. This fear or moral panic is based on several assumptions about the nature of childhood, childhood innocence, and the role of adults. However, what happens when this discourse of childhood innocence is challenged, not only by children’s talk and understandings of gender and sexuality, but by ‘race’ and class? In particular, in what ways does (e)‘racing’ and (un)classing gender and sexuality problematize the sexualisation of young children as it incites anxiety, fear, and excitement in the field of early childhood?

This paper aims to explore such questions by revisiting an exploratory study I conducted with 3 and 4 year-old children about their understandings of gender and sexuality (Blaise, 2010). I intend to locate and map the assumptions and silences that were made about ‘race’ and class in the research design and methods I created and used, and by the participants (children, parents, and the teacher) in the study. MacNaughton and Davis use the term ‘racing’ (2009, p. 2), to capture the complex processes that form young children’s feelings, desires, understandings and enactments of ‘race’ in their daily lives. This paper expands and develops this concept further to explore how (e)’racing’ and (un)classing are strategies through which whiteness and middle-class ideals of gender and sexuality were deployed throughout this study. Initial findings illuminate how these strategies (re)produce whiteness and middle-class sexuality as desirable, normal, and unthreatening. These strategies will first be located within the research design, while conducting research as an active participant, and in the findings. Then these strategies will be mapped by using Deleuze & Guattari’s ([1984], 2004) concept of assemblages of desire for problematizing these (e)’racing’ and (un)classing strategies and for imagining new ways for ‘racing’ and classing gender and sexuality research so that the politics of childhood sexuality can be used to engage with and disrupt assumptions made about the sexualisation of young children.

1. **Chie Nakazawa, Tokyo Gakugei University**

**Gender relations in the classrooms in Japanese compulsory schools**

Authors: Chie NAKAZAWA, Seiichi MATSUKAWA, Yasuko MURAMATSU, Michiko NAOI, Shin TOMABECHI, Michiko TAKAHASHI, Midori OHTAKE, Rinko MANABE, Ikue KIMURA

Description of the paper:

This study focuses on gender relations between teachers and pupils and in the peer groups in the classrooms of the compulsory schools in Japan and aims to figure out their perception on gender relations and the gap between them.

Methods: A questionnaire research, which was conducted on teachers and pupils at elementary and junior high schools in Japan in 2006.

Findings: Some of main findings are as follows. Firstly, we examined pupils’ perception on gender relation in the classrooms. Pupils act separately by sex and girls tend to be silenced in the classrooms, as their grade in school advances. The targets of teasing are mostly girls at elementary schools, and move to boys at junior high schools. It seems to be mostly boys that tease others, and teasing is a kind of power relation, so it suggests that masculinities are formulated in such competitive peer relations among boys.

Secondly, as to leadership among pupils, teachers rather admit girls’ leadership and pupils, especially boys, feel superiority on their own sex about leadership in the classroom. There is a gap between them.

Thirdly, as to teachers’ attitudes on gender, they tend not to stand for the gender division of labor, but stand for the differences of congenital competence by sex. Many of teachers perceive no difference on the bases of gender of pupils and they consider they treat pupils equally. But the numbers of teachers who think they treat pupils differently by sex such as “strictly to the boys, gently to the girls” are not negligible. Male teachers, especially relatively younger teachers tend to make contacts more to the boys than to the girls. Teachers who have authoritarian educational perspective tend to have stronger gender-biased notions.

Finally, the school culture is analyzed. There are more female teachers at elementary schools and more male teachers at junior high schools. Teachers at elementary schools take responsibility for the whole aspects of their classes, but teachers at junior high schools take responsibility rather for each subject. It is suggested that these differences between school stages have impacts on the circumstances on gender at schools.

Based on the results from the questionnaire research, we will discuss that the Japanese schools still keep the gender order, while girls are getting more active than before. In contrast, boys as gender are emerging in Japan. Many boys suffer from the pressure, are getting less ambitious and feel that they can’t meet the expectation to be masculine. We will also discuss the differentiation within gender and changes/unchange on gender at schools in Japan, compared with western countries.

1. **The investigation of gender discrimination in Iranian children story books**

**Authors; Jalil Etebari, Hamid Khojani, Institution; Shiraz University, Iran**

Children's literature plays a key role in shaping a child's perception of those around her or him and the world they live in. Books have an important role in transmission of our beliefs and values to future generations. It is crucial to understand the messages that children's literature sends them about the role expectations in order to understand how they view real life.

The aim of this study was to investigate gender discrimination with regard to different aspects such as male and female social references, social activities, emotional-social behaviours, and features, innuendosand pictures.

Gender discrimination theory was used for this investigation. Further, content analysis method and reversed questionnaire technique was used to collect the information. The sample included 50 book titles with 120 stories.

The findings show that women were depicted in a place inferior to men in all aspects. Ninety percent of job positions in these stories belonged to men. Only one percent of women had a leadership position. Most of working women were engaging in occupations such as nursing, teaching and tailoring. In 92 percent of cases, women activities were showed at home. Only 5.9 percent of women were politically active. In addition, Weakness of character and personality characteristics such as fear was belonged to females in 80 percent of cases. In contrast, men described as strong and brave characters. Analysis of the pictures in these books show that women portrayed in traditional roles. In 79 percent of cases they were pictured at home.

Maghsoodi (1995) and Haji Nasrollah (1998) used the same techniques to evaluate gender discrimination in Iran. This shows the traditional role of men and women in the children books has not changed for more than a decade. However, according to the National Statistics Centre of Iran (Markas Amar Iran) participation of women in social, political and economical activities is higher than shown in children books.

1. **(S)expectations: Using Butlerian tools to (re)think senior schooling subject selection and post-school planning**

**Christina Gowlett,** **The University of Queensland**

The processes being used in secondary schools to help students ‘select’ what to study in the senior years of schooling has received little critical analysis. Much attention has been given to *the type of subjects* students inscripted as male and female select and *how they perform* in those subjects, but far less commentary surrounds *the processes* being adopted in schools to assist students in making decisions about their future. The diversity of schooling structures across the globe is perhaps a deterrent to having such conversations since no two systems, let alone schools, will guide students in exactly the same manner. The process of students ‘selecting’ a curriculum pathway in the secondary schooling arena is, nonetheless, an issue that transcends many countries. How curriculum pathway selection is being facilitated may differ across countries and regions, but the commonality lies with the emphasis on schools being positioned as facilitators of human capital production, thus preparing students for transition into work. The purpose of school being centred on workforce alignment and readiness is potentially problematic given the predominance of inequalities between men and women which exist in the labour market. Across OECD countries, women still on average earn less than men and are still predominantly found in lower paid and more casualised areas of employment (Blades and Pearson 2007). What this paper seeks to explore, therefore, are the attitudes about senior schooling subject selection, what I have called the ‘(s)expectations’, and how these affect the process of students ‘choosing’ what to study and work towards after they leave school.

Drawing from the work of Judith Butler (1990, 1997), this presentation will demonstrate how students are performatively constituted as male and female by what they study in years 11 and 12 (the senior years of schooling). Two student stories from a case study secondary school in Queensland (Australia) labelled as ‘disadvantaged’ will be used to contextualise this argument.

Being categorised as male or female can happen via a multitude of acts (such as name, hair length, clothing and deportment to list a few (Youdell, 2005). This presentation explores how what one studies also positions students in terms of their membership to being appropriately ‘male’ or ‘female’. While the case study school tries hard to ensure students ascribed male or female select ‘appropriate’ subjects to suit their perceived interests and abilities, this does not always work. This presentation illustrates the consequences of failing to conform to these (s)expectations. As Butler succinctly points out in an interview with Olson and Worsham (2000, p. 748):

There is a set of legitimating norms and they all come with their punishments or their costs so that as the child emerges into subjecthood, it emerges in relationship to a set of norms that give it its place, its legitimacy, its lovability, its promise of security; and it risks all of these things when it abdicates those norms.

Through the stories of two students, I illustrate the price that some students pay when they find themselves not conforming to the normalising practices expected of their sexed categorisation.

1. **New Scientific Identities: Redressing Gender Inequity in STEM.**

**Dr Richard Watermeyer and Dr Vicki Stevenson – Cardiff University**

This paper forms a study of a science‐activity club for young secondary school aged girls in Cardiff, Wales, UK. *Discover!* clubs are learning spaces

dedicated to change in cultural attitudes inhibiting the wider recruitment and retention of women in Science, Technology, Engineering and Maths (STEM); subject and occupational areas traditionally dominated by men (Burke and Matthis 2007; Bystydzienski and Bird 2006). *Discover!* is conceived as a learning space intended to stimulate and consolidate the imagination and interest of young female learners and empower feelings of self‐efficacy and entitlement in science domains. The study focused on the attitudes and experiences of club participants, their parents and session leaders. Data was collected via non/participant observation, qualitative interviewing and survey over the course of a three‐ year period.

This paper offers a critical analysis of interactions between group participants, and their mentors in building an equitable and experiential

learning zone for female learners in STEM. It explores how the *Discover!* programme exists as a form of gender re‐education ‐ reconfiguring gender

identities in science. It invokes Tanner’s (2009) notion of the ‘equity eye’ in revealing forms of gender inequity, so ubiquitous as to be latent and

unobservable, and which in turn mobilizes the deconstruction of hegemonic gender discourse. Integral to this process and accordingly the design of the *Discover!* programme is a single/same sex model of collective learning. Consequently, the project explored the advantages and limitations of same sex role models, single‐sex learning and feminized accounts of science in generating new female STEM ambassadors. Ultimately, the paper considers

how informal, experiential, same‐sex pedagogy:

1) scaffolds female learners in acculturing and sustaining confidence and capacity to negotiate multiple iterations of STEM

2) leads from disavowal to celebration of gender difference through integrating the unique contribution of women in science

3) culminates in new scientific identities

This paper draws on ideas of breakdown (Haraway 1999), undoing (Butler 2004), fragmentation (Trinh 1992) and processes of carnival (Bakhtin 1965,Bergen 1991) that disrupt the seamless, unchallenged evocation and assignment of male domination in science. *Discover!* is thus approached as a vehicle for imaginative, creative and playful learning pathways that accentuate female agency and representation in STEM.

1. **Professor Jane Martin, Institute of Education, University of London**

**Rethinking the common school: women and the comprehensive experiment in London, 1930 to 1960**

This paper troubles the established historical narrative by re-considering early metropolitan experiments with comprehensive secondary schools from the standpoint of gender. The story begins in 1934, when the Labour Party first won control of the London County Council and Councillor Eveline Lowe became the first female chair of the Education Committee.

My concern is with politics at a local or ‘grassroots’ level. Looking at local stories behind the national story, reveals the contribution of the nowadays (virtually) unknown women politicians and pioneer head teachers who in the words of educationist Robin Pedley “hewed a path through the jungle of obscurantism and cultural poverty” to establish “interim comprehensives” in the late 1940s and 1950s (1970, p. 84). Besides Lowe, Helen Bentwich and Margaret Cole are two politicians that stand out in this revisionist narrative. Paradigm “cases” of leading head teachers of schools called “comprehensive” when they opened in the 1940s and 50s will be Harriet Chetwynd of Woodberry Down school, Mary Green of Kidbrooke school, Margaret Miles of Mayfield school and Anne O’Reilly of Walworth school (established in 1947 as one of the first group of eight experimental “comprehensive” schools).

late 1940s and 1950s (1970, p. 84). Besides Lowe, Helen Bentwich and Margaret Cole are two politicians that stand out in this narrative. Paradigm “cases” of leading head teachers will be Anne O’Reilly of Walworth School (established in 1947 as one of the first group of eight experimental comprehensive schools), Harriet Chetwynd of Woodberry Down School (which opened in 1955) and Margaret Miles of Mayfield School - the first London grammar school to go comprehensive in 1955.

1. **SYMPOSIUM: ‘Without space, no multiplicity; without multiplicity, no space’: Space, gender and power in education**

This symposium takes these words from Doreen Massey (2005, p9) as a starting point from which to explore the complexity of material-discursive-epistemological relations of space, gender and education. In different ways, each paper engages with the question of how spatial formations intersect with, and (re-)produce, student and teacher gendered identities; how practices of spatialisation contribute to understanding the ‘materialization’ of the gendered body and processes of embodiment; and how space intersects, and is shot through with, the workings of power. The three papers focus on a range of educational contexts, from schools in rural Ghana, to a UK sixth form college classroom, to doctoral education in cyberspace, in order to foreground the crucial but often unnoticed and unanalysed place of space and spatialisation in accounts of gendered educational practices. In doing so, it urges a reconsideration of space as a key dimension in understanding the relations between knowledge, gender, subjectivity and learning.

In Youdell’s (2006, p58) view, ‘the significance of … spaces and their imagined meanings, is increasingly being recognised and explored’. However, there are still many silences and gaps in knowledge about spatial practices in education in general, and space, gender and education in particular. Studies of space and spatiality constitute a small, heterogeneous field of study, with a research emphasis on schools and higher education (Edwards and Usher, 1999; McGregor, 2001; Quinn, 2003). However, studies of the micropolitical aspects of spatial practices are largely absent in current theorizing (but note Tamboukou, 1999; 2002; 2004) and it is this absence the symposium begins to address. The symposium takes an interdisciplinary stance, as the authors draw on a heterogeneous body of theory (Hubbard *et al*., 2004; McIntosh, 2008; Massey, 1994; 2005) and a diverse set of methodological approaches, to consider space and gender in education as an epistemological location from which ‘new possibilities may be emerging’ (Dillabough *et al*. 2008, p302). Through detailed empirical instances of gendered identities, embodiments, materialities and relations, the three papers albeit in very different ways, offer an interrogation of Foucault’s view that ‘space is fundamental in any form of communal life; space is fundamental in any exercise of power’ (Foucault, 1984, p252). Taken together, the papers explore some of the particular ways in which spatiality, understood as ‘the triple dialectic of space, time and social being’ (Soja, 1989, p12), is instantiated in specific educational spaces.

**‘Muddy rules for cyberspace’: Musings of a she-blogger**

**Yvonne Downs, University of Sheffield**

Although referring specifically to intellectual property rights, the above quotation from Burk (1998) gives a sense of the complex, emergent, often ambiguous terms on which we enter new digital spaces. In this paper I give an auto/biographical account of my experience of writing a blog for a number of months while doing research for my PhD. My account is located in the broader context of a consideration of ‘cyberspace’ and animates the contention that ‘(t)he new opportunities and constraints online interaction creates are double-edged, leading to results that can amplify both beneficial and noxious social processes’ (Kollock and Smith 1999, p.4). Whilst acknowledging that ‘cyberspace represents an exciting new medium which allows us to communicate, teach, learn and understand in ways never before imagined’ (Bryant 2001) I also ask whether the multiplicity, mystification and mythologizing of cyberspace (Mosco 2005) has diverted our attention away from the question of ‘what happens to gender when it goes through the hardware?’ (Arpiz 1999). Although I touch on the relationship of cyberspace and physical spaces, relating my specific and limited experience of blogging as a PhD student clearly cannot provide definitive answers or adequately theorise the complexity of cyberspace. My aim is rather to instantiate a method of ‘seeing with both eyes’ (materially and discursively) relations of power within new digital spaces.

**‘His magisterial chair’: space, bodily materialization and gendered power in a sixth form classroom**

**Carol Taylor, Sheffield Hallam University**

This paper focuses on teacher bodily performatives within a UK sixth form college classroom. Beginning with Shields (1997, p186) view that ‘bodies are understood and lived spatially as much as are topographical sites in the landscape’, the paper explores how a teacher works with the disposition of bodies in space to produce the classroom as a visible-material-discursive space. In putting forward a case for understanding gendered identity through the analytic lens of the spatialisation of subjectivity, I argue for a microsociological understanding of the place of teacher bodily performatives in the instantiation of gendered power (Butler, 1990; Foucault, 1982, 1984). Taking a line opened by Barad (2003) that shifting analysis to practices/doings/actions enables us to foreground ontology, materiality and agency, I then discuss the multiple tactics through which one particular teacher orchestrated a specific regime of disciplinarity and visibility in the space of a sixth form classroom. In unpicking the linkages between gender, space and performative bodily tactics the paper seeks to illuminate the ‘coincidence and rapidity’ (Gore, 2001, p170) with which power is enacted as a spatially-situated activity; it works to apprehend the ‘fullness of materiality’ in the flows of gendered power; and begins to re-think performativity as a mode of ‘intra-activity’ materialized in/through the body (Barad, 2003, p810/p817).

**Dropping out: gender and identity spaces in and out of school in Ghana**

**Máiréad Dunne & Eric Daniel Ananga, University of Sussex**

This paper explores geographies of identity of Ghanaian school dropouts. In particular, we investigate how school dropouts in rural communities construct narratives of identity within and outside school. In our analysis we trace how space, power and identity intersect in accounts of dropping out. We first consider the school dropouts accounts of their regulation within the gender and age regimes in schools and the ways they used the available space to enact dominant gender/sexual identities. These narratives highlighted how school experiences promoted highly polarized gender identities. We then turn to their accounts of life outside school where they may have significant social responsibilities as parents and/or wage-earners. It became evident that their social positioning and identities within their communities were in tension with those they occupied within school spaces. Through this analysis, we suggest that difficulties in navigating power and identity in these different spatial geographies is critical to understanding the processes of dropping out. As such this paper contests the homogenised deficit accounts of dropout produced in the dominant development discourses.

1. **SYMPOSIUM: Gender and the Austerity Agenda in Higher Education**

The financial crisis is impacting unevenly across the global higher education (HE) sector, but it is clear that in the UK, HE has entered a new age of austerity. Public funding for teaching faces a 40% cut and tuition fees are set to almost treble. The impact on students, staff, institutions and the arts/humanities/social sciences is only just becoming apparent, but a significant re-shaping of the sector is inevitable.

This double symposium examines the implications of this austerity agenda in HE for teaching, research, staff and students. It explores how gender is performed and re-constituted in the discursive, material, spatial, temporal and psycho-social contexts of the contemporary academy, globally and locally, whilst also exploring spaces for resistance.

In the first paper, ‘*Changing Concepts of Equity in Transforming UK Higher Education: implications for future pedagogies and practices in global higher education*’, **Miriam David** explores contradictions in developments in equity in HE. She notes, however, how a concern with women’s education has been replaced by an emphasis on the needs of men in HE in today’s austerity culture. The focus on the global continues in the next paper,’ *Sex, Grades and Southern Theory: the Impact of Feminist Research on Higher Education Internationally*’. Here **Louise Morley** shows how global research findings on sexual harassment in HE are repeatedly ignored. Using concepts from Southern Theory, research impact and feminist research she cautions of the dangers of the austerity culture for women in the academy. The third paper maintains this focus on research. **Carole Leathwood**, in *‘Constructing research/ers in austere times: gender, research and inscriptions of value in contemporary UK higher education policy’*, explores the ways in which symbolic systems of value inscribe and de/legitimise academic/researcher identities and research activities, and she considers the likely winners and losers in the increasingly competitive research culture.

In the fourth paper ‘*The Academy, the inequality of affects: space for an ethics of austerity*’, **Valerie Hey** brings together work from cultural sociology, feminism and the psycho-social to ask how we ‘do austerity’. She considers how the austerity agenda, and the requirement to ‘do more with less’, impacts on the bodies and psyches of those working in higher education. The focus on workers in the academy is continued in the next paper ‘*Being a Union Activist in a Time of Austerity*’. Here **Meg Maguire** draws on interviews with women trade unionists in HE to detail the ways in which the new austerity culture of job cuts and increasing workloads is influencing and shaping the experiences of ‘different’ women who ‘do’ union activism – and offer resistance to the attack on the higher education sector. In the final paper, ‘*Fail Better: creating feminist heterotopias in dystopian times*’, **Cath Lambert** continues this theme of resistance by exploring potential intellectual and pedagogic resources for troubling the hyper-performative, target-driven and austerity culture of the academy. She draws on Foucault’s concept of ‘heterotopias’ (or ‘counter-spaces’) and queer theory to explore the possibilities for developing pleasurable and productive feminist spaces.

**Changing Concepts of Equity in Transforming UK Higher Education: implications for future pedagogies and practices in global higher education**

**Professor Miriam David, Institute of Education University of London**

This paper is about changing concepts of equity in UK higher education. It charts moves from concepts about gender equality as about women’s education in 20th century higher education to men’s education in the 21st century. These changing concepts of equity are linked to wider social and economic transformations, the expansion of higher education and the growth in the knowledge economy, or ‘academic capitalism’, and the so-called austerity culture. Feminist theorists and activists, (second wave feminists), developed concepts of gender equality in the 20th century, and these have been incorporated into higher education and policies with the expansions of higher education, especially around notions of widening participation. These notions in policy and practice arenas focus on equity as about social class, socio-economic disadvantage, ethnicity and race, rather than on gender questions. Equity is now twinned with diversity and where gender is now invoked it is working class men’s disadvantage in higher education. These men are seen as more in need than women in the new ‘austerity culture’.

As a feminist, I want to question current policies, theories and perspectives about the changing balances between men and women in higher education, lifelong learning and academic labour markets. I will argue that current policies have lost their critical and feminist edge and have become incorporated into practices that sustain and reinforce systemic inequalities. It is also likely, given the austerity culture, that they will be exacerbated in future.

The question of how transformative higher education has been in the direction of equity is both a major policy and practice issue in the UK in the late 20th and 21st century. Given massive expansions in education, and higher education especially, over the last 20 to 30 years, how equal has higher education become for men and women from diverse families and multicultural backgrounds nationally and internationally? The social sciences collectively have developed an important role in contributing to debates about evidence and social or economic ‘impact’, a tricky and contested concept nowadays, at least in the UK for research assessment and/or excellence. Given that socio-economic contexts are now uncertain how certain can we be about current transformations not maintaining inequalities locally, nationally and internationally?

The answer to my question about how transformative global higher education has been in the direction of gender or social equity is indeed full of contradictions. Mass higher education has been critical to the global knowledge economy, both in supplying the knowledge and knowledge or professional workers for key elements of corporate capitalism. Opportunities to participate and progress through higher education and into postgraduate studies and research are extensive and yet not as dramatically different as we might have hoped for. Social mobility remains elusive and constrained and is being further restrained as the new policies of the ConDem coalition are being developed, including retraction of the Equalities legislation 2010.

**Sex, Grades and Southern Theory: the Impact of Feminist Research on Higher Education Internationally**

**Professor Louise Morley, Centre for Higher Education and Equity Research (CHEER), University of Sussex, UK**

This paper brings together concepts of Southern Theory, research impact and global feminist research on sexual harassment in higher education. A central argument is that the quality of research is now evaluated for its policy, social, economic and community impact (Levin, 2004). There are also calls to develop an epistemology of the South, or Southern theory *i.e.* the inclusion of southern perspectives in knowledge production and development of social theory (Connell, 2007; De Sousa Santos and Meneses, 2009, Smith, 1999). However, it seems that global research findings on sexual harassment in higher education are being repeatedly ignored, with practices repeatedly enacted. A question is how to ensure that feminist research is globally inclusive and has impact. There are dangers that the rapidly developing austerity culture will coagulate with the ‘chilly climates’ that women have experienced in higher education for centuries.

Sexual harassment is a hidden norm of organisational life that frequently remains unchallenged- despite the global policy architecture of gender mainstreaming (Morley, 2010). It involves spatial and cognitive justice, with women having to self-minimise in order to avoid unwanted attention (the majority of studies report heterosexual male to female harassment). Hostile/toxic learning and working environments, or ‘chilly climates’ for women have been the subject of much research (*e.g.* Sandler *et al.,* 1996; NUS, 2010)*.* MacKinnon’s (1979: 116-18, 174) early theorisations argued that sexual harassment is sex discrimination because the act reinforces the social inequality of women to men. The labelling of familiar behaviour as sexual harassment in the 1970s was a landmark speech act which both named and declared opposition to these practices and discriminatory gender regimes. Since then, there have been numerous studies internationally *e.g*. Botswana (Letsie and Tlou, 1997), India (Bajpai, 1999), Hong Kong (Chan, 1999), Israel (Kaplan, 2006), Nigeria (Bakari and Leach, 2007; Nwadigwe, 2007), Ghana (Tete-Mensah, 1999), Kenya (Omale, 2002), Pakistan (Durrani, 2000), Lesotho (Mapetla and Matlosa, 1997), Zimbabwe (Shumba and Matina, 2002; Zindi, 1998), South Africa (Simelane, 2001), Sri Lanka (Jayasena, 2002), Southern Africa (Bennett *et al.* (2007), the UK (Bagilhole and Woodward, 1995), sub-Saharan Africa (Hallam, 1994), and in a global context including Sri Lanka, India, Tanzania, Zimbabwe, Kenya, South Africa, Nigeria, Uganda, (Mirsky, 2003). Manuh, Gariba and Budu (2007:138) also discuss ‘transactional sex’, or ‘sexually transmitted grades’, in their Ghanaian study. This when male lecturers offer female students high grades in return for sexual favours- a finding that was also apparent in Morley *et al’s* (2010) study of Ghana and Tanzania.

Sexual harassment can involve both actual and symbolic violence, but is often hidden, silenced and displaced. A theme running through all these studies was how sexual harassment is rarely formally reported by female students, for fear of victimisation, stigmatisation or lack of confidence in procedures. A further recurring theme is the impact on women’s academic engagement, health and well-being. Difficulties with disclosure and the ongoing existence of sexual harassment raise questions about how gender continues to be formed and reformed in the discursive, spatial and temporal contexts of higher education- internationally.

**Constructing research/ers in austere times: gender, research and inscriptions of value in contemporary UK higher education policy**

**Professor Carole Leathwood, Institute for Policy Studies in Education (IPSE), London Metropolitan University**

My intention in this paper is to explore the gender implications of current trends in UK research policy, with a particular focus on how ‘research’ and ‘researchers’ are constructed in this policy arena.

The context is of major cuts to public spending across all Government departments, including a 40% cut in higher education funding, although it is one in which the research budget appears to have emerged relatively unscathed. The Spending Review conducted by the Coalition Government includes a commitment to ‘ensuring the UK remains a world leader in science and research by continuing support for the highest value scientific research, maintaining the science budget in cash terms over the Spending Review period with resource spending of £4.6 billion a year’ (HM Treasury 2010, p. 51). A priority is to ‘establish a higher education, science and research framework that promotes world-class competitiveness in teaching and research’ (Department for Business Innovation and Skills 2010, p. 3). However, policy trends that include the prioritisation of research in the STEM subjects (science, technology, engineering and mathematics), the increasing emphasis on the economic utility of research, and further selectivity in research funding reflect the valorisation of some research and researchers over others.

A critical discourse analysis of key policy texts including government documents, ministerial statements and responses from others (such as university mission groups) in this policy arena is being conducted. Initial findings reveal the extent to which a discourse of ‘competition’, ‘selectivity’ and ‘excellence’ continues to dominate the field. Elements of what Reay (2001) has called ‘class action’ can be seen in the lobbying undertaken by elite universities to maintain their privilege, epitomised by the heading of a recent newspaper article: ‘*Cut student places not funding, says university chief: Protect research even if second rate colleges have to close...*’ (Vasagar 2010). Post-Spending Review decisions about the precise allocation of research funding have yet to be announced, but questions about what and whose research is protected are key. In relation to this, the critical analysis of policy texts will be complemented by an analysis of Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA) data on the staff composition of different universities, mission groups and disciplinary areas in terms of gender and ethnicity, and on RAE/REF data such as panel membership.

A particular focus of the paper will be on the ways in which symbolic systems of value (of individuals, institutions, subject areas, etc) inscribe and de/legitimise academic/researcher identities and research activities in these new times. As Skeggs (2004, p. 4) notes: ‘Discerning how positioning, movement and exclusion are generated through these systems of inscription, exchange and value is central to understanding how differences (and inequalities) are produced, lived and read.’ Drawing on literature that has explored the (gendered, classed and racialised) construction of academic/researcher identities (e.g. Henkel 1997; Reay 2000; Harley 2001; Maylor 2009) and the gendered academy (e.g. Leathwood and Read 2009), I will who the winners and losers are likely to be in the ever more competitive research culture that is emerging.

**The Academy, the inequity of affects: space for an ethics of austerity?**

**Professor Valerie Hey, Department of Education, University of Sussex**

METHODOLOGY This paper offers a commentary on the psycho-sociality of higher education.

This paper contributes to work developing an affective sociology of higher education (Hey, 2009) by taking the present realities and rhetorics of austerity and recession as its starting points. I try to work cultural sociology, feminism and a reading of the psycho-social into a template for investigating higher education’s division of emotion/al labour market.

Higher education has been seen, especially under New Labour (Leith Report, 2006), as pivotal to the economy, concerned with stimulating and accommodating individual social aspiration by ‘widening participation’ as a policy contribution to building social cohesion (Rammell, 2007). However, the Browne Review (2010) whilst agreeing with HE’s economic utility displaces communitarian claims. Instead, by advancing the case that those benefitting from their ‘investment’ should pay for it, the review relegates notions of the wider benefits of learning to the past. Here the society is not so much ‘big’ as invisible.

What does the switch from the optimistic agenda of growth to the pessimistic mood of decline effect in those working in higher education not least to their sense of autonomy, selfhood, solidarity, agency and professionalism? This paper offers a take on the likely consequential impact of having to ‘do more with less’. Which bodies and psyches bear the cost of so doing?

Whist the punitive threat and actual installation of ‘austerity’ has been dreaded and dreadful, recently Fintan O’Toole (BBC Radio 4, November 1st) has argued that we need to return to use the post-War connotation of ‘austerity’. He suggests that this will show austerity in a far more positive and redemptive light as a contribution to a discourse of social ethics based on the building of a new social order – after WW 2, one that recognised sacrifice and offered stakes in the society that survived – in education, social housing and health and welfare.

The current inscribing of ‘warfare on welfare’ sets an entirely different tenor – dividing the deserving from the undeserving in crudely familiar ways. Now ‘belt-tightening’ is framed as a public rebuke, signalling the ideological work it does to secure a collective punishment. This neat trick shifts the locus of blame from the bankers to the mortgaged.

My interest lies in asking how we ‘do austerity’ in the Academy not least how we may anticipate its signification in any new audit of our work. Who is ‘austere’? And what are the gender dimensions to this? The consequences of the economic-political realm on the institutional and on social actors, suggests a methodological attempt to tie macro level economic, social and policy regimes (such as neo-liberalism and privatisation) to the shaping of institutional idiolects and personal practices. I see the psycho-social – the emotions and desires associated with envy, anger and anxiety as deeply implicated in these relations and forces.

**Being a Union Activist in a Time of Austerity**

**Meg Maguire, King’s College London**

In all our Universities, the role of the Universities and Colleges Union (UCU) can be complex, complicated and sometimes contradictory. On the one hand, the role of the UCU ‘rep’ is to support and represent individual members (UCU, Resource Booklet, 2010). This involves supporting those with problems, isolating the key difficulties and helping to work towards effective solutions – all in a respectful and non-discriminatory manner. Just as important, the role also involves ‘the importance of making the personal collective’ (UCU Resource Booklet, 2010: 12). Recently, as we are all aware, in the wake of the current fiscal crisis and the ensuing cuts in different branches (universities), union activists are involved in building the campaigns and fight backs to this massive attack on Higher Education. The role of a union activist is multi-faceted (individual and collective) and can make many demands on members and activists who do this sort of work.

For woman who are active in the UCU, there can be a number of additional dilemmas. While the UCU pays serious attention to issues of representation and equity, trade unions in the UK have historically been led by men and women have been under-represented in union memberships (Healy and Kirton (2002). And while the UCU is led by Sally Hunt, and there is a national quota system to ensure that women are represented at every level, there is a need to explore more fully, what it is like (in a grounded manner) to be a women activist in the union, particularly at such a challenging time - politically, economically and socially (Collini, 2010). How do different cohorts of women manage the sometimes competing demands of being a trade union ‘rep’ and of doing their paid work?

This paper will draw on a small number of in-depth interviews with UCU women activists in order to start to chart their perceptions and experiences of trying to fulfil the role of a UCU ‘rep’ and work to ‘make the personal collective’ in these complex times. In a period where jobs are being cut, posts are being frozen and workloads are increasing, what is it like for ‘different’ women who ‘do’ union activism; for example younger/older women; part time and full time women; contract researchers and senior established women etc. (Kirton and Greene, 2002)? In particular, the intention in this necessarily speculative paper is to start to detail the ways in which (if at all), the new austerity culture is currently influencing and shaping these experiences.

**Fail Better: creating feminist heterotopias in dystopian times**

**Cath Lambert, University of Warwick**

*Beckett's cloistered characters may be bedridden, trapped in jars, up to their necks in sand, but their dogged perseverance, even in the face of utter desolation, to carry on speaking, to communicate with others, demonstrates an admirable tenacity.* (Power, 2006)

In the tragically predicable fallout following the UK Lib-Con Government’s Comprehensive Spending Review and Browne Review of Higher Education (2010), we face up to the putative destruction of the university as a public good, with a concomitant re/definition and re/valuation of teaching, learning and research in narrow economic terms. These seemingly inexorable processes are resulting in painful individual and collective (material, social, cultural, emotional) losses. Amongst these losses are the erosion of spaces of critique and celebration. Within higher education, these are the spaces in which much of the vital work around gender and sexuality is carried out, including the development of feminist theory and praxis through teaching and research, and the informal but critically sustaining day-to-day encounters over coffee.

In this paper I consider possible intellectual and pedagogical resources with which to situate and enact appropriate and necessary resistance. In so doing, I seek to articulate a re/defined and re/invigorated feminist critical pedagogy which is up to the task of both mapping and understanding some of these losses, and re/generating and sustaining alternative spaces of critique and celebration. The discussion utilises Foucault’s (1986) notion of ‘heterotopias’ or ‘counter-spaces’. Heterotopias are ‘real’ spaces (rather than utopias or places of fantasy) which ‘have the curious property of being in relation with all the other sites, but in such as way as to suspect, neutralise, or invert the set of relations that they happen to designate, mirror or reflect’ (Foucault, 1986:54). Developing the work of contemporary Queer Theorists who identify the subversive and productive values of ‘negative’ or ‘anti-social’ tropes or aspirations (see for example Halberstam, 2008; Edelman, 2004; Love, 2007), I explore possibilities for generating feminist heterotopias using the interconnected strategies of: *queering time and space*; *ruin*; *play*; *superficiality*, and; *failure.* As the austerity agenda in universities finds its unwelcome place within the existing hyper-performative landscape of smart targets, strategic visions and an ever inflated discourse of excellence, then words and practices which value failure, promote superficial encounters, or involve playful methodologies, are productively troubling. The paper highlights practical examples where fun, irreverence and excess are privileged within research and teaching encounters. Failure, rather than being configured as deficit, is recognised and celebrated as a meaningful, unavoidable outcome which should be taken on its own terms. As Samuel Beckett (1983:7) famously urged, ‘Ever Failed. No matter. Try again. Fail better’. The paper suggests that teaching and research in HE offer myriad possibilities for the generation and occupation of feminist heterotopias, enacting challenges and modifications to (hetero)normative space and time with pleasurable and productive effects.

I argue that such spaces offer critical resources for perseverance and tenacity so that we may be able to carry on speaking, teaching, discovering and celebrating together in generative ways, no matter how dystopian our context(s).

1. **SYMPOSIUM: Acting for Change: Challenging teachers through theatre, interventions and research**

Presenters:

**Anita Hussénius**, Centre for Gender Research, Uppsala University (anita.hussenius@gender.uu.se)

**The theatre group Hysterica**: Sara Ekholm Sastre, Therese Ståhl, Karolina Svensson, Klara Wenner Tångring, Elisabeth Wölger (contact person e-mail: klara.wenner.tangring@hotmail.com)

**Anna Danielsson**, Faculty of Education, University of Cambridge (atd32@cam.ac.uk)

**Kristina Andersson and Annica Gullberg**, University of Gävle ([kns@hig.se](mailto:kns@hig.se), agg@hig.se)

**Outline of the session**

The symposium integrates presentations from ongoing research projects with demonstrations of the different strategies used to explore and challenge pre-service and in-service teachers’ often stereotypical views of gender. In doing so, we will mix the common conference format of paper presentations with an innovative theatre group performance. The symposium focus on the intersection of gender, teacher education and science from different perspectives, engaging with questions such as:

* How are stereotypical views about gender and science challenged and changed when foregrounding knowledge on gender in teacher education or in professional development?
* How are in-service and pre-service teachers being empowered by (or resisting) knowledge about gender when foregrounded in education or in-service projects?
* How do primary school student teachers negotiate the multiple, possibly conflicting, subject positions that are actualized in their teaching of science?

The first presentation will give a short overview of our interventions and research projects, and also specifically describe the use of ‘cases’. These cases consist of real classroom situations that are used to elucidate teachers’ and student teachers’ understandings of gender, and to challenge these views. Next, the theatre group Hysterica will give a performance, dramatizing a number of such school situations used as ‘cases’. The third presentation concerns intersections of gender and the teaching and learning of science among primary school student teachers; how they engage in science, and how this engagement is related to who they see themselves as being and becoming as teachers. Finally, results from a longitudinal action research project lasting over more than five years, with a group of teachers mainly consisting of pre-school teachers, will be presented. In summary, the symposium will share and discuss different strategies used for increasing teachers’ gender awareness; the evaluation of such strategies; and the analysis of processes of change and identity constitution.

**Case with *cases* - a method for work of change**

**Anita Hussénius, Centre for Gender Research, Uppsala University**

Several studies have shown that teachers treat girls and boys differently (Andersson 2010; Eidevald 2009; Stadler 2007). The authors of these studies also report that the step from being aware of the importance of equity and gender issues to actively putting equity into practice may be a large one, and it may be difficult to see one’s own behaviour without some kind of help or support. Futher, science education researchers have established that teachers’ assumptions about and expectations on pupils are of importance for these pupils’ achievements in science subjects in school (Huang & Fraser 2009; Kahle & Meece 1994).

In an on-going project we want to illuminate in-service and student teachers’ as well as upper-secondary school students’ understandings of and attitudes toward gender. Moreover, we want to challenge preconceived conceptions about gender and science. In doing so, we introduce critical perspectives on gender as related to the nature of science, the culture of science, and a feminist critique of the sciences. This presentation will focus on the use of ‘cases’ consisting of real school situations to highlight different issues of gender and to increase the awareness of their importance (Andersson, Hussénius & Gustafsson, 2009). The activities with the ‘cases’ give the participants tools for reflection which may increase the possibility for articulating thoughts about gender and science through verbal and written forms. The data collection consists of video-recorded group discussions, spontaneously responses to ‘cases’ written without prior considerations and semi-structured interviews. The empirical material is a source for exploring the process of the participants’ on-going negotiations of gender, science, and science teaching. Another objective with the study is to examine whether the case-method is a practicable way to bring about change.

**Acting with cases**

**Performance by the Theatre group *Hysterica***

In this performance a couple of real school situations and classroom events will be dramatized. These are some examples of the ‘cases’ used to make teachers, student teachers, and students in upper secondary school aware of gender issues in the classroom and to challenge preconceived ideas. The dramatized cases are short and can be regarded as frozen situations with an open ending where the trend of events suddenly has been interrupted. Thus, these ‘cases’ become a starting point for reflections, discussions, and analysis of what is happening and why. Moreover, these discussions can move forward to suggestions on alternative ways of handling the situation. The ‘cases’ have been collected mainly from students, through group discussions and handed-in essay writings. A number of such cases have been video recorded for that purpose of use in teacher education.

**Caring for physics? Gender perspectives on primary school student teachers’ constitutions of identities as teachers of science**

**Anna Danielsson, University of Cambridge**

This project investigates intersections of gender and the teaching and learning of science among primary school student teachers; how they engage in science, and how this engagement is related to who they see themselves as being and becoming as teachers. In doing so it explores how primary school student teachers negotiate identities as teachers of science, a negotiation that is embedded in the nesting of a constellation of practices, including the teaching of young children, the teaching and learning of physics, and the doing of gender. Broadly speaking, previous research about primary teachers and science has mainly focused on examining the teachers’ subject knowledge and/or their pedagogical content knowledge, working from individualised perspectives of both learning and gender. In addition, is still relatively uncommon for studies on gender and science education to adopt a critical stance. Research exploring primary teaching from a gender perspective, on the other hand, has largely focused on non-subject specific issues (such as, teachers' understandings of caring) rarely taking disciplinary cultures into account. By exploring the student teachers’ complex identity negotiations the project aims to nuance how previous research often has explained primary teachers negative attitudes to (physical) science, and their low confidence in teaching it, solely in terms of a lack of subject knowledge and/or pedagogical content knowledge. In particular, the project focuses on how the student teachers handle the meeting between primary teaching, an occupation associated with women and femininity, and the discipline of physics, which is both dominated by men and associated with masculinity on a symbolical level.

In order to explore how primary school student teachers ‘do gender’ in their constitution of teacher identities the project works from dual, but integrated, theoretical starting points. Firstly, the project is founded in a feminist post-structural understanding of gender as performative, something ‘done’ in a social context (Davies and Gannon 2005; Hey 2006). Secondly, learning is, following situated learning theory, conceptualised as involving the constitution of an identity (Lave and Wenger 1991). The primary means of data collection is semi-structured interviews, conducted with Swedish primary school student teachers specialising in science and primary PGCE students at a highly rated Education department in the UK. This presentation will focus on students' classed and gendered interpretations of (school) science and how these interpretations by some male teachers are used as a means to fit into a primary teacher role and by some female teachers as a means to challenge what they perceive as a limiting, stereotypical primary teacher role.

**What is science in preschool and what do teachers have to know to empower children?**

**Kristina Andersson and Annica Gullberg**

**University of Gävle, Sweden**

Several studies within science education have shown that primary and preschool teachers have poor self-confidence in regard to science teaching (Fleer 2009; Garbett 2003; Appleton 2006). Since the many researchers have expressed a belief that the teachers’ inadequate scientific knowledge is the source of their poor self-confidence, their solution is to ensure that teachers acquire this knowledge (Kallery & Psillos 2001; Smith 1999).The question is, thus, whether it is reasonable to believe that preschool teachers’ inadequate self-confidence can really be remedied by acquiring more subject-specific knowledge. Instead of regarding the teachers as the problem, we suggest that the natural sciences *per se* and the view of the sciences have to be scrutinized. The natural sciences have had an indisputable authority in twentieth-century within the Western societies mainly because of the technological and medical conquests and these successes have also lead to the dominant view of scientific knowledge as value neutral and context independent (Keller & Longino 1996). However, during the last four decades this dominant view has been questioned by feminist scholars (*e.g.* Haraway 1991; Harding 1986; Keller 1996). They have pointed out that the natural sciences are culturally situated and their communities have developed a hierarchical and elitist organisation. The dominant view in Western society of how scientific knowledge is constituted and also narratives about scientific enterprise like the one about the male genius (Harding 1986), is also reproduced in school and creates problems thatfor example can result in the pre-school/primary teachers’ low self-confidence. Using the acquisition of the scientific concept knowledge as the measure of success is predominant in science education, something that is manifested in the extensive research around scientific concepts and conceptual change. This field have not problematised what knowledge counts as scientific and has therefore ignored the cultural aspects of learning (Brickhouse 2001; Scantlebury & Martin 2010).

In this presentation, we wish to discuss and problematise the purpose of science instruction in the preschools as well as which competences preschool teachers need if they are to carry out such scientific activities. We stress these issues by using a common science situation, that took place during an action research project in a Swedish preschool, and analyzing it from two different epistemological perspectives. We want to discuss how different ways of interpret learning and teaching science can bring about totally different consequences for both the view of children and the required teacher competences.

1. **Gender, power and sex: Educational challenges in the age of Internet pornography**

**Maree Crabbe and David Corlett, Brophy Family and Youth Services, Warrnambool, Australia**

Over the past decade or so, pornography has become both more mainstream and increasingly hardcore. For young people growing up in this era of ever-new and accessible technology it is almost impossible to avoid exposure to pornography. Consumption – particularly for young men – has become normalised. And the ways young people understand and experience gender and sex are being influenced by what they - or their partners or peers – observe in porn.

Sexual exploration is a normal and healthy part of adolescent development. For most adolescent boys and girls, sex and sexuality are topics of intrigue and fascination. And while it is not new for porn to play a role in young people’s sexual exploration, pornography is no longer just one of many voices in young people’s sexual world. Rather, in recent times porn has become a central mediator of young people’s sexual understandings and experiences.

Young people are living in an era of new sexual expectations, acceptance and practices. There is evidence that some young people are enacting porn scripts. Young men are developing a taste for and initiating sexual positions, practices and techniques they learn from porn. Young women are facing the prospect of staving them off, developing a taste for these things themselves, or agreeing to do sex that they do not particularly like. Porn is normalising sex acts that research indicates most women do not enjoy, and may find degrading, painful or violating.

As a result of growth in the loudness of the porn voice, young people today face unique challenges as they negotiate their sexual identities. In this world, young people need to be equipped to critique the images and the meanings they see in porn. Significantly, this is about teaching young people critical literacy. But it is not only about this. It is also about having frameworks with which to understand these images and their meanings. Young people need to be taught to think well about gender, power and consent.

This paper draws on work from the *Reality & Risk: Pornography,* *Young People & Sexuality* project based in Australia. *Reality & Risk* aims to critique the messages about sex and gender portrayed in mainstream pornography and to promote alternative ways of imagining sex and gender based on concepts of dignity, human rights, mutuality, consent and pleasure.

As well as engaging in public discourse – including through the production of a documentary film –*Reality & Risk* is developing education resources for use in mainstream Australian schools. The project’s education resources are being integrated into the state of Victoria’s respectful relationships and sexuality education programs, which explicitly teach students to think in terms of gender and power.

The project’s outcomes have been informed by academic and other literature as well as filmed interviews in Australia, the United States, and Hungary. The project has conducted interviews with professionals working with young people – including teachers, mental health practitioners, youth workers, police, educators, academics – pornography industry participants – including producers, directors, performers, agents – and young people.

The paper will discuss the findings of the Reality & Risk project and present a model for effective education to young people about pornography and its implications.

1. **The Lesbian Goodgirl: Disembodiment and the Denial of Desire**

**Elizabethe Payne, Queering Education Research Institute (QuERI) , Syracuse University**

In American culture, “good girls” are not supposed to experience sexual desire, nor are they to be sexual outside of heterosexual, monogamous marriage (Tolman, 1994). The demands placed upon the adolescent “good girl” for managing her sexuality include: no sexual agency; no ownership of body and desire; control and containment of body; and an internalized male gaze which is then focused on evaluation of self and of other young women and their sexuality. Young women lack a public language of embodiment and this limits their agency in thinking about and experiencing their own bodies as sites of desire (Hillier & Harrison, 1999). The sexual discourse available to young women relies on the moral framing of sex through hegemonic femininity. Hegemonic femininity is linked not only with “proper” performance of gender and a rightful claim to “normalcy” but to a moral discourse surrounding what it means to be a “good” person - so that gender “properly” performed equates to “goodness” and to properly perform gender, one must be straight, so “straightness” too becomes a requirement for “good girl” status. Conflict, then, potentially exists as young lesbian identifying women wrestle with an identity sexualized by the culture that denies them claim to a position as a moral subject and yet tells them they “should” be “good girls”.

Young lesbian women in this study balance these tensions by narrating their lesbian attractions through an absence of desire. Linda recounts her attraction to one of several young woman she described with the characteristic “innocent:”

“ I had this crush on this girl in high school... I mean I was just knocked to the ground because she was so beautiful… She had these big innocent eyes and she was just absolutely beautiful.”

Linda talks about her embodied attraction not in terms of sexual desire and agency, but in terms of awe and weakness. So powerful was this beauty that she sapped the strength of Linda’s body. Her body is not charged, not poised to act, but crumbles to the safety of the ground. The mark of innocence further reduces the implication of sexual charge. This embodied narrative of attraction becomes instead a platonic ode to innocent beauty. It is beauty and innocence that is so powerful that Linda is rendered weak - not that her attraction to a woman is so strong that it impacts her

body.

Lesbian as an identity is culturally defined not only by desire, but by deviant desire (Ussher and Mooney-Somers 2000). The young women in this study grappled with the identities of “lesbian” and of “good girl” and stretch the boundaries of these constructs, making strong, consistent claims to the “good girl” label - primarily through distancing their lesbian identities from sexual desire, denying the embodied experience of desire, and stressing their conformity to the heteronormative standards of goodgirldom.

The data presented in this paper are a subset of data from a larger critical life story

research study with adolescent lesbians, ages 18-21, in a major metropolitan area of Texas.

1. **Reality bites: Queer New Zealand secondary students’ views of teachers and teaching**

**Dr Steven S. Sexton, The University of Otago**

Reality bites: Queer New Zealand secondary students’ views of teachers and teaching

In 2005, New Zealand took explicit steps to improve the quality of life in schools for queer students (queer is used here to denote those who have self-identified as gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgendered, takataapui, fa’afafine and intersex; see NZ AIDS Foundation, Rainbow Youth, & OUT THERE, 2005) with the publication of *Safety in Our Schools – Ko te haumaru i o tatou kura*. This action kit drew on the Youth ’01 report (Le Brun, Robinson, Warren, & Watson, 2004) that highlighted approximately one in twelve New Zealand secondary students self-reported some variation other than exclusively heterosexual attraction. The Youth ’07 follow-up study (Rossen, Lucassen, Denny, & Robinson, 2009) reproduced similar results. More importantly for this study was the survey carried out in 2008 by the Otago University Student Association’s Queer Support which explored the climate of the 27 secondary schools in relation to their queer students (Painter & Kearney, 2009). Nearly two-thirds of the participating queer students reported bullying and teasing (Espelage & Swearer, 2008; Swearer, Turner, Givens, & Pollack, 2008) and one-third reporting discrimination or homophobia (Espelage, Aragon, Birkett, & Koenig, 2008) while only one in fifteen felt staff and students were supportive (Tharinger, 2008; Williams, Connolly, Pepler, & Craig, 2005).

This study seeks to explore how students in the Otago region of New Zealand perceive their teachers and what makes a good teacher for them. Specifically, how do queer students see teachers and their role within the school community? Focus group discussions (Allen, 2006) will be held with secondary school aged students (15-18 years old) who have self-identified as queer or questioning. These students are being recruited through a local organisation that provides confidential, safe, supportive and inclusive opportunities for queer and/or questioning youth to gather and be queer and/or questioning. It is through this organisation that these queer and/or questioning students have the right (Talburt & Rasmussen, 2010) to be gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgendered, takataapui, fa’afafine and intersex. This study seeks to provide students with the opportunity to express for themselves how they experience (Mayo, 2007) heteronormative secondary schooling and what is of concern to them about teachers and teaching . These discussions will utilise a Kaupapa Māori spiral discourse procedure and analysis (Bishop, 2003) to allow the participants to have the greater control and direction over the discussion process.

It is anticipated that the results from these discussions will add to the body of literature around masculinities in school (see for example, Mac an Ghaill, 1994; Martino & Berrell, 2003; Younger & Warrington, 2008 ) and queer theory (see for example, Dillabough, McLeod & Mills, 2008; Espelage & Swearer, 2008; Letts, 2006) by exploring these issues from a New Zealand Kaupapa Māori perspective.

1. **Homophobia in school: an analysis of male and female students’ reactions**

**Maria Eulina Pessoa de Carvalho, Institution/organisation: Universidade Federal da Paraíba, Brazil**

Co-authored paper with Fernando Cézar Bezerra de Andrade

Gender diversity has been included in the curriculum in recent years in Brazil. This paper analyses the experience of a project focusing on homophobia and homosexual and transgender rights in a public evening school for 8th and 9th grade students who are above regular age, during the first semester of 2010, in Joao Pessoa, Paraiba, Brazil. Homophobia affects students and teachers and the project problematized male students’ harassment and rejection of a gay teacher that occurred in the school, using film discussion and theater of the oppressed workshops. The analysis of students’ participation in and reactions to the activities showed that male students were uneasy, disengaged and mocked one another, indicating identity risk and resistance; in turn, female students were engaged, mostly sympathetic and unthreatened regarding their sex/gender identity, due to the link between homophobia and misogyny. In the theater of the oppressed scenes, focusing on family conflicts involving a gay son and brother, the father and one of the sisters rejected him, whereas the mother and another sister accepted him. In the interventions, there was more participation of female than male students, and no male student played the homosexual brother, conceived as a feminine character. Confusion between sex and gender, and a heteronormative/gender dichotomous conviction and stance (associated to biological/deterministic and religious notions) predominated among both male and female students, in spite of prior conceptual discussion, indicating cognitive and affective resistance and curricular shortcomings. Discussion of students’ corporal and discursive reactions draws on cognitive psychology and psychoanalysis and questions the school curriculum.

1. **Sexuality, gender and school curriculum: ways of subjectification**

**Ana Cristina Leal Moreira Lima,** **NUTES/UFRJ- Federal University of Rio de Janeiro- Brazil**

Ana Cristina L Moreira Lima, NUTES/UFRJ,

Vera Helena Ferraz de Siqueira, NUTES/UFRJ

This paper is part of a doctorate project which aims at studying gender and sexuality issues at the school environment from a post-structuralist and cultural studies perspective. These themes were officially inserted in the Brazilian school curriculum in 1996 and at this study, curriculum is perceived as a cultural policy aimed not only at transmitting objective knowledge, but also at constructing meanings and social and cultural values. Likewise, the appropriation of the curriculum is seen as entailed to ways of subjectification, which are understood as individual’s constitution practices, where the individual emerges as object of a specific relationship of knowledge and power.

Considering that individuals learn in several school situations and that these learnings reverberate in their identity constructions, we aim at investigating processes of subjectification related to the questions of gender and sexuality among teenagers in a public school in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil. The conditions through which the ways of subjectification are formed are subjected to the establishment of games of truth, of rules by which what an individual can say relates to the field of what is true or false (Castro, 2009). According to Foucault, subjectivity arises as something that involves a posture before life, being the expression of what, inside ourselves, relates to the world linked to time in a relationship with things, through history. In school science discourse, sex has worked as a nodal point in the disciplinarization of gender differences and sexuality. The difference of sex, although it seems just scientific, becomes central to the definition of gender and sexual behaviors (Macedo, 2007). The understanding of gender in this study implies sexual differences as inextricably linked to a discursive boundary, bringing in itself a normative categorization that belongs to a regulatory practice (Butler, 2001).

In this qualitative study, in order to investigate both discourses and practices that are built in the school quotidian, we performed observations of classes of different subjects, break time, meetings, billboards and school surroundings (students coming in and out of the school) as well as interview conductions with students, teachers, parents and staff and the development a documental analysis of the curriculum adopted. The methodological perspective is integrated by concepts such as discursive formation and utterances that shape the basis of Foucault’s discourse analysis and allow us to identify the constitution of both subjects and objects. To this author, not only do discourses represent reality, but they also built it and are related to power as they have always been produced in relationships related to power. This study promotes the identification and description of discursive and non-discursive practices related to questions of gender and sexuality present in the curriculum and school quotidian, as well as the ways through which these practices are being situationally subjectivated by students, mediated by questions of knowledge and power, in the context of a Brazilian public school.

1. **Gender and Sexuality: Subjectivation of Students at a Brazilian University**

**Vera Helena Ferraz de Siqueira , Universidade Federal do Rio de Janeiro**

At the university, besides acquiring formal knowledge, students are also subjectivated to what aspire in life, how to be men and women, and the way they should perform in the world. Identity formation occurs in the various sites of socialization, being the product of power relations exerted upon the bodies, movements and desires (Foucault, 2006). Such notion, by situating body and sexuality as cultural constructions, goes against the essentialist view of the differences, conceived around the biological/genital matrix up to the 60's, when feminist theorists created the notion of gender as analytical category in the sexual division of the world. Culturally and historically situated, we take gender - as well as other identities - as constructed in a relational way, being culturally presupposed rather than the expression of a prior reality (Butler, 2008).

Departing from such notions, an empirical study was conducted aimed at analyzing the construction of students’ identities as they occur during hazing, a traditional practice among Brazilian students, with focus on gender dimensions. The study took place at a prestigious Brazilian university; the data was collected from March to September 2010 through observation of hazing activities and 20 semi structured interviews with freshmen and veterans attending the Pharmacy and Medical school.

Sexuality occupies a central place in hazing and the students bodies become sites of power: the women’s are painted, dressed and exhibited in such ways for men to desire them; men are commanded to act as homosexuals through a series of performances that construct homophobic meanings. The relational feature of power (Foucault, 2006) was evidenced: both women and men command such activities in a military fashion and the freshmen anticipate the future time when they will assume the command of hazing; as one of them affirmed, “hazing is always a revenge”. A tension is present on the students’ discourses: although describing hazing as humiliating and unbearable, they do not react to its occurrence and defend it as an important socializing instance. As identities are defined through a process of difference, being critical of what one perceives as wrong, not participating of valued activities, correspond to subordinated acts which might result in discriminatory processes, as being excluded of some groups.

Constituted of apparently naive jokes, hazing are artifacts which “produce knowledge and social meanings” (Giroux, 2000). The production of norms is evidenced, such as ideals of proper and improper masculinity and femininity, establishing, as Butler puts it, “the ontological field in which bodies may be given legitimate expression” (Butler, 2008, p. xxv).

As one recognizes gender and other identities as social constructions, it is possible to envision the possibility of intentional efforts by the university for fostering other ways of being, other behaviors; it is important to problematize the constructed divide of masculinity and femininity, particularly on how ones selves are being constructed in such interactions and to recognize the right to other forms of sexual orientation (Stromquist, 2006). If these students had more opportunities to engage in such reflections, would ruptures be introduced into these practices?

1. **SYMPOSIUM: Science, Gender and Representation**

**Convenor: Heather Mendick, Goldsmiths, University of London**

There is a persistent pattern of under-representation of women working within many scientific fields within the UK. Another pattern of occupational segregation is the concentration of women in the less prestigious and rewarded science occupations (the so-called glass ceiling). This symposium brings together two studies, funded by the UK Resource Centre for Women in Science Engineering and Technology (SET), which sought to address these patterns of horizontal and vertical segregation by providing evidence on gender differences in the representations of people working in science within children’s television and online media. The two studies looked qualitatively and quantitatively at media texts and carried out empirical research with young people to see how they make sense of these representations and how we can understand their ‘influence’.

In contemporary, Western societies, young people are increasingly constructed as consumers of manufactured goods, public services and cultural products: “Consumer-media culture has taught [children] to produce identities, weave social bonds and display and sustain differences through consumption” (Kenway & Bullen 2001: 139-140). In line with this, research has shown the key influence of the media on young people’s subject and career choices, especially, but not only, in relationship to scientific fields (Archer & Francis 2006; Williams & Mendick 2008; Mendick *et al.* 2008a, 2008b; NEWI, 2005). What emerges strongly from this body of work is that young people now make subject and career choices which they feel fit with their identity. As such, the image they get of different fields and of those working in these fields from the media is of crucial importance.

Previous research has also identified a strong relationship between masculinity and science within popular culture (and society more broadly). Women in SET are rarely central to the plot of film and television dramas. When they are visible in factual and fictional narratives, their status as a scientist is often shown as conflicting with a traditional feminine identity. For example, much greater emphasis is placed upon their appearance than for men . Adopting a traditional femininity is often presented as threatening their scientific credibility, while taking on the identity of the ‘mad’ or ‘geeky’ (male) scientist is often seen as unsuitable for a woman (Flicker 2003; Haran *et al*. 2008; Kitzinger *et al*. 2008a, 2008b).

This symposium will be made up of two presentations (outlined below), a response and a wider discussion. The response will come from, Gill Kirkup, an expert in the field. Her contribution will contextualise the two research studies, draw connections between them and lead into an extended discussion about the issues arising from them and their implications.

Overall we hope to address the following questions:

* How are media representations of people engaging in scientific activities gendered?
* How are these representations ‘read’ by young people?

**Investigating and creating (gendered) STEM identities for children and young people through TV**

**Elizabeth Whitelegg, Science Faculty, The Open University, Jennifer Carr, Maths, Computing and Technology Faculty, Richard Holliman, Science Faculty**

This paper will discuss the Invisible Witnesses project (Carr *et al.* 2009) that investigated children and young people’s (CYP) understanding and interpretation of representations of STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics) on UK television from a gender perspective, and the effects these representations might have.[[2]](#footnote-3) In this paper we argue that a focus on television as an out-of-school setting for informal learning about STEM and those who are involved in it is an important and necessary contribution to the efforts to increase the participation of all students, but especially girls, in STEM within school and beyond.

The first phase of the project, which drew on both quantitative and qualitative methods, involved an investigation of the continuing portrayal of established stereotypes and the possible emergence of new representations of STEM on UK children’s television programmes (Whitelegg *et. al.* 2008). A key premise that has underpinned the project, is that children and young people are not simply passive receivers or consumers of media messages, but active viewers, interpreters and, potentially, producers of media representations. Indeed, we have argued that this process of interpretation plays an important role in the ways in which CYP actively construct their sense of self-concept and their identities. As such, a key aim of this project has been to move away from research methods that focus on the ways in which adult researchers interpret representations of STEM to engage with the insights offered through children’s and young people’s media literacy skills.

Media literacy has been defined as “the ability to access, understand and *create* communications in a variety of contexts” (Ofcom 2004: 2, our emphasis). Our emphasis on the creative aspect of media literacy skills reflects a concern that whilst a good deal of the research carried out in this area has explored how people access and understand media content, rather less attention has been paid to researching people’s ability to play an active part in creating content and the purpose this might play in their lives (Livingstone 2004).

In this paper we will discuss the activities carried out with 59 CYP aged 7 to 15 years (35 girls and 24 boys) that were designed to support them in analysing, for themselves, short extracts from television programmes in order to expose the images that these CYP bring about STEM and STEM practitioners and to engage with the ‘creative’ element of their media literacy skills by planning STEM-related television series. We will discuss how these CYP drew on their sophisticated media literacy skills to demonstrate not only their understanding of stereotypical representations of STEM and the roles that these stereotypes play, but their ability to conceptualise the notion of ‘an audience’ and suggest how alternative representations might be constructed and displayed in a way that the audience would find engaging. As such, we feel that this research has important messages both for TV professionals who are developing STEM-related TV programmes and for researchers and educators seeking to gain a better understanding of the role that these representations might play in shaping children’s and young people’s engagement with STEM.

**Saints, Wives and Babes: a study of online representations of women scientist**

**Heather Mendick, Goldsmiths, University of London, Marie-Pierre Moreau, University of Bedfordshire**

In this paper we will outline the research study: *Monitoring the presence and representation of women in SET occupations in UK based online media*. In this study, we compared the online representations of women and men engaging in science, engineering and technology (SET) by analysing samples of the content of 16 diverse websites, including some specialist science websites (for example, The Science Museum and the Bad Science blog) and some generalist ones (for example, the BBC and Wikipedia). We also carried out six individual interviews with web authors from these sites and six group interviews: four with 16-19-year-old school students and two with university students. The interviews explored young people’s attitudes to science, online media and gender and asked them to respond to some specific examples of online texts. This paper will draw on the textual analysis of SET websites and on the group interview material.

The monitoring of online representations of men and women in SET showed that this content was numerically dominated by men. In this paper, we will focus on the findings about the women who were present in the sample. They were predominantly White, middle-class, able-bodied and heterosexual. SET women were subject to muting of their ‘voices’. This included instances where women were pictured but remained anonymous and instances where they were used, mainly as science journalists, to ventriloquise other’s people scientific work. They were also subject to clustering in specific SET fields and website sections, particularly those about ‘feminine’ subjects or specifically about women. The relative expansiveness of web space compared with ‘traditional media’ allows this online ‘female’ presence that positively links women with SET. However, it also contributes to their construction as *women* in SET and thus to their continued marginalisation. Similarly SET women were associated with ‘feminine’ attributes and activities, notably as caring, demonstrating empathy with children and animals and as close to nature rather than to the physical world which is associated with masculinity. They were peripheral to the main story and subordinated as students, young scientists, relatives of a male scientist and/or less likely than men to take an active role, such as conducting an experiment. Some facets of this are specific to online media. For example, we found less hyperlinking of women’s than men’s names. SET women were discussed in terms of appearance, personality, sexuality and personal circumstances more often than men, in ways that detracted from their scientific contributions, that positioned them in the private domestic sphere, and associated them, more often than men, with the new category of ‘bad science’. In particular, the extent of the sexualisation of women in SET online was greater than that found in similar studies conducted in ‘traditional media’ and was linked to the prominence of user-generated content online.

However, drawing on the group interviews we conducted with young people, we will show that web users produce diverse ‘readings’ of websites. For example, while some participants produced critical and gender aware accounts of online SET texts, others generated examples of sexism arising from ‘laddish’ behaviours, paralleling the gender regimes of some websites. The identification among participants of discourses of resistance *and* of endorsement of the gender regimes of these websites suggest that there is no simple, causal relationship between texts and their readings.

1. **Frontiers of the Male Teacher Debate in the United States**

**Marcus B. Weaver-Hightower, University of North Dakota**

**Description of the Paper:**

Around the world, particularly in Anglophone countries, there is growing concern over a paucity of male teachers in primary and secondary schools (e.g., [Drudy, Martin, Woods, & O'Flynn, 2005](#_ENREF_2); [Martino, 2009](#_ENREF_9); [Martino & Kehler, 2006](#_ENREF_10); [Mills, Martino, & Lingard, 2004](#_ENREF_11); [Thornton & Bricheno, 2006](#_ENREF_15)). Such concern is driven, in part, by similar concerns for the academic achievement and social indicators of boys—a “boy turn” ([Weaver-Hightower, 2003](#_ENREF_16)) in educational research and practice. Male teachers are thought to be potential role models, one “cure” for the problems of boys.

This paper focuses on the male teacher discourses in the United States. Because the US policy ecology is “diffuse, conservative, structurally and legally constrained, and localized” ([Weaver-Hightower, 2008a, p. 160](#_ENREF_17)), no explicit, *de jure* federal policy has been created on boys’ education or on male teachers. Instead, the US Department of Education has used whatever small means it can to encourage more males to become teachers. Their main initiative is Teach.gov (http://teach.gov), a multimedia website that encourages—nominally—*all* visitors to become teachers, answers questions about the process of training to become a teacher, and provides a forum for posting open teaching jobs. Yet examination of the images and text on the site suggest that the main audience is really males, particularly males of color. Using this website and interviews with the Secretary of Education, this proposed paper analyzes these discourses of male teachers and boys’ education that pervade this initiative and assess the chances that it will be successful in attracting more males to teaching.

**Methodology:**

This paper’s analysis is based on methods of critical discourse analysis ([Fairclough, 2003](#_ENREF_3); [Gee, 2005](#_ENREF_4)) and critical policy analysis ([Bensimon & Marshall, 2003](#_ENREF_1); [Marshall, 2000](#_ENREF_8); [Taylor, Rizvi, Lingard, & Henry, 1997](#_ENREF_14)). These methods were applied to a data set consisting of published interviews with Arne Duncan, US Secretary of Education; text and multimedia on the US Department of Education’s Teach.gov website; and various policy documents, both in the United States and in other countries.

**Conclusions:**

Based on analysis of the federal initiatives and interviews with Secretary of Education Arne Duncan, I conclude that the US Department of Education is actively promoting the increase of male teachers (particularly males of color) in public schools. Similar to other programs to increase the numbers of males in other countries (e.g., [Mills, et al., 2004](#_ENREF_11); [Weaver-Hightower, 2008b](#_ENREF_18)), however, these US initiatives have little chance of making positive impact on teacher demographics and have dangerous implications for the reification of particular discourses of gender. They lack an understanding of the complex reasons men are less likely to take up teaching ([King, 1998](#_ENREF_5), [2000](#_ENREF_6), [2009](#_ENREF_7); [Sargent, 2001](#_ENREF_13)), they reiterate discourses of racialized masculinities that ignore structural difficulties in urban and rural schooling ([Rezai-Rashti & Martino, 2010](#_ENREF_12)), and they fail to forward policy levers that might actually entice more men or improve their working conditions.

1. **Technodesire as heterodesire: Exploring Nerd Sexuality and Corporeality in Higher Technology Education**

**Andreas Ottemo, Department of Education and Special Education, University of Gothenburg**

At least since the early 1980’s, parties engaged in science, technology and engineering education have been trying to encourage more women into higher technology education (Abbiss 2008; Blickenstaff 2005; Henwood & Miller 2001; Nyström 2007; Phipps 2008). In connection to such efforts, as well as in academic research trying to understand gender patterns in technology, issues of masculine identities are often raised (*e.g.* Wajcman 1991). Especially, it is often argued that “the Nerd” works as a masculine gatekeeper keeping women out of technology education (*e.g.*, Eglash 2002; Gansmo, Lagesen, & Sørensen 2003; Margolis & Fisher 2002; Tonso 2007). I agree, but would argue that how this gatekeeping work is actually performed, or rather, how it is that the Nerd comes to stand out as a masculine stereotype, is a theme often left undertheorized. More specifically, I argue that an analysis of “the Nerd” should include a focus on sexuality. As has been noticed by several researchers lately, studies on the gender and technology field often fail to acknowledge the central role played by heterosexuality in the co-production of gender and technology (see, *e.g.*, Henwood & Miller 2001; Landström 2006; Mellström 2004; Stepulevage 2001). I find this problematic and in my analysis, drawing on feminist technoscience research and using Judith Butler’s (1990) concept of the heterosexual matrix, I wish to show how a focus on heterosexuality can help deepen our understanding of how “the Nerd” comes to appear a masculine figure. The paper is based on ethnographic observations and interviews with students in a Swedish technical university, analyses of popular culture texts and a recent press debate on engineering education recruitment in the Swedish trade journal *Ny Teknik*. I am adopting a discourse theoretical approach and in line with such an approach I analyse how the Nerd position is discursively produced in the material that I study. In the paper I show how “the Nerd” takes part in the co-production of gender and technology and how this co-production can be seen as partly constituted by “the Nerd” embodying heterosexualized bonds between masculinity and technology. By focusing primarily on the linking of masculinity and technology, I also seek to avoid some of the problems associated with repeatedly focusing on “girls and technology” pointed to by Wendy Faulkner (2001, *cf*. also Öhrn 2002:42). As argued in the text a focus on norms that link masculinity to technology also makes it easier to start asking questions of why it is that, at least in the West, also fewer men seem to be interested in going into higher technology education, and what role representations of “the Nerd” and similar figures might play in such a development.

1. **The place of adult education in the lives of thirty-something women**

**Flora Macleod, College of Social Science and International Studies, University of Exeter**

This paper examines the part played by gender in understanding the complexities of learning in the life course by studying the ways in which decisions taken by women and the timing of events in their lives impinge on the likelihood of their participation in adult education. Two longitudinal datasets are utilised in an iterative relationship with one another: The British Household Panel Survey (1991-2005) and semi-structured interviews conducted over a four year period as part of the Learning Lives Project. The analytic sample drawn from the BHPS consists of 345 female original sample members who were aged 20-25 in 1991 and 33-39 in 2005 with birth dates ranging from 1966 to 1971. For this analysis the life course is conceptualised as interdependent trajectories of social roles over time. The simultaneous interplay among social roles is investigated using latent class models estimating the probability of participation in formal adult education in relation to other social roles at four time points. Three distinctive paths are revealed and, whilst the relationship between early and later patterns is complex, some paths seem more conducive to the probability of being a participant in adult education. The interview data are used to describe and elucidate the experiences of four women from widely divergent cultural backgrounds as they move into and through their thirties. All have experienced transitions into and out of work and all have participated in formal learning. Yet they each have their own orientations towards work and the place of formal learning in their lives. Through the stories of these four women, told over time, we see what their everyday lives are really like making it possible to chart what they actually think and do and how this is changing. We see how their differing histories and domestic and material circumstances have led to differing responses and outcomes. We gain insights into what constrains and facilitates their access to different kinds of resources, activities, experiences, and forms of knowledge and with what consequences for their life chances and access to formal learning opportunities.

By using two datasets it has been possible to focus on the big picture of lives over extended periods of time whilst simultaneously focusing on how individuals experience events/roles/turning points/transitions. We see how women make choices, how their lives are interrupted and how the intersection of work and family life is experienced differently by women. The findings show just how critical gender is to understanding patterns of participation in adult education and training and caution against buying into an ideology of individualism that has informed much lifelong learning policymaking in recent years.

1. **Gendered factors influencing school-to-work transitions for immigrants and Swedes**

**Caroline Berggren and Thomas Johansson,** **Department of Education, University of Gothenburg**

Extensive research on educational participation and on labour market adaptation of immigrants from different regions, as well as on gender differences, has shown that children of immigrants are disadvantaged, particularly those who are visible (coloured) immigrants (e.g. OECD, 2010). Concerning gender, men with foreign background seems to have greater difficulties both in the educational system and on the labour market compared to women (SOU, 2005). The difficulties for children of immigrants remain also when differences in social class is taken into account (OECD, 2010). Education is in some studies perceived as a neutralising discrimination (OECD, 2010). However, people with foreign background, who have got a Swedish higher education degree, still face considerable difficulties in obtaining a matching job (Berggren, in press; SOU, 2005). Having responsibility for minors negatively biases job seekers on the labour market, particularly women (Ridgeway & Correll, 2004). How the merged effects of ethnicity, gender and parenthood interact on school-to-work transitions remains to be studied. This paper analyses how people with a Swedish education are able to, or allowed to participate on the labour market. The study is expected to describe labour market situation for young adults with particular focus on: 1) white immigrants and (visible) coloured immigrants in relation to native Swedes; 2) men and women; and 3) influence of parental responsibilities on job opportunities for both natives and those with foreign background. Several factors that have explained some of the group differences in other studies will be kept under control, thus making it possible to more accurately determine which groups in society that are most exposed to discrimination. Theoretically, we will apply an intersectional perspective, focusing on how different factors/variables interact and contribute to the construction of a variety of ethnic and social hierarchies (cf. Johansson & Hammarén, forthcoming; Johansson & Olofsson, forthcoming).

This is a large scale study including all individuals born in 1974 – 1976 who lived in Sweden the year they were 16 years old. This means, that almost all of them have Swedish credentials either from upper secondary school or from higher education. Their labour market position in 2006; that is, when they were 30-32 years old will be analysed. The abundant information from Swedish register data, available at an individual level makes it possible to keep several factors under control and to link information between register; such as, educational credentials to labour market information. Moreover, accessibility to parents’ education and labour market position makes it possible to control for family resources (cultural and social capital). Knowledge about national origin and family responsibility makes the prerequisites for carrying through this study.

1. **Gender differences in final year undergraduates’ salary expectations in China: the role of gender roles and sex discrimination in the labour market**

**Jian Zhu, ­­­­­­­­­­­­­The Moray House School of Education, The University of Edinburgh**

Gender differences in final year undergraduates’ salary expectations in China: the role of gender roles and sex discrimination in the labour market

With the transformation of China’s socioeconomic situations and the expansion of higher education, gender equality has been achieved to a substantial extent (China Education Yearbook, 2009). However, the gender equality has not been transferred to the Chinese graduate labour market. One example is the gender pay gap in China. For instance, a large online survey shows that in 2008 male university graduates got a 2,249 RMB monthly salary six months after their graduation, the corresponding number for their female peers was 1,988 (Mycos, 2008).

This study attempts to address the gender gap in final year undergraduates’ salary expectations in China. It firstly explores what are the salary expectations of male final year undergraduates and those of their female counterparts, it then compares the salary expectations of male final year undergraduates with those of their female peers and identifies whether or not there are gender differences in the salary expectations. If so, it also attempts to work out what factors have actually contributed to the gender differences in the salary expectations.

The study employs the conceptual framework-‘choice and constraint’ (Crompton and Harris, 1998), which means that final year undergraduates are able to make their own choices towards salary expectations; however, their choices are limited by a number of constraints (England, 1992; Crompton and Harris, 1998 and 1999; McRae, 2003).

According to the research questions and conceptual framework, the study uses a mixed method sequential explanatory design. On-site self-administration questionnaire survey and the follow-up semi-structured interview have been employed to collect the research data in a university in Central China. It finally has 427 valid questionnaires and 26 follow-up interviews.

Results show that overall, male final year undergraduates had higher salary expectation than their female counterparts, and the salary expectations between male final year undergraduates and their female peers were statistically significant different. Further explorations reveal that gender roles (men being a main breadwinner and women a main homemaker) and the perceived sex discrimination in China’s labour market might result in the gender differences in final year undergraduates’ salary expectations. This study also discusses that why university students-a well educated group-still have the traditional gender roles and why they encounter sex discrimination in China’ labour market despite drastic changes have taken place in China in the past few decades.

1. **The Relationship between Gender and Writing Performance Anxiety among Iranian EFL Learners: A Case of Intermediate Students**

**Bahman Gorjian, TEFL Dept., Islamic Azad University- Abadan Branch**

Feeling of anxiety is commonly expressed by foreign language learners in learning to write in a foreign language. Many students exhibit strong anxiety about writing which often interferes with their ability to learn how to write. Studies have shown that students' writing performance is related to anxiety. This study seeks to find how anxiety is related to the gender as well as level of the students. A total of 120 students, studying at Azad University of Dezful, participated in study. They were selected randomly and divided into four groups of 30 students according to their gender and their level of proficiency. The subjects were administered two scales measuring their writing anxiety and writing achievement. After collecting data they were analyzed by Pearson Product-Moment Coefficient Correlation, Independent t-test, and two-way ANOVA. The findings showed that generally the males performed better than the females in their writing achievement test. They also showed lower level of anxiety than females. In terms of different levels of the students, high level achievers experienced less anxiety than low ones. It was concluded that there is a negative relationship between the language proficiency level of the learners and their writing performance anxiety.

1. **The Significance of Mothers in Early Literacy: Working-Class Girls’ Literacies and Emotional Capital in Two U.S. Studies**

**Stephanie Jones, The University of Georgia, United States**

This paper draws from two multi-year ethnographic studies illustrating the significance of mothers to the literacies and identities of young working-class girls. Feminist and post-structural theories of language, literacy, and the construction of classed and gendered selves (e.g. Davies, 2003; Hicks, 2002; Jones, 2006; Reay, 1998; Skeggs, 1997) grounded the two studies and I use Reay’s theorizing of emotional capital (e.g. 2004) for this paper.

Reay (2004) theorizes emotional capital and confronts what she calls a “feminist conundrum” regarding the investment of mothers’ emotional capital with their children for purposes of future happiness or present well-being. Reay found that working-class mothers invested emotional capital in their children to focus on their present emotional safety and well-being because suspending present emotional well-being for future academic or economic success was too risky. Middle-class mothers, however, were more likely to invest their emotional capital in their children’s *future* freedoms and happiness in ways that resulted in the loss of emotional well-being in the *present* because they believed such sacrifices were necessary early in life to ensure the accumulation of the capitals needed for future success.

Reay’s work around emotional capital and the pain of upward mobility inspires my theorizing of young working-class and poor girls’ literacy practices focused on their mothers. The sheer number of times that “mom” was written by the girls in their free writing was astonishing including stories about their mothers, hypothetical letters written to their mothers, poetry written about their mothers, fictional narratives created about their mothers, and random “I love mom” signs written on loose paper and throughout their notebooks. The girls’ oral narratives frequently focused on their mothers as well, including insightful conversations about their mothers’ positioning in the world and their own futures they hoped for.

In this paper I argue that girls’ literacy practices around their mothers accomplished three things:

1. The maintenance and strengthening of emotional connections

to their mothers even as they took risks for academic achievement in an institution that had not been kind to nor productive for their mothers;

1. The construction of an emotional defense shield that asserted protection for the girls’ mothers from harsh judgments by middle-class school authorities;
2. The presentation of their mothers as powerful women who they would like to be like in many, if not all, ways.

In other words, the very young working-class and poor girls in these studies were investing a tremendous amount of emotional capital in their relationships with their mothers as well as the protection and defense of their mothers. In doing so through repeated written and oral narratives, the girls engaged their literacy practices to write and speak themselves into emotional and moral commitments to classed and gendered reproduction. Since U.S. schools presume the function of schooling for students “of poverty” is upward class mobility, educators and researchers must tend more closely to emotional capital and the significance of mothers for working-class and poor girls’ literacies and future trajectories.

1. **SYMPOSIUM: Gender in the professional lives of teachers and educational leaders: masculinity and care**

**Jo Warin, Lancaster University**

The GEA conference focus on ‘past, present and future’, with its underlying intention to take stock of the field of gender and education, presents a very appropriate niche for the ongoing conversation that has been commenced between a group of Swedish and English gender researchers (Ashbridge, Dempster, Evans, Gannerud, Grahn, Hellman, Houghton, Ronnerman, Warin and Wernersson). With funding from the Swedish Research council this network was formed in 2009 with a shared intention to research influences on the obdurate pattern of gender imbalances in teaching and related roles. We recognize that, in Western countries, the majority of female teachers in preschool and primary school, are matched by the decreasing number of women in secondary and tertiary school and among school leaders. Our starting point, for a closer look at this pattern, is with the professional lives of preschool and primary school staff together with related educational roles such as sports coaches. Such roles are strongly associated with the mixed purposes and practices of teaching and care.

In order to ‘trouble’ this pattern as a necessary basis for broader gender transformation we might choose to look to the growing literature concerning processes of gender subjectivity and the shaping of identity for the men who enter this professional field However, we are mindful of the question posed by Dillabough et al (2008) in relation to “all this attention to the construction of subjectivity” (p. 305). They ask where the field of gender and education research might move next in order to map out larger contexts and relate to ‘new times’. One answer is to point to the value of international collaborative comparative research in gender and education which has the potential to enable researchers to begin to recognise the bigger picture surrounding the purposes and practices of professional masculinities and femininities.

The membership of our network places us in a good position to expand our horizons internationally and also to adopt a long historical view, for example re-examining affirmative action initiatives of the 1970s in the light of current debates, reflecting on the field of gender and education past, present and future. Our conversations, particularly about similarities in the conditions of teachers’ work in Sweden and in the UK, have helped us to recognise the influence of global neoliberal ideologies and the marketization of education as persisting barriers to gender transformation. We raise questions about tensions between discourses of competition/performance and discourses of social care. We have found that these contradictions are embedded in the pedagogic discourses of primary school and early years’ teachers and trainees, and sports coaches. The concept of ‘educare’ provides a lens through which to view current and ongoing right wing curriculum reforms, in both countries, revealing the limitations of narrowly defined academic achievements at the expense of more multifaceted approaches to the purposes of education. The papers presented here recognize the influence of deep rooted andocentric perspectives on the purposes of education in which the goals of academic performance and competition dominate.

**Male Early Years and Primary Initial Teacher Education (ITE) students; an endangered species?**

**Owain Evans and Jan Ashbridge, University of Cumbria**

As primary and early years initial teacher educators we are committed to ensuring that we support the development of both male and female student teachers as we believe that both parties are necessary agents within our education system. We recognise that a majority of our trainees are female due to the current cultural value placed on what is traditionally seen as a caring vocation and to the widespread national anxiety surrounding men with non-family young children. There is anecdotal and limited evidence that appears to show that a higher percentage of male trainees that enter ITE do drop out compared to the number of their female peers doing so (Thornton and Bricheno, 2006) .

Our study, based in the University of Cumbria, investigates the effectiveness of the Peer Assisted Study Scheme (PASS) as a tool for improving retention rates with a particular issue being the perceived asymmetric drop-out ratesof male ITE students. We use the PASS system to train groups of students to mentor and support students in the year below, usually second year supporting the first year. This scheme has been trialled for the last three years with two cohorts of students and appears to have had a positive impact on the overall retention rates across the cohorts. In the past no particular focus had been placed on male students, however, this year we are rolling out the PASS scheme across the whole of the first year on two Early Years and Primary programmes. This larger sample enables us to explore a broader range of professional programmes and thus have access to data which includes a greater number of male trainees, in particular a first year primary cohort that currently includes over thirty percent males. This extended PASS system is offered to all students and certain PASS leaders are recruited and briefed to support the development of those with particular learning needs, specific family backgrounds and routes to higher education.

Do male students manifest a particular range of needs? An aspect of the overall investigation is the collation and identification of the perceptions of the PASS leaders as to the needs and attitudes of the first year students that they mentor. We intend to investigate how male students perceive themselves and their needs, in particular in terms of their role as a teacher in an early years and primary school environment. How realistic are their expectations and preconceptions? Do they perceive that they have different needs from their female peers and, if so, why? Does their conception and understanding of the role of the teacher change once they have begun their training, in particular, after their initial experience in school? Does their initial experience change the way they relate to their programme? How far does the PASS scheme influence their approaches and expectations? Does the employment of the PASS scheme encourage the male ITE students to persist with their studies and their original intention to become an Early Years or Primary teacher? Our paper provides answers to these questions.

**Aspects of gender in the experiences of male teachers and coaches: Competiveness and social relations in child football.**

**Eva Gannerud, Gothenburg University**

In this paper, I present a theoretical background and some preliminary results from a new project, aiming at comparing aspects of gender in the experiences of teachers/leaders for young children in two different contexts; primary school and sport, especially team sports such as football. The project is based on interviews and focuses on how male teachers/leaders perceive their task, how they experience their relations to children, parents and colleagues in the school/sports context as well as how the teaching profession/coaching role is constructed and valued in wider society in relation to the gender order. Many studies with gender and feminist perspectives have pointed out that teaching, teachers and the teaching professions in school are historically and culturally imbued with multiple discourses of gender. Many contradictive and conflicting discourses and aspects related to gender are described in research about teachers and teaching. Teaching, especially teaching young children has been associated with femininity, motherhood and caring (Sabbe & Aelterman, 2007). Women teachers’ experiences and working conditions have since long been described as shaped by gendered social expectations and stereotyped images of women (e.g. Acker, 1995; Gannerud, 2003; Tambouko, 2003). Male teachers are also burdened with gender discourses that define them in certain ways and determine their roles, which gives rise to tensions and contradictions in their professional self-understanding (e.g. Warin, 2006; Francis, 2008; Hjalmarsson, 2009). In many countries there is a concern about the ‘feminization’ of teaching, meaning that the proportion of women teachers shows a tendency to increase. There is little empirical evidence, that the gender of the teacher is of any great importance in relation to pupil’s achievement, wellbeing or attitudes ( Lahelma, 2000; Francis et al, 2008). The teaching professions, especially those teaching young children, are mostly predominated by women. During the last decades in Sweden, another field has grown where there are thousands of men engaged in teaching young children, sometimes as an occupation, but far more often as a voluntary task, that is in sports, especially in football. In Sweden, sports education is not integrated in the school system as in many other countries, but is mostly organised by clubs, but economically supported by the state and the communites. About 50% of boys and about 40% of girls aged 7-12 are enrolled in fotboll schools in their leisure time. Sport is a context that is highly gendered, and has even been pointed out as the most powerful one in reproducing gender order and gender beliefs (i.e. Messner, 2009; Eliasson, 2009; Larsson, 2009). The project as a whole focuses on a comparison of how male primary school teachers and men coaching 8-11 year old boys in football clubs perceive their tasks and how they experience their relations to children, parents and colleagues. In this paper, I focus on how those male football leaders/coaches discuss the relations, or perhaps dilemmas, between discourses of football as an arena of competitiveness and discourses of the sport as an arena for development of social understandings and skills.

**Constructions of gender in relation to social and performance orientation in sport: Analysis of textbooks used in sport coaching education programs**

**Karin Grahn**, **Gothenburg University**

In this paper I will present how ideas about girls and boys are presented in textbooks used to educate coaches in six different sports. I will concentrate on the relations between a social orientation in sport and a performance orientation and how these discourses construct femininity and masculinity through instructions to the coaches concerning what they need to consider when coaching girls and boys.

In Sweden youth sport activities are arranged for leisure time by different sport clubs. The schools do not usually organize sports outside of the scheduled physical education classes. Instead sport activities are organised by sports clubs, which are connected to the specialised sports federations belonging to the Swedish Sport Confederation. The specialised sport federations organise coaching education programmes and produce textbooks for these programmes. The textbooks describe how to coach from different perspectives such as methodology, physiology, and pedagogy. When coaches attend coaching education programmes they read these text books which not only describes how sport should be performed, but also create ideas about what girls and boys "are" and how they should be trained. One such idea is that girls are socially oriented in their sporting activities and thus require a socially-oriented leadership.

The paper is based on my PhD-thesis (Grahn, 2008). The study draws upon gender theory and discourse analysis of textbooks used in six different sports (football, floor ball, handball, track and field, gymnastics and swimming). In this paper I will present results from a selected part of the textbooks which concern adolescent girls and boys and how they are described in relation to social aspects and performance orientation in sports. Of special interest is how ideas of these girls and boys are constructed by instructions to the coaches.

In the analyzed textbooks femininities are constructed in relation to both a performance discourse and a social discourse, and they are portrayed as both performance oriented and socially oriented. But the over all idea of girls is that they are in need of having specific social aspects taken into consideration while doing sports, at the same time boys are less likely to be described in the same ways. Boys and girls are often portrayed as oppositional or different from each other. The coach (the intended reader of the textbooks) is important in how femininity is created in the textbooks. Ideas about girls are formed by stating facts about how girls “are” but also by instructing the coach how to relate to a girl. In the descriptions of girls, a rather problematic girl is constructed. In response to this girl the authors of the texts turns to the coaches with instructions on what leadership *for girls* includes in terms of being understanding, empathic, and taking social aspects into consideration. In contrast, the boys are constructed as natural athletes, where problems and special instructions on a specific leadership are lacking.

**Take another bite so you’ll be a big and strong boy! Preschool teachers production of boyishness and class in meal situations at two Swedish preschools**

**Anette Hellman, University of Gothenburg**

The starting point of this paper is how normality and hegemonic masculinity are produced in some preschool situations and sports activities among teachers and 3-6 years old children. This presentation analyses how norms of strength, achievement and control are made gendered by male and female preschool teachers and linked to boy’s bodies as well as to specific boyish positions. I also discuss how social class is linked to girls and boys bodies at the dinner table. In this process certain ways of performing boyishness are made “normal” while others are marginalized or made invisible.

While practices like sport are well documented for producing hegemonic masculinity among older boys in educational contexts, my study from two Swedish preschools shows that norms about achievement, strength, and body size among younger children are mainly produced in other practices, such as meal situations.

Rules in dinner situations are often surrounded by struggles of power between children and adults, especially those concerning control and self-determination in relation to children’s bodies. Such rules are strongly directed towards all children, both girls and boys. When norms about strength, size and achievement are accentuated, positions such as “strong and big” were ascribed and directed towards boys and not towards girls. My field notes also show how these norms became linked to boys bodies in general, during meal situations, and to an ideal boyish position in particular and thereby exclude positions such as “tiny” “weak” or “small” in relation to “real” boys.

On the one hand dinner situations make it relevant to control bodies according to body ideals about strength, size and achievement and on the other hand to perform norms about “nice” and civilized behaviour. The analysis will examine why norms such as control, strength and achievement are made extra relevant by the teachers at the dinner table. Why does it become extra important in these situations for teachers to control children’s bodies? And what role do norms about masculinity, gender and class play for the teachers in the construction of “real boys”? The presentation aims to examine these questions in relation to positions ascribed for girls and boys by the teachers at the dinner table: Typical boys, nice children and tiny boys.

The analysis builds on the ethnographic method to explore these processes in a specific context for two years. The study was conducted in a larger Swedish city at two pre schools with one male and six female pre-school teachers and children aged from one to six years of age.

**Men Allowed? Parental attitudes and experiences of male teachers and practitioners interaction with young children**

**Ann-Marie Houghton and Steve Dempster, Lancaster University**

This paper seeks to review existing literature reporting on the multiple and contradictory messages associated with male teachers and practitioners interaction with young children. Its starting position is an international context in which there is government concern about the difficulties in recruiting and retaining men as teachers to work in Early Years and Primary school classrooms. A common discourse used to champion the need for male teachers and practitioners is their presence as male role models. For some policy makers, male role models within school are seen as an increasing necessity due to changes in family arrangements and the schools need to ‘compensate’ for absent or partially present fathers. Unfortunately, as Evans and Jones (2008) observe ‘males in educare must cope with discourses of both risk and adulation’ (p 660). Therefore despite the declared support for male role models, men working in Early Years accounts suggest that the culture, context and reactions of their colleagues and parents raise them to ask the question ‘Men allowed?’, and if men are allowed, what they should be allowed to do?

Whilst this paper will acknowledge the range of stakeholder perspectives on the interaction of male teachers and practitioners with young children, the attitudes and experiences of parents will be prioritised. Parents constitute a powerful constituency whose role in, and relationship with schools has been explored from a number of perspectives. The absence of male primary school teachers may also alienate fathers and men more generally from participating within their child’s education. This paper will therefore allow further ‘troubling’ of the context of men’s presence in Early Years and Primary Schools, because fathers themselves may not only have a view about other men teaching their child, but may also wonder if the ‘Men Allowed?’, question applies to them.

The paper will loosely connect with previous empirical research that explored parental views of school and the role that they can play in partnership with teachers to support their children (Houghton, 2003) and theoretical observations about laddishness and masculine hegemony of undergraduates. The literature reviewed will focus on questions emerging from the collaborative network of English and Swedish researchers that is focused on gender and teachers/leaders for young children. The purpose of the review is exploratory and underpinned by an interest in understanding the similarities and differences between different countries response to male teachers and practitioners interaction with young children.

Our intention and goal is to contribute to debates explored by Gannerud & Ronnerman and Warin who seek to understand different aspects of ‘educare’ and the role of men fulfilling caring as well as educational roles; offer insights regarding the male undergraduate culture that may be of relevance to Ashbridge and Evans ‘Peer Peer Assisted Study Scheme (PASS), and consider the attitude of parents regarding the gender stereotypical messages of Hellman’s ‘big strong boys’. Our hope in is to use this paper as a stimulus for further work on the role of parents in their child’s education.

# Educare – a gendered concept?

### Karin Ronnerman and Eva Gannerud, University of Gothenburg

# Preschools in Sweden are often discussed in terms of educare, Early Childhood Education and Care (ECEC) (OECD, 2006). The purpose of this paper is to discuss how the concept “educare” can be understood in relation to gender in the context and work in preschool, but also in relation to other educational contexts. The educational elements within the work in Swedish preschool are often realised through and associated to thematic work, which includes and emphasises play as well as learning and care. The concept of educare is used to enlighten and emphasise the multifaceted nature of education for young children. Learning has today become a strong concept taking more and more place in the discourses of early childhood education and is in the latest (and coming) curricula highly emphasised. In other educational contexts, aspects of care seems to be very relevant, although they to a great part are expressed differently. According to a report from The Swedish National Agency for Education, 2007 (Skolverket ), learning is not enough but care seems to be crucial in forming successful schools.

This paper is to a great part based on the results from two earlier studies (Gannerud & Rönnerman, 2003; Gannerud och Rönnerman, 2006), These empirical studies deal with how the tasks of pre-school and school, and teachers’ work in preschool and school, are described and valued. The first study is a text-analysis based on journals edited by teacher’s union. In this, a comparison is made of how tasks of teachers, and of school as a whole, are described in editors articles and letters to the press, mostly written by professional teams or individual teachers. The results show that there is more concern about aspects of care in the texts from teachers. The other study is a case study using observations and teacher team interviews, in order to map how teachers describe their tasks and work, and to relate this to what we noticed in the observations of their daily work. In those, we discuss how the differences between two pictures of teachers work can be related to the concepts of learning and caring, as well as to gender order in school and society. In this paper, however, we will use those findings and relate them to today’s discourses of the concept of educare. We will connect and relate our findings to the current discussions related to the coming school reforms initiated by the ‘right wing’ Swedish government. In the new (coming) curricula learning is put on the fore and literacy and mathematics are the subjects to be emphasised. In our paper we will discuss how these reforms are expressed in official documents and in the debate in both union journals and daily press, in order to will get both the teachers voices and a general view of these matters and we are able to compare the views from an earlier reform.

**The status of care: linking ‘educare’ and gender**

**Jo Warin, Lancaster University**

I explore the connections between debates about the absence of male teachers within the early years and primary phase of schooling, and wider debates about the status of the caring professions. The starting point is to ask what would have to change in order for more male teachers to enter this realm of work. I answer, firstly, by drawing on a growing literature about the values of care and welfare (e.g. Tronto 1993). Secondly, I draw on a body of case studies of the individual experiences of men working in early years care and education, to which I have contributed (Warin 2006). Drawing on these two types of literature allows for the juxtaposition of the micro with the macro, revealing wider political influences on care within the lives of individual male education professionals. Thirdly, I draw on my current engagement with researchers in Sweden and England who have formed a collaborative network focused on gender and teachers/leaders for young children. Our network, whilst still at an early stage of development, has already allowed me to question some previously held assumptions about Swedish policies and practices in gender and education, and to recognise that I may have viewed these through ‘rose tinted glasses’. I have learnt that there may be more similarities than differences especially as both countries have recently experienced a change to right wing governments, and are subject to an increasing marketisation of education. We have shared a recognition that, in both Sweden and England, current government educational reforms are predicated on a value for performance based pedagogies, creating an ethos of competition between pupils, amongst staff, across schools and within the global market place. In this league-table dominated approach to education the social purposes of education become are neglected.

So what has to change before males take up caring roles in relation to young children? There is clearly a vicious circle at work. Whilst men remain removed from teaching in primary schools and early years education the status of these professions remains low. Perhaps, instead of trying to make it our objective to encourage men into these professions we should break this vicious circle by giving due recognition and reward to the work of early childcare and education as part of a wider objective to elevate the status of care within a pedagogic framework of social justice and the development of social understanding. The concept of ‘educare’, derived from Swedish pedagogy, has the potential to draw together educational purposes relating to both learning and care. It may also have the power to transform professional gender roles within education.

### Affirmative action for males to become preschool teachers, and then…? A Swedish experience

**Inga Wernersson, University of Gothenburg**

In the early 1970ies a wave of activities in order to promote gender equality was initiated by the Swedish state. The foremost target was educational and occupational choice. In analogy with promotion of “girls and women into science and technology” action was directed towards “boys and men into preschool teaching and nursing”. Starting in 1971, male applicants could get a fraction of a unit added to their grade point average to facilitate entrance into preschool teacher education. In 1978 this arrangement was evaluated and the conclusion was that it had had at least some effect (Wernersson & Lander, 1979). In the 1970ies the proportion of males among preschool teachers was about 3 percent and in preschool teacher education it was 8-13 percent. In 2009 men comprise 2.9 percent of preschool teachers working in preschools and 7.9 percent of those who graduated from preschool teacher education. In terms of quantities the situation at present is the same as in the 1970ies, but is that true also for the arguments and discussions for and against male teachers for young children? Drawing on the evaluation study from 1979 in comparison with recent studies on male teachers and preschool teachers in Sweden the paper will discuss differences and similarities can be found concerning the pros and cons expressed for encouraging more males to go into teaching, especially into teaching young children.

In 1979 three groups of arguments for the need to encourage more men to go into preschool teaching were identified. One group referred to the importance of role models for children – either for unambiguous sex-roles or for less stereotyped sex-roles. The second group of motives referred to conditions in the preschool teacher occupation – concerning social position and salaries or content and quality of occupational performance. The third and last group of motives was connected to social structure at the macro level. Gender equality in general, structural changes in the labour market (decreasing demand of labour in the male dominated industrial sector) and the possibility to move society to the left by new ways of childhood socialisation. The two first groups of motives are still used – children’s (boys) need of role models for two different and opposite reasons and the need to get more men to raise positions and salaries are still there (Nordberg, 2005 a, 2005b, Blank & Palmqvist, 1998, Högskoleverket 2009). However, the present political discourse and labour market concerns of 2010 are of little resemblance to the discourse of 1979.

The evaluation from 1979 also included a study of female and male preschool teacher’s own views of their occupational choice and job situation. In the paper comparisons with more recent studies will be made also of how male preschool teachers perceive their conditions and position presently compared to 30 years ago. Are there any indications of if/how changing gendered structures in society have implications male preschool teachers?

1. **SYMPOSIUM:****Women and academic careers: reflections on female experiences of working in the neo liberal academy**

In this collection of papers, we explore different categories of ‘successful’ women working in (or recently retired from) higher education (HE) who have had less attention paid to their working situations. The papers explore the experiences of women who have been successful in accessing permanent posts in higher education and who have all made significant progressions in their formal ‘careers’. The intention of the papers is to start to ask critical social justice questions about these different groups of women academics working in contemporary HE.

The first paper draws on a small sample of senior women academics as they are coming up to/have just retired from working in higher education. The focus in this paper is two-fold - first; although some elder women have attained ‘success in academia, many more remain in marginalised positions and as they age, they may all experience ‘discomforts’ in work. Second, as Featherstone and Wernick (1995, p. 8) have pointed out, ‘unlike the other social oppositions, youth and old age... are transitional statuses’ and work in a less clear cut way’. The paper considers the impact the ageing process has for women in the academy and asks how do women ‘trim to the storm of time’ (Emerson)?

The second paper draws on a sub-set of data arising from a larger study which looked at the professional lives of twenty two women managers and leaders in initial teacher training in ten institutions in the UK. The paper explores the complex and nuanced survival strategies used by seven senior women in their bid to survive or to even thrive in their present roles in the education market place. The senior women in this research are defined as those who are ranked as head of school/ department, deans or above in seven different institutions where initial teacher training takes place.

The third paper draws on research undertaken with twenty female professors, from a range of academic disciplines and ethnic backgrounds. The paper examines methodological tensions in contemporary feminist research, involved when a younger female academic interviewed twenty professors. The paper argues that rich data can be generated through such exchanges, despite power imbalances in the research process.

**How the papers fit together under this theme:**

This symposium consists of three papers drawn from three different, but related, research projects that deal with the complexity of being a woman currently working in (or recently retired from) Higher Education in the English setting in terms of social justice issues. The intention in this collection of papers is to take a close look at the situated experiences, past and present, of three specific groups of women academics; those who are senior managers; senior women academics who are coming up to/have just retired and women of the professoriate.

**‘Trimming to the storm of time’: elder women in Higher Education**

**Meg Maguire, King’s College London**

Focus of the paper

This paper will explore factors related to age and ageing that influence the careers and working lives of a small number of women academics. The paper is based on two aspects; although some elder women have attained ‘success in academia, many more remain in marginalised positions and as they age, they may all experience ‘discomforts’ in work. Second, as Featherstone and Wernick (1995, p. 8) have pointed out, ‘unlike the other social oppositions, youth and old age... are transitional statuses’ and work in a less clear cut way’. What impact does the ageing process have for women working in the academy? How do women ‘trim to the storm of time’ (Emerson)?

Methodology

The paper will draw on a set of on-going interviews, being conducted with women who work in/have recently retired from higher education, that focus on their perceptions of what happens as they get older. The focus in this paper will be with their professional work and institutional experiences, their moves towards retirement and their attempts to ‘trim to the storm’.

Theoretical framework

The theoretical framework for this research draws on work on identity, age and feminist theories. The substantive focus is to ensure that age/ageism is included in social justice work.

Findings

The paper will be drawing on some interviews that have already been conducted to highlight the way in which ageism influences the work experiences of elder women past and present. Instances of new possibilities and new selves as ways of being and of countering some of the more uncomfortable aspects of being an elder in the academy will also be explored.

**Senior Women in Initial Teacher Training: Surviving, Thriving or Getting Out**

**Dr Barbara Thompson**

Focus of the paper

This paper draws on a sub-set of data arising from a larger study which looked at the professional lives of twenty two women managers and leaders currently working in initial teacher training in ten institutions in the UK. It focuses specifically on the complex and nuanced survival strategies used by seven senior women in their bid to survive or even thrive in their roles in the education market place. Senior women are defined as those who are ranked as head of school/ department, deans or above in seven different institutions where initial teacher training takes place.

Methodology

In –depth ethnographic interviews (Spradley, 1979) and participant observation

Analytical framework

The theoretical framework draws on insights provided by feminist post structuralism which have been useful in explaining how ‘individuals can simultaneously be positioned in different ways at different time depending on the discursive environment (Foucault, 1980, cited in Francis 1999:2). Also important has been the concept of struggle (Bourdieu, 2000) where it is argued that social agents (individuals) are frequently engaged in a struggle with the constraints of what Bourdieu termed the ‘field’ in which they operate; in this case the field of neo liberal policies and practices as they impact upon initial teacher training. Beck and Beck - Gernsheim’s (2002) notion of the ‘individualised individual was significant and the issue of agency (Bourdieu, 2000; Davies and Saltmarsh, 2007) emerged as pivotal to the success of the senior women in the sample.

Findings

The notion of struggle is complex and multi dimensional and impacted upon different women in different ways. However, without wishing to take an essentialist position, it was apparent from the data that most of the senior women in the sample seemed less beleaguered by the job of management and leadership within current new managerialist discourses than did their more junior colleagues. Most senior women had found a niche in the educational marketplace as administrators and/ or entrepreneurs for their institutions and for themselves (Du Gay, 1996). However, for a few ‘top’ women’ particularly those who had an interest in social justice, the struggle to accommodate the discourses of neo liberalism was over whelming and they resigned from the management and leadership of initial teacher training in order to find a space which sat more comfortably with their personal values and political positions.

# Teenage Girls in Special Needs

**Barbro Johansson, ­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­Department of Special Education, Stockholm University**

This paper is part of my on-going PhD thesis-work in special education. It is a longitudinal interview study of nine teenage girls in secondary school from the age of 13 until 16 who have been assessed to be in need of special support in school. The aim of my presentation is to elucidate the process of data analysis. Data was collected four times a year, mainly through narrative interviews and partly through classroom observation. The presentation is based on two years of data collection.

The overall aim of my thesis is to:

To understand the relationship between these nine girls, their teachers and classmates in both the classroom and extra-classroom activities within the school context.

The conversational interviews aim to let the girls tell about their perception of the schools’ learning environment. They also aim to bring out the girls own ideas on what could assist them with their schoolwork. Much thought is put on how to create respectful meetings i.e. letting the girls be seen as social actors, able to impact on the school environment.

The first stage of data analysis is a focus on identifying emerging themes from the narratives. The different case studies are compiled and continuously revised as new data is collected. The girls’ statements are analysed in a matrix where the themes discussed during the interviews are compared.

I will present the preliminary findings and discuss the following topics and questions:

It emerged from the interviews that these girls experience a huge stress when they discover that they are behind in school work in comparison to their classmates. They are placed in small study groups with individual work forms which confirm extra need and therefore a significant support from the teacher. A negative consequence is that the girls do not want to risk making mistakes when they work in the regular classroom and hence they alienate themselves during group works.

The study also shows that teenagers have many strategies to conceal their problems and that many teachers lack the knowledge on how to ask questions that lead to the girls opening up and telling about their situation.Several of the girls have no expectation that teachers should clear up misconceptions and they prefer to let injustice pass.

Most of the girls have a rich leisure time; they manage their own sports projects and compete at high levels. The schools inability to notice and take into consideration the capacity of these girls leads to the setting of requirements that hinders their resources to be utilized.

1. **Inclusive policies and the constitution of identity and difference among students at a Brazilian Public University**

**Vera Helena Ferraz de Siqueira,Universidade Federal do Rio de Janeiro**

Vera Helena Ferraz de Siqueira – Universidade Federal do Rio de Janeiro.

Gloria Walkyria de Fatima Rocha- Universidade Federal do Rio de Janeiro.

Adriana Arrigoni - Universidade Federal do Rio de Janeiro.

Imira Fonseca de Azevedo - Universidade Federal do Rio de Janeiro.

It is well known that public universities in Brazil have traditionally excluded certain segments of the population, due to some features of its selection process; also the attendance to their most prestigious courses has been largely determined by gender, race/ethnicity and social class. Although a process of transition is presently occurring in this scenery through the implementation of inclusive education policy, this does not guarantee democratic relations and equal opportunities; there are internal power relations that are influential on the social positions and identities formation, which we hereby take as mobile, relational and inherent to any human relation (Foucault, 2003; 2008). At the university, besides acquiring formal knowledge, the individuals are subjectivated on what they may aspire in life, to the roles they play as men and women and the way they should perform as professionals and citizens. Thus, their identity is constructed within specific historical practices both discursive and institutional and is asserted through a process of signification as it circulates within various interlocking discourses (Butler, p. 196).

Based on such conceptual tools and having in view that such processes must be seen within the historical context of the contradictions of modern society, we are conducting an empirical study (supported by CNPq, Edital Universal/2010) at a prestigious Brazilian university where affirmative actions have recently been introduced, aimed at investigating by which mechanisms of power the students’ identities are being produced in the context of such changes, taking gender/social class and race as interrelated aspects. In this paper we analyze the data obtained thorough on depth interviews conducted with eight female students of lower social class, which entered disputed courses, traditionally masculine through different routes; it interested us to identify processes of subjectivation in relation to their present academic status in the University context.

Among other results we found that the self construction of the ones benefited by the affirmative actions occurred mainly in alignment with educational and political discourses presently circulating at society, as mirror images of the “other” students – white, male and of higher social class. We consider that such oppositions sustain the discursive influence of the contrasting “other”, by which these students’ identities gain meaning. Among the women who were not benefited by these policies, it prevailed an abstract liberal conception of identity, rational and centered: the terms “will power”, “conquest”, “overcoming barriers” appeared often to support the argument that despite belonging to minority groups, succeeding in academic and professional life is possible. Such constructions negate the role of political and social context and individualize the responsibilities.

We consider that this is a privileged time for “denaturalizing evidences, promoting a critical view of the present time and building the necessary autonomy for the appearance of other subjectivity forms, such as political, ethical and esthetic creation” (Loyola, 2009). Offering occasions for debates and the respect for a multiplicity of views are essential for building creative thought and action at the university which are essential to attain inclusive conditions, related to the exercise of citizenship and democracy.

1. **Girls as ‘good learners’ in the early years: intersectional identities in the first year of school in England**

**Alice Bradbury**, **Institute of Education, University of London and Roehampton University, London**

This paper will explore the different ways in which four- and five-year-old girls are constituted as learners in two Reception classrooms in England. Using the idea of intersectionality to consider the discursive matrices of class, race and gender that constitute these children, I discuss how certain identity positions are compatible with ‘good learner’ identities in the classroom. In a context of the ‘feminisation’ of school success in primary schools ([Renold and Allan, 2006](#_ENREF_5)), I consider exactly which girls are intelligible as ‘good learners’, and for whom this position is foreclosed.

The data was collected during an ethnographic study of a Reception classroom (age 4-5) in a primary school in inner London. The study as a whole aimed to explore how inequalities in early years were reproduced and maintained. Methods included regular classroom observation, interviews with teachers, and document collection. The school (Gatehouse Primary) was a large community primary school in an area of disadvantage in London; a large proportion of the children received free school meals. The majority of the children were from minority communities, with a small White minority.

Data was analysed using a post-structural framework, including a Foucauldian understanding of discourse as productive ([Foucault, 1980](#_ENREF_4)) and Butler’s work on performative identities ([Butler, 1990](#_ENREF_1); [2004](#_ENREF_2)). Following Youdell’s work on school subjectivities ([2006](#_ENREF_7)), Butler’s concept of intelligible identities was used to consider which children are recognisable as ‘good learners’. I use this term to mean a positive school subjectivity associated with high attainment, good behaviour and the display of appropriate values.

The main findings relate to two groups of pupils in the Reception class at Gatehouse: the Afghan Muslim girls and White working-class girls. Although it has recently been argued that Muslim male pupils are understood as the ‘new folk devils’ in schools ([Shain, 2010](#_ENREF_6)), these Afghan Muslim girls were constituted as ‘good learners’, made intelligible through discourses of Asian girls as hardworking and well-behaved, and discourses of Afghan families as aspiring and having ‘appropriate’ educational values. Thus there was an intelligible space for these girls to be recognisable as ‘good learners’. The White working-class girls were understood as either part of the ‘hard-working poor’ who were committed to education and had a linguistic advantage over the pupils with English as an additional language, or as part of an ‘underclass’ which did not value education. Thus the girls in this last group were constituted as distant from successful learner identities, while the Afghan girls and ‘aspiring’ White working-class girls were intelligible as ‘good learners’. However, this intelligibility relied on a specific ‘identity performance’ ([Carbado and Gulati, 2000](#_ENREF_3)); for example, when one Afghan girl produced an identity performance outside of the specific intelligible space, she quickly become unrecognisable in this position and her previous high attainment was deemed to be inauthentic.

These findings will be used to draw some conclusions regarding the conceptualisation of gendered identities in schools, the use of intersectional analyses, and the issues of recognisability and intelligibility in relation to learner identities.

1. **Privileged young women - agentic sexual subjects?**

**Claire Maxwell, Institute of Education, London**

This paper examines whether, how, when and where young women from more privileged socio-economic backgrounds may become more agentic within their sexual and intimate relationships.

The paper will initially review recent work on young femininities which on the whole argues that socio-economic privilege increases the potential for agentic practice. Then the paper will introduce the concept of ‘top girls’ (McRobbie, 2009) and examine how such notions have been linked to social class. The paper will subsequently briefly review the literature on agency and resistance within young women’s sexual and intimate relationships – identifying how authors theorise this and the empirical examples they draw on to highlight what practices are considered agentic and which are not. We also examine how the literature in this particular field suggests agentic practice may be linked to social transformation in relation to gender. Finally, we introduce our developing framework for understanding agency – one that takes young women’s conceptualisations of power at its starting point (Maxwell & Aggleton, 2010).

The paper uses data from an in-depth study conducted in one private school in the south east of England which involved 54 young women in their final two years of schooling through focus group discussions and interviews.

Using this data, we examine how the young women drew on types of ‘top girl’ discourses and offer an analysis of how closely these were tied to a discourse of neoliberal subjecthood with a choice biography, especially in relation to gender relations. The analysis focuses initially on young women’s discussions of their experiences of school and future aspirations, and then more specifically on their narratives of sexual and intimate relationship experiences. We conclude our analysis by exploring the degree to which their narratives are strongly linked to socio-economic privilege and a ‘living out’ of a top girl discourse with few constraints. Our final thoughts focus on the question of whether and how identified agentic practice by young women in our study was potentially socially transformative in relation to gender and/or reproductive of socio-economic privilege.

1. **The Future Girl’s Problem Past: A Genea**logi**cal Approach to Feminised Success**

**Michele Paule, Oxford Brookes University**

This paper will offer some observations from a genealogical investigation of achieving girl discourses.

The rise of the achieving girl across educational and popular culture fields has been variously accounted for within the discourses of neoliberalism, postfeminism and in the UK, of New Labour education policy (Harris 2004, Aapola et al 2005; Gonick 2006; Ringrose 2007; McRobbie 2009). While acknowledging the central role of such discourses in the production of this luminous and emblematic figure, I argue that in the contemporary 'top girl' can also be traced historical discourses of genius and their gendered restrictions which have persisted through Western philosophical, aesthetic and scientific traditions (Battersby 1988; Stollery 2002; Connor 2005).

In troubling liberal-humanist narratives of the inspired individual and in exploring alternative accounts of extraordinary production, feminist and post-structuralist scholarship has revealed ways in which ability in women has been constructed as limited, debased and threatening (Delap 2004; Brandels 2008). In contemporary accounts of achieving girlhood as the product of gendered learning behaviours one can see a reworking of the restrictions, and in prevailing successful girls/failing boys discourses a resurfacing of the anxieties that such achievement historically evokes.

Some feminist endeavours to expose exclusionary discourses of genius have risked setting the trap of cognitive essentialism in the place of gendered essentialism and eliding the role that achievement discourses play in the maintenance of structural inequalities; setting out to trouble essentialist categories of genius and gender via a genealogical approach reveals some ways in which the myth of meritocracy has worked to reproduce privilege and rationalise exclusion, from Galton’s *Hereditary Genius* to New Labour’s ‘gifted and talented’. However, it has also revealed some practices which could be seen to run counter to the neoliberal individualist project.

1. **Young people’s working-class skills: entrepreneurial activity or subversive practice?**

**Gabrielle Ivinson, Wales Institute of Social & Economic Research, Data & Methods (WISERD)**

**Cardiff University**

The ideal post-industrial learner is presented as one who possesses ‘generic’ skills that are ‘flexible, entrepreneurial and transferable’. This paper suggests that it is not skills that are being taken up in the job market but certain kinds of people. Working class communities have long demonstrated resilience, flexibility, risk-taking and entrepreneurial skills. In contrast to academic knowledge, skills were nurtured and anchored in fields of production and not in schools (Bernstein, 1996). In previous generations, working class groups have tended to view schooling as a time of waiting before entering the workforce (Marshall, 2009). Through inter-generational transmission young people in post-industrial communities come to embody skills. However, these go unrecognised or devalued within schools. We are in danger of relegating these skills and the communities’ values as subversive rather than as the shoots of economic growth.

The paper draws on two studies, undertaken in 2009 -10 in two south Wales valley locations. The first investigated young people’s (aged, 11, 14 and 17 years) understanding of skill through 55 individual interviews that used pictures of skills in four contexts, work, home, school and leisure’ as stimulus material. Ethnographic work was carried out in one secondary school with a small break away class of 7 boys who were receiving an alternative curricular to others in the year. The second study ‘Young People and Place’ involved 60 individual interviews, 10 walking tours, and participant and non-participant observations carried out in one boys’ school and one community centre in a valley location.

Emerging findings demonstrate that skills were gained through everyday experiences in which men accompanied boys in activities such as trail biking and hunting. Many of these activities took place on land which was contested ‘public’ or ‘private’ property and so often involved police surveillance. Indigenous working class skills can be viewed as patterns of desire (Trevarthen, 1992) that call-out a person in different ways. It might be possible to become aware of affective patterns that underlie desire and build on these 'lines of flight' (Olsson, 2009) or implicit motivations (Hedegaard and Chaiklin, 2005) as a first step in broadening our understanding of the role of desire in education and citizenship. According to a Marxist analysis, it could be said that two generations ago, boys would have been appropriated by Capitalism to produce coal. The relationship between worker and bourgeoisie capitalists was clear-cut and men came to recognize that they were being exploited. As Hartd and Negri (2001) suggest, there is a new relationship between person and state in which the state acts directly yet imperceptibly on the body. Bringing the two strands together, the historical materialism of Marx and the *aleatory* materialism of Adorno (c.f Bennet, 2004) involves paying attention to body, local culture and desire. The boys’ trail biking activity can be viewed as an example of Foucault’s bio-politics in which police surveillance was embodied and intertwined with the development of skill. Hardt and Negri (2008) have pointed to the importance of marginal groups in society to the process of state resistance. The paper highlights the boys’ sense of freedom, autonomy and joy in developing trail biking skill. It is their appetite for movement, power and body techniques that may be the germ cell of resistance to what McLaren *et al* (2002) refer to as the deadening hand of state surveillance.

1. Changing landscapes, changing masculinities

Judith Marshall, Trinity University College Carmarthen

This study investigated engagement in education in valley communities in South Wales across three generations. It drew upon theoretical tools from social representations theory (Moscovici, 1984) to map dominant social representations circulating in two communities that had experienced rupture in community life due to cessation of coalmining. The materiality of place, and the ways in which a place changes over time is intricately connected to how individuals and groups make sense of their lives. People become entrenched within communities that are significant to them (Howarth, 2001), and their sense of their lives within a place depends upon the communities to which he or she belongs, has belonged, or has particular knowledge of. Social representations theory places emphasis on the historical dimension of ideas; for example, how due to social and economic change different networks of ideas circulate during different time periods. Social representations are embedded in the material and symbolic forms: in a place through its landscape, structures, practices, objects, people and events. Specifically, material features of a locale that are strongly linked to traditional practices, such as employment in the mines will carry powerful meaning for local residents. Following de-industrialization in Abertillery, people must attempt to deal with the unfamiliar by reconciling the past with the present, by undertaking psychic work in order to deal with the trauma of change and the loss of meaningful employment. Thus social identities and possible futures are attached to past practices, institutions and relationships.

Mobile methods were used to gather images of each locale. 37 images of the locale were used in photo-elicitation interviews. Unstructured interviews used the phrase ‘*I’m interested in people’s experiences of education, training and learning in general and I’m interested in hearing about your own experiences of these*’ to elicit narrative accounts. Over 50 interviews were conducted with three age groups, men and women of age 50-70 year, 30-40 year and 16-25 years.

Findings demonstrate that for the younger generation, new social representations relating to neo-liberalism have fused with those of ‘the body’ and ‘education’ to form a very different structure of social representations. For example, young men spoke about the male worker as educated, multi-skilled, employable and mobile, and many imagine futures within a global community. Social representations carry historical legacies that have a depth formed by the past practices and values of the community that are based on what *was* symbolically important to the community (Jodelet, 1991).  Young men in the study who were unable to imagine themselves forward through education used historically available social representations to imagine alternative identities that were strongly connected to notions of the body founded in heavy industry. Their future trajectories were imagined through education, but continued to be based upon the possession of a fit, healthy body. While changes in practices have been shown to give way to different forms of masculinity and femininity in Abertillery (e.g. Brandth and Haugen, 2005), for many young people, deeply rooted social representations circulating in Abertillery have continued to oppose alternative social identities.

1. **Classed, gendered and ‘raced’ friendship dynamics in the context of academic achievement**

**Dr Barbara Read, Roehampton University**

**Description of the paper**

This paper reports on the findings of a British Academy-funded pilot project (involving two week-long periods of observations of 12-13year old secondary school pupils) exploring the dynamic interplay of gender, 'race' and classed identities within peer friendship group interactions in the context of achievement. Specifically, the project was designed as a pilot to test the feasibility of exploring a particular dynamic that seemed to emerge from the data of a previous study by myself, Becky Francis (PI) and Christine Skelton. The data in this previous study enabled us to trace an intriguing tendency amongst a number of ‘popular’ and high achieving (HAP) pupils, to have a more disruptive, less high achieving close friend (Francis et al., 2009). It appeared from our analysis that the existence of such a friend enables the HAP student to be at the centre of ‘laddish’ and sometimes overtly ‘rebellious’ action in the classroom, and to obtain 'coolness' and 'popularity' capital, without having to be directly disruptive/confrontational themselves – or to suffer the consequences of such behavior, either in terms of failure to produce schoolwork, or in undergoing discipline.

In this previous study we found such patterns of behavior amongst girls’ friendship groups as well as boys. Also, from the small number of cases we were able to observe there was a highly interesting possibility that such dynamics may be ‘classed’ to a certain degree. However the small number of cases and lack of definite information in relation to class background for some of the friends of our chosen participants meant that the picture was unclear (Francis et al. 2010). The pilot project therefore aimed to focus specifically at this potential dynamic and its implications in relation to social inequalities and achievement.

**Methodology**

Ethnographic observations (Somekh and Lewin, 2005) were conducted in Year 8 classes (12-13 year old pupils) at two different schools in London, UK, focusing on the classroom, break-time and lunchtime behaviour of those children identified as high achieving and ‘popular’ and the dynamics of their friendships. High achievement was be defined through previous assessment data such as SAT results, and ‘popularity’ indicated (given the inevitable limitations of such a subjective, slippery concept) through a short questionnaire given to pupils at the start of the fieldwork, asking questions designed to elicit who are seen by the pupils as the most ‘popular’ children in the class. Observation was recorded through fieldnotes, listing key themes beforehand around which to record data.

**Findings**

The findings discussed will focus on a poststructuralist analysis of the gendered, classed and ‘raced’ dynamics of peer group interactions from the observations, and the extent to which they supported the patterns of behaviour discussed above. I will be also focusing on the complex gendered ways in which pupils take up ‘space’ in the classroom and how relations of power are constructed and re-constructed between pupils and teachers, and between the pupils themselves.

1. **Emotional situations – gender-marked practice**

**Eva Skåreus, Department of Creative Studies & Umeå Centre for Gender Studies**

In this presentation I will highlight various aspects of a pre study of art teacher students’ emotional experiences during their longer teaching practice. What emotions emerge for students as important during their student teaching? And how do emotions intersect with gender in school practise? To search students notable emotions could point at contemporary gender order and in the long run expand a gender informed teacher education.

Using Sara Ahmed’s theory on emotions, my aim is to understand “the doing” of emotions in students’ talk, writing and pictures about their teaching practise. “The doing of emotions … is bound up with the sticky relation between signs and bodies … to materialise the surface and boundaries that are lived as worlds” (Ahmed, 2004, p 191). As R.W. Connell (2002) argues, emotion is one of four dimensions of gender relations and in that sense emotions intersect with gender, constructing legitimate femininities and masculinities between bodies in social life as well as in school practise.

The pre study is part of my recent project “Emotions and gender in education”. The empirical material consists of students’ own pictures, texts and interviews. This involves an elaboration of my method “pictorial semiotics as discourse analysis” from former study *Digital Mirrors – Conceptions of the Teacher Role and Gender in Student Teachers’ Pictures* (Skåreus, 2007, 2009), which means rethinking and questioning the theoretical frame. Is Ahmed’s view on emotion as signs consistent with semiotic signs?

1. **Rocket Boy, Rocket Girl: Young Children’s Identity Construction through Drawing**

**Dr Emese Hall, Graduate School of Education, University of Exeter, UK.**

The study reported on in this paper (Hall, 2010) builds on the work of researchers such as Anning and Ring (2004), Brooks (2005), and Dockett and Perry (2005), who have used socio-cultural theory to investigate the influence of context on young children’s drawing, meaning making, and representation at home and in school. The research explored the communicative potential of young children’s drawings through case studies of 14 reception and year one children at a rural school in South West England. The three main research questions concerned *what* and *how* the children communicated through drawing, as well as drawing *influences*.

Data was collected over one school year, in three seven-week phases. Each of the 14 children (8 girls, 6 boys) were given home and school scrapbooks in which to collect their drawings, and these were discussed fortnightly in individual, audio-recorded, research conversations. The class teacher and children’s parents were interviewed, with the children’s drawings providing the focus of discussion, and observations of the children drawing in class were also conducted. These methods were repeated for each phase. The children were asked to choose their own project names and throughout the research, in line with Wood’s (2005) advice, the children were recognised as expert informers and witnesses regarding their own experiences and perspectives.

Nearly 800 spontaneously produced drawings were analysed through a data-driven, iterative process where *intersubjective* understandings were emphasised. Expert colleagues were asked to analyse data samples in order to avoid bias, and internal validity was achieved through utilising multiple data sources (drawings produced at home and school, conversation and interview transcripts, research diary, and other empirical research) to ensure triangulation and capture the ‘‘shifting realities’’ of the participants (Greig, Taylor & Mackay, 2007).

The communicative potential of the children’s drawings was considerably broad, but one main theme (*Identity*) and two sub-themes (*Power* and *Purpose*) were visible in relation to the data. Importantly, the drawings offered *spaces for intellectual play and identity construction*, where the children positioned themselves as competent and creative individuals. The drawings were also shaped by a variety of shifting socio-cultural factors stemming from home, school, and elsewhere.

Gender differences were found in support of previousstudies (e.g. Anning & Ring, 2004; Cherney, Seiwert, Dickey & Flichtbeil, 2006; Ring, 2003, 2005),with the boys generally preferring to draw vehicles and human-made environmental features, and the girls generally preferring to draw people. However, focusing on general gender differences can mask the drawing preferences of individual children. In addition, it is important to look beyond the superficial content of drawings in order to understand the *meanings* communicated. This paper offers a detailed comparison of nine drawings featuring rockets, produced by seven of the children (five boys and two girls) in phase one of the study. Despite common subject matter, the rocket drawings provide evidence of the children’s ‘‘unique participation in the world’’ (Bakhtin, 1993, p. 56). The implications of these findings highlight the value of recognising drawing as a complex visual language that should be shared through discussion.

1. **Boys, Masculinities and Visual Arts Education**

**Stina Wikberg, Department of Creative Studies, Umeå University, Sweden**

I will present results from my ongoing PhD project, which deals with gender issues of visual arts education. The overall aim is to study how the compulsory school subject Art is gendered in practice, and how pupils and teachers do gender within the subject. Boys and their performances of masculinities are given special attention. The starting point is that the school subject Art is often described with feminine connotations. Also, statistics suggest that there is an obvious problem with gender within the subject. When comparing boys’ and girls’ leaving certificates from Swedish compulsory school, Art is the subject with the greatest difference between the two groups.

The study was conducted in two classes, one from a school in an urban area, the other from a school in an inland rural area. Around 40 Art lessons were observed, during which the teacher’s instructions and the pupils’ talk were recorded. The pupils, as well as their art works, were photographed.

Methodologically the study is inspired by visual ethnography. This means that I consider images equal to words as ethnographic representation. Visual ethnography rejects the idea of a hierarchy of knowledge or media for ethnographic representation. Since images and words cannot replace each other, different media are regarded as complementary (Pink, 2007). As a lot of my data consists of different types of visual material, my presentation will focus on the visual, mainly the pupils’ art works.

The results show that there is a manner of teaching and instructing pupils in Art, that is informed by the teachers’ notions of gender, and that certain types of tasks risk creating stereotypical expressions of gender. For comparison, another study from a Swedish educational context shows that many teachers of aesthetic subjects are of the opinion that issues of gender equality has no relevance to their work, or subject content (Gannerud, 2009). It seems to me, that future Art teacher education faces a challenge here. We need to stress the importance of a gender-consciuos teaching, and the importance of knowing when gender is relevant to teaching – and when it is not.

1. ***Sod ‘em, sod ‘em like there’s no Gomorrah*: Voices of fear, resistance and hope in professional education and the development of sexualities equality**

**David Nixon, Graduate School of Education, Exeter University**

This paper reports on a small-scale research study which compares professional education in the field of sexualities equality. Teachers, doctors and clergy have been significant in the creation and transmission of culture in the UK, including the construction of identities around sexualities, and in particular the understanding of homosexuality. In Western Europe, stringent legal interdictions against anything other than procreative sex, based on a literal reading of the Bible, gave way very slowly to a medicalised model of homosexuality as pathology. In educational research, it is only relatively recently that schools and universities have been the subject of enquiry about sexualities – of being a lesbian or gay teacher (Sparkes 1994), student teacher (Nixon and Given 2004) or pupil (Mac an Ghaill 1994). Later articles have attempted to problematise heterosexuality, as well as avoiding any sense of gay and lesbian people being ‘victims’. Recent action research in primary schools has attempted to explore how teachers challenge homophobic behaviour and heterosexist practices (e.g. Atkinson and DePalma 2009).In the background to this research, the Church of England and other Christian denominations risk serious divisions over different attitudes to homosexuality, and the difficulties of engaging Muslim cultures in equalities work was also revealed. A review of medical literature suggests that UK doctors’ education is becoming cognizant of the need to respect patients’ life style (including sexualities), promote diversity and understand the impact of equalities legislation on healthcare (*Tomorrow’s Doctors*, *The Foundation Programme*). At the same time, research shows concerns about how gay and lesbian patients are treated (e.g. Sanchez et al 2006) and about the experiences of LGBT medical students (Risdon et al 2000).

Paper and on-line questionnaires to students in these three professional groups were followed up by individual semi-structured interviews, which were recorded and transcribed. Research questions included: How do different professions educate about sexualities in contemporary Britain? What stories are told in these professional settings about the history of sexuality / about contemporary expressions and understandings of sexuality? What discourses are being used in each setting? Data was analysed within a frame of postmodern methodologies, initially in terms of each profession separately, and then across professions and theme.

Findings suggest while the public policies of the teaching and medical professions are committed to valuing diversity and inclusion for practitioners and pupils/patients alike, the lived experience of individuals reflects continued shortcomings in these aspirations. By contrast, the education of those intending to be clergy is being undertaken at a moment when open contestation of sexualities is dividing many mainstream churches, and where prejudice and discrimination are widespread. One common theme here is that whether a profession welcomes, distrusts or even rejects its LGBT members, the voices of these same individuals tend to be marginal to the debates. This paper intends to remedy this silence, at the same time as showing that LGBT voices often say more about other matters which professional bodies find discomforting.

1. **Making his(or her)story: young people’s development of trans and genderqueer identities**.

**Andolie Marguerite, Goldsmiths, University of London**

I am conducting an ethnographic study of a youth group for young people who identify as trans or genderqueer or are questioning their gender identity. I have made observations of the youth group over a period of more than 18 months. This data will be triangulated with in depth interviews with some of the group members. I will present findings from both observations and interviews.

The focus of this paper will be the functioning of the group in the development of alternative gender identities. The group is varied. Most of the young people identify as trans and are at some stage of changing the gender by which they are identified. These young people are crossing from a female to male, or male to female, identity within binary definitions of gender. Other young people identify outside the gender binary, for example as genderqueer (there are currently many words for alternative gender identities that both younger and older people seek to occupy, but this is the most common). I am interested that the performative nature of gender identity (Butler 1990) can work at multiple levels at the same time. Some young people hold naturalised understandings of gender identities, including transgender identities, while working to establish a different gender identity both to themselves and to others.

I will look at the young people’s negotiation of discourses of gender. Possible gender identities are strongly determined by the available discourses of gender constructed through the interrelationship between power and knowledge (Paechter 2006; Foucault 1991, 1998). These young people seek to understand themselves within a variety of competing and conflicting gender discourses: within their families, wider cultural discourses, medical discourses of transsexuality and gender variance, and legislation. They need to engage with these discourses to be legitimated in their chosen identity in their everyday lives, but also to gain access to medical interventions such as hormones or surgery. Transsexual identities are very marginal but do currently have some social legitimacy and increasing visibility and medical support. Some of the young people understand themselves as being born in the wrong body, or that their brain development has determined their real gender, following established narratives of transgender and transsexual identity (Mason-Schrock 1996). Others in the group are seeking to establish or maintain identities such as genderqueer that are not visible in mainstream culture, that have almost no medical recognition and no legal status.

I will also consider whether and in what ways the youth group functions as a ‘gender’ community of practice (Paechter 2003, Lave and Wenger 1991), given that individuals have to negotiate different understandings of gender held by others in the group rather than fully sharing practices. I will also consider whether the trajectory of the participants conflicts with the group functioning as a community of practice. Often in the past successful transitioning has meant becoming reabsorbed within mainstream culture without a visible trans history, unlike in a community of practice where peripheral participants move to becoming more central as they develop expertise.

1. **They’re “freaking out” : Elementary School Educators’ Responses to the Presence of a Transgender Child**

**Elizabethe Payne and MelissaSmith, Queering Education Research Institute (QuERI), Syracuse University**

In Fall 2009, the *Reduction of Stigma in Schools* (RSIS) program was approached by two Central New York elementary schools with reports that their teachers were “freaking out” over the presence of transgender children in their classrooms. They expressed high levels of fear and anxiety over the teaching of these children and fear of the community’s potential response to their providing a supportive environment for these students. RSIS is a research-based professional development program that trains educators to create affirming learning environments for LGBTQ youth (Payne & Smith, 2010) and is part of the Queering Education Research Institute (QuERI). In the absence of literature on the experiences of transgender children at any grade level and the absence of the experiences of teachers in supporting transgender students, we drew heavily from work on gender enculturation in childhood and elementary schools as gendered spaces (Thorne & Luria, 2002) and gender in elementary teacher practice (Korth, 2007) to begin to explore and better understand the reactions of educators to transgender children. Educators often rely on unnamed gender assumptions to interpret their students’ activity (Korth, 2007; Skelton & Read, 2006) and classrooms reflect a cultural assumption that girls and boys are essentially and naturally different (Rands, 2009). The presence of a transgendered child makes visible some of these assumptions and, we believe, disrupts teacher identity and sense of pedagogical competence. “If gender truly has such boundaries, then [a gender non-conforming child] is…some kind of failure who needs help….” If we understand such boundaries as not true but as “a function of a normalization of power…it is the description of gender that fails [the child] and not the child who fails gender” (Boldt, 1996, p. 120). We began interviewing elementary educators on their experiences with transgender children in 2009 and data collection continues. Preliminary data were utilized to generate a professional development workshop for teachers which piloted in the summer of 2010. Our data and in-schools experiences indicate that educators’ initial reaction to awareness of the presence of a transgender student is fear. Words most frequently used to describe their response to the awareness of a transgender child in school included: “freak out”; “panic”; “crisis”; “fear”; “un-prepared” with the fear related descriptors appearing in all interviews. Preliminary themes that emerged in the data related to the fear included: “The other kids”; “flirting”; The “bathroom issue”; “fixing” the child/”fear” of harming the child; threat of “puberty”; gender is/as sexuality; ways of teaching/framing the world; and “community backlash.” This will be the first paper generated from the data set. Carspecken’s (1996) critical ethnography has guided the development and execution of the study.

1. ***Educating parents: A critical study of the encounter between government parent support and parent’s narratives***

**Britt-Marie Berge, Department of Education, Umeå Universtity**

**Eva Magnusson, Department of Psychology, Umeå University**

**Ann-Louise Silfver, Department of Education, Umeå University**

**Kim Wickman, Department of Education, Umeå University**

**Ulrika Widding, Department of Education, Umeå University**

This project is in the beginning phases and takes its starting point in the Swedish government’s national strategy for parent support and education. Epidemiological surveys over the last decade have shown that children’s’, and especially young girls’, mental health has deteriorated in Sweden (Socialdepartmentet, 2009). A concern for children’s health and development has been expressed at the government level and been connected to parenting skills. The Swedish government has therefore declared a national strategy for parent support and education. A fundamental assumption underlying this strategy, is that children’s’ health can be improved by strengthening parents’ in their parental roles by offering knowledge about child development and good child rearing practices (Socialdepartementet, 2009). The Swedish National Institute of Public Health has been given the task to lead a project during 2010-2011 to build a support system for all Swedish parents. Ten municipalities have been granted funding to develop support for parents: knowledge of child development and parenting skills, and venues where parents can discuss and share their experiences (Socialdepartementet, 2009). The materials that will be included into the study are government policy, municipal parent support initiatives and parents’ narratives. The study pays attention to the following aspects: Authoritative images of good parenthood and family; constructions of problematic parenthood and families; how parent support is understood at government, municipal and individual levels; how parents narrate their experiences of family, parenthood and need for support and finally, how gender, sexual orientation, class, ethnicity and ability are constructed in relation to parenthood and family in policy and narratives. Methodologically we draw on notions of how discourses form actions and boundaries - both within the government’s parent support initiatives and in the narratives of parents. For policy analysis on state and municipal levels we will use Bacchi’s (2009) “What’s the problem represented to be” approach which focuses on how problems are constructed in policy, and how representations of problems bring about certain effects. For analysis of how individual parents relate to dominant societal discourses we will use critical discursive psychology (Edley 2001). Since issues of parenthood and family are saturated by ideas of, for example, gender, sexual orientation and ability/disability, the study will also be informed by theories of social categorisations (Butler 1990/1999; Connell 2009; Young 1997) and how these categories intersect (Crenshaw 1994; Yuval-Davies 2006). An assumption is that the national strategy for parent support can fruitfully be seen as providing authoritative discourses and ideals of parenting and family life. Our first interest lies in analysing discourses that become active in policy documents on state and municipal levels in parent support initiatives. Secondly, we are interested in how parents negotiate - accept or resist - these discourses, as evidenced in how they narrate everyday experiences of family life and parenting. Thirdly, as educationalists and psychologists, we find it interesting to study which constructions of parenthood and family that become possible to express today, when parent education is increasingly being positioned within a medical discourse, rather than a moral, pedagogical or psychological discourse.

1. **Gender, learning and family restructuring: women and men dealing with significant life changes through an online divorce support community**

**Carrie Paechter, Goldsmiths, University of London**

In this paper I will report on the initial findings of a pilot study of the first year of an online divorce Wiki and support forum. The study is a combination of analysis of posts and interviews with key actors within that period. In the study, I am attempting to understand the development of the site as an online community of practice; to identify the different forms of learning that took place there; and to understand the effects of this learning on the identities of the individuals involved and on their ability to negotiate through and move on from divorce.

Divorce impacts differently on women and men. While women are more likely to suffer materially as a result of divorce, the major effect on many men is the loss of their children and daily family life. Both women and men frequently lose day-to-day social support, including the support of wider family members, such as in-laws and mutual friends. At the same time, both men and women have to come to terms with the complex and somewhat arcane nature of the legal divorce process, learning about the procedures involved and what they mean. Couples with children have to learn new ways of parenting, which may need to change rapidly with circumstances. In the study I consider the different forms of learning that are involved, looking at how people engage with the site in order to support their developing understanding of the divorce process, and to obtain advice to support and develop their co-parenting practices.

This paper will focus on the different ways that men and women use the site to support their learning, including the topics about which they post, both those they initiate and those they respond to, the discursive style of their various posts, and the forms of learning and kinds of personal change found among women and men within the online community.

1. **The ‘brave’ man in the early years (0-8): examining the ambiguities of the ‘role model’**

**Dr Simon Brownhill, University of Derby**

The call for more ‘brave’ male primary teachers (Plowden, 1967: 64) and early years practitioners remains prevalent in educational discourse as boys’ under-achievement, behaviour, and disaffection with learning continues to dominate the education agenda (Baird, 2008). In an attempt to narrow the attainment gap between boys and girls there is a recognised need, backed by government policy (Holley, 2010) and public discourse, for more men to work with children aged 0-11 and act as *male role models*.

This research paper reports on the ambiguous nature of the ‘role model’ by presenting select findings from the author’s doctoral research which set out to critically examine the notion of the role model. The research sought to investigate the thoughts and perceptions of a cross section of men with a range of roles and responsibilities who currently work/train in the early years (0-8) sector in a central county in the Midlands, UK. Through various data collection methods participants were asked to offer their definition of the term ‘role model’. The research embraced a mixed paradigm location and adopted an ethnographic methodological approach due to the nationally small population from which the data was gathered. A staged approach was utilised in relation to the deployment of the three methods of data collection selected for this enquiry:

* *Stage One* – 174 postal/electronic questionnaires sent out to men who work/train *directly* with children (0-8)
* *Stage Two* – 1 focus group interview with men who work *indirectly* with children (0-8) (senior management members)
* *Stage Three* – 6 in-depth semi-structured interviews with men whowork in the 0-8 sector, following up lines of enquiry/areas of

interest from Stages One and Two

A critical exploration of ‘role model’ definitions from academic literature and primary research highlights a general lack of consensus as to how the term is defined, particularly when one considers the role model’s ‘behaviours’.

* Whilst there are shared sentiments of the role model being emulated, copied and imitated, it is argued that role models can have a negative impact on those who ‘look up’ to them, a sentiment which is seemingly devoid in policy making.
* Research findings suggest that everyone*,* irrespective of their gender, can be defined as a role model depending on their ability to model both ‘natural’ masculine and feminine traits; this challenges the idea of the role model as necessarily being ‘male’.

Definitions of the ‘role model’ from the primary research differ when the age of the child the role model is working with is taken into consideration: role models in the 0-5 sector are defined as a ‘nurturer’ whereas in the 5-8 sector the role model is defined by their ‘good behaviour’. This suggests that definitions of the role model are defined by context, situation and expectations.

1. **Life histories of Turkish women as teachers 1930s to the present day; enhancing capability based gender justice**

**Firdevs Melis Cin, University of Nottingham**

The issue of gender is a bleeding and an unresolved problem for every nation, government, society and community. Sadly, there is no place in the world where gender inequality does not exist (Nussbaum, 2000). Triggered by this global gender injustice, this paper will shed light on women teachers’ educational and cultural experiences in Turkey from its establishment as a republic in 1923 through to contemporary times using the lens of life histories of 20 women. This paper focuses on two aspects of women’s educational lives; their personal lives and their professional lives. Its purpose is to examine the impact of prevailing cultural and social norms and belief systems on women’s lives and to discover how these themes and the education they received (both formal and informal) have influenced their identities and agency freedom. The second focus of paper will look into how articulated gender relations, gendered norms, and social constructs affected their education perspectives and the way they perceive themselves as women teachers. This investigation illuminates the role of women teachers in Turkish society at different times and the way they coped in enhancing their own capabilities and the freedoms of others in society as teachers working for social change. Part of the research also addresses socio-political and socio-economic circumstances historically in order to weave the context for the changes in teachers’ lives and to illustrate that the state is not a neutral institution in issues of gender inequality. The conceptual framework of this study draws primarily from feminist and capability theories to display a better understanding of the complexity of human lives - capabilities, identity and agency. The capability approach in this study serves to evaluate women’s lives and focuses on human flourishing and developing people’s capabilities and fundamental functionings to enable their freedom to choose the life they have reason to value (Sen, 1999). Capabilities will offer a study of what women have been able to achieve and what they have had access to in their lives. The capability approach does not only evaluate gender equality on a legal basis. It also investigates whether individuals are educated under conditions marked by gendered social arrangements (Unterhalter, 2007). The identity construction of the participants sets the stage to understand how social, political and economical discourses gather and overlap to form selves. The concept of agency seeks to investigate women’s autonomy and their freedom to shape their lives, experiences and as a consequence of this their own perceived roles as teachers in different societies at different ages. The main methodological tool to enlighten the deep and wide context of women’s lives is life histories. The findings of this research, which is still in progress, is to present a picture and a clear understanding of the progress or lack of progress and change towards justice and gender equality in Turkish female teachers’ personal and professional lives.

1. **Assessing Kindergarten Teacher’s Personal Gender Beliefs: an assessment on eight kindergarten teachers in Labschool UPI- Indonesia**

**Hani Yulindrasari, Indonesia University of Education**

This research aims to investigate kindergarten teachers’ gender sensitivity. This research adopts the definition of gender sensitivity introduced by Salgado, Vogt, King, & King (2002) that is the degree to which a teacher aware of and sympathetic to the needs or requirements of each gender. In order to investigate teacher’s gender sensitivity, this research will focus on exploration of gender personal beliefs of the teacher that includes tacit knowledge and expectations. Based on a qualitative method using projective technique in interpreting the data, it is clear that gender personal beliefs determine teachers’ response to gender undirected stimulus. However, some of the data give a clue that the manifestation of gender beliefs into discriminatory treatment against gender can be controlled by raising gender awareness of the teachers and providing as much inconsistent information about variety of gender roles as possible.

1. **Empowering female medical students in Qatar**

**Krystyna Golkowska, Weill Cornell Medical College in Qatar**

The transnational universities springing up in the Middle East in recent years seem to offer fascinating opportunities to study issues related to gender and education. Weill Cornell Medical College in Qatar (WCMC-Q) is no exception in this regard. The first American style medical school in the region and an Ivy League University in the country that saw its first public schools open merely fifty years ago, WCMC-Q presents an interesting case for researchers and practitioners.

Female students at WCMC-Q have to face many challenges related not only to the so-called Western ways of teaching and learning but also to acculturation and identity re-negotiation. Like all college students, they need to learn the explicit and implicit norms of the academic community or adjust to new expectations and methods of assessment. Unlike their Western counterparts, however, Qatari females also need to get used to being in a co-educational setting and to speaking in public with the kind of authority traditional interpretations of the Qur’an could deny them. In some cases, due to some beliefs and attitudes still prevailing in their society, they also enter their field of study with a great deal of anxiety that can hinder their professional growth. In brief, whether they openly acknowledge it or not, gender plays a profoundly significant role in structuring their educational experience.

What culturally sensitive ways of consciousness raising can college instructors use to empower these women? How can they provide a forum in which the students would feel comfortable talking about their situation? It is the goal of this presentation to suggest a practical approach to dealing with such questions.

The presenter, who teaches in the Pre-Medical Program at WCMC-Q, discusses her experience of working on an Undergraduate Research Experience Project sponsored by Qatar National Research Foundation. The project, titled “Female physicians in Qatar: perceptions and reality,” involved designing a qualitative study meant to identify some traditional societal beliefs regarding female physicians in the region and evaluate their impact on young Qatari women. Information for the study was collected by a group of Qatari pre-medical students through surveys, focus groups and interviews. The presenter shares the results of the study, which suggest that perceptions related to professional careers of Arab female physicians in Qatar do not always correctly reflect reality and play a detrimental role discouraging young girls from choosing the profession. At the same time she emphasizes what she sees the main value of the project: the opportunities it afforded its female participants. She concludes that introducing Arab female students to ethnographic practice, especially ethnographic fieldwork, can not only enrich their understanding of important issues but also visibly empower them.

1. **Gendered Networks in Academia**

**Petra Angervall, Department of Education, Gothenburg University**

**Jan Gustafsson, Department of Education, Gothenburg University**

**Eva Silfver, Department of Science and Mathematics Education, Umeå University**

This paper takes as a starting point the complexities and proposed changes of contemporary power relations within academia recognised throughout the Western world. For example, it is said that ‘traditional’ gender relations are losing ground as growing numbers of women position themselves in e.g. educational research (Murray & Maguire, 2007; Arnesen et al., 2008; HSV, 2008). However, the pattern is still that men occupy more senior positions (Ducklin & Ozga, 200; Kurtz-Costes et al., 2006; Silander, 2010). Notwithstanding, institutions are influenced by a growing performative discourse, which might affect the dominating power and gender relations in research work (Acker, 2008). Our paper presents preliminary findings from a Swedish research project, *Gender and career in academia*, the main aim of which is to develop knowledge about gender and other power relations within universities. Six academic institutions were selected to present a variety of departments of education/educational sciences according to location, size, major orientation, traditions, and externally funded research. We also interviewed approximately 120 doctoral students and junior researches, in order to map structures, positions and relations within research groups, and in doctoral programmes (Smith, 2005). Theoretically, we draw on Ball’s (2008, 2009), Rhodes’ (1997) and Newman’s (2001) ideas of governance and networks in institutional contexts. It is argued that academic institutions, departments and milieus vary with regard to social and economic capital (Bourdieu, 1986; Field, 2009; Lin, 2002), used as resources for power. These resources promote certain networks and groups before others, they condition scientific interests, and how positions are given and ordered, i.e. they enable different careers. We further agree with Connell (1996, 2002) and others who underline that gender can be performed differently depending on contexts, i.e. the power and gender regimes do not automatically follow the prevalent gender order. In this paper we focus on one of the six selected academic institutions. The aim is to show how individual and collective resources are provided and used from a power and gender perspective. A preliminary analysis shows that subject discipline, research traditions and external funding influence junior researchers’ possibilities to access horizontal and vertical networks and other career productive resources. Also, former supervisors are found to act as gatekeepers to networks and capital which condition career paths. Notions of gender and other social categories impact on junior researchers’ possibilities to be seen as ‘promising’ researchers with potentials to make a successful career. The analysis also illustrates how positions in the horizontal institutional network tend to affect positions provided by the vertical network. Resources (social, economic) used and provided in the horizontal network are often needed in order for the researcher to be admitted into the vertical network. Further, aspects of trust play an important role in the process, where institutional networks and different positions are established. We also argue that many vertical networks promote performativity and thereby exclude those (often women) lacking legitimacy and certain resources for power.

**58) Art for a Few: Gendered Exclusions and Mis/recognitions in Higher Education Admissions Practices**

**Professor Penny Jane Burke, Roehampton University, London**

This paper critically examines admissions practices in the field of art and design. The research aims to understand the ways that current admissions policies and practices might (unwittingly) reproduce gendered, classed and racialised exclusions, inequalities and misrecognitions in higher education. We argue that gendered formations of subjectivity, which are embodied as well as performative, profoundly shape selection-processes. The paper makes connections between the theoretical analysis and its implications for the policy and practice of women’s access to art and design higher education, thinking through complex intersections of age, class, ethnicity, gender and race.

The paper draws on feminist post/structural concepts to examine relations of inequality and misrecognition that are often so subtle and insidious that they are largely overlooked in everyday practices, such as admissions. The constitution of a legitimate student subjectivity is understood in relation to processes of recognition and formations of gender, as well as contested discourses of potential, talent and creativity. The construction and recognition of ‘potential’ is inextricably tied in with processes of gendered subjectivity, which is continually being made through social practices and in relation to difference.

A central question explored is in what ways are admissions practices shaped by implicit, disciplinary and institutional perspectives that are implicated in the re/privileging of particular gendered subjectivities and discourses? The qualitative study was designed to collect detailed data of admissions policies and practices and to deconstruct the key assumptions, values and perspectives underpinning the selection of students.

The methods included a documentary review, in-depth interviews with admissions tutors about their perspectives of the admissions process and observations of actual selection interviews with candidates. The research was based in five colleges of art and design across the England. Seventy selection interviews were observed and ten members of staff were interviewed. All of the interviews were recorded and transcribed, with anonymity and confidentiality strictly followed.

The paper will focus on the following issues identified in the analysis of the data and their implications for gendered exclusions:

* The general lack of clear information, advice and guidance available to applicants in relation to processes of selection and exclusion;
* The admissions tutors’ tacit, unspoken understanding of what counts as having potential and/or ability, which is seen as measurable through portfolios, tests and interviews;
* The over-emphasis on particular ‘attributes’ associated with having potential, which contributes to misrecognitions;
* The construction of the (imaginary) ideal student-subject against whom admissions tutors measure and judge applicants;
* The institutional and disciplinary values and perspectives that implicitly shape the selection process in ways that exacerbate gendered, classed and racialised inequalities and exclusion in art and design admissions.

1. **SYMPOSIUM: Radical Futures: Entanglements of Matter and Meaning in Contemporary Feminist Theory**

**Christina Hughes, University of Warwick, Jocey Quinn, University of Plymouth, Maria Tamboukou, Centre for Narrative Research and Gali Weiss, Visual Artist**

‘How did language come to be more trustworthy than matter? (Barad, 2003: 801). Barad’s question provides the framework for this symposium through which we engage with the textures of ‘experience and reality that do not present themselves in propositional or even in verbal form’ (Sedgwick, 2003: 6). Barad’s work steps off from where Butler and Foucualt leave us by bringing together the human and nonhuman, the material and discursive and the natural and cultural. Barad’s concerns are that performative concepts of language have been limited to, perhaps even privileged, psychic and socio-historical forces over those of the physiological, biological and neurological. As such they have failed to take account of how ‘other material forces actively matter to the process of materialization’ (2003: 809). Barad’s insistence on a productive view of materiality does not presume that matter is inert as would be found in many social constructivist accounts and through which matter is there to be ‘shaped’. Neither is matter determining of the social, something that has been of great concern to feminist thought given the negative consequences of essentialist arguments. Instead, object/subject and nature/culture are understood within entangled relations and ‘as emerging through particular encounters of persons and things’ (Suchman, 2010).

There are two terms central to Barad’s position. These are intra-action and cut. Intra-action ‘signifies the mutual constitution of entangled agencies’ (Barad, 2007: 33). Intra-action, as it is captured within Barad’s development of agential realism, calls for an analysis that requires us to consider entanglement, diffraction and posthumanism rather than individualism, representation and humanism (Dolling, 2007). This is reinforced through the concept of the cut which draws attention to the significance of ethical responsibility and positionality in the development of knowledge. The ‘cut’ marks the boundary that we should pay attention to as it is the cut that marks our knowledge of a phenomenon. Boundaries mark the point at which human meaning can be made but they are not innocent, in the way that an objectivist science might suggest. These concepts are explored in the three papers in this symposium.

Christina Hughes’ research on jewellery designer makers examines a moment of salivating over a desired jewel. This provides an exemplary case to raise critical questions about the intra-action of physiological processes and pleasurable anticipation. In scientific literature on learning, such a relationship would be traditionally Pavlovian (or even Skinnerian). However, Christina’s paper considers the relationship between matter and discourse as one of mutual entailment such that ‘Discursive practices and material phenomena do not stand in a relationship of externality to one another … matter and meaning are mutually articulated’ (Barad, 2003: 822).

Maria Tamboukou and Gali Weiss’ collaborative paper provides the context for thinking through the intra-relationship between the spatial and discursive entanglements of art and the academy. Their paper provides a diffractive analysis of the relationship between artistic practice and academic convention as it explores the differential positioning of each author.

Jocey Quinn is concerned with entanglement of human and other through our relationships to the natural world. Research respondents in her recent study of young people working in low waged occupations (Quinn, Lawy and Diment, 2008) frequently commented on their engagement with the countryside, the sea and animals. As a neglected aspect of lifelong learning, Jocey raises a number of questions about the role of nature in the learning lives, not only of others but of herself. How does an intra-active relationship with nature shape subjectivity and ways of knowing?

In presenting these papers our aim is to open a discussion on the efficacy and potential of employing Barad’s philosophical framework. How does her work help us to capture hitherto neglected or bracketed out aspects of gender and education? What tools and methodologies do we require to fully embrace the entangled relations between the natural, the social and the cultural? What are the political implications of a Baradian analysis and where do we have to be watchful?

**Salivary Identities: The Matter of Affect**

**Christina Hughes, University of Warwick**

**A Moment of Salivating**

*“Do you want to know how I know which one [precious gemstone] I’m going to buy? When I see a stone I like, I get …. [She points to her mouth. Her tongue looks as if it is touching the roof of her mouth and then it flickers, in lizard fashion, momentarily across her lips.] My mouth goes wet. That’s how.” (Rachel, Jewellery Designer Maker comments, Field Notes, April 2008)*

In the epigraph above, Rachel presents a self that salivates over the prospect of buying gemstones. In so doing, she calls to mind a classic image of Pavlovian stimulus-response behaviourism. Just as Pavlov’s dogs salivated on hearing a bell as a prelude to food, so Rachel salivates, seemingly at the stimulus of buying a particular precious gemstone. In providing salivation as the catalyst to purchase, we might read Rachel as an over-trained jewellery designer whose subjective attachments to the tools of her trade have led to an unthinking biological responsiveness.

A tangential selfhood that Rachel presents is that of the dopamine influenced pleasure seeker. Dopamine is strongly associated with addiction as drugs stimulate its production creating a reward circuit that is hard to break. Thus, commenting on how her love of specific gemstones leads her to buy more than she may, in all likelihood, ever use in her work, Rachel remarks with an ironic laugh: ‘Yes, it’s like being an addict’. Such an impression is reinforced by the local generic term for gemstones. Notably amongst designer makers, the gemstones are not referred to by their specific names of tourmaline, opal, pink diamond, landscape agate and so forth. Highlighting their complex status of being both a beloved, precious, confection and a synonym for amphetamine drugs, they are referred to euphemistically as sweeties.

Using this moment of salivary anticipation, this paper uses the terms ‘hot spots’ and ‘hot circuits’ to consider the intra-action of neuro-biological processes and artistic and craft learning. Such an approach, however, risks its own denouement because of such categorical diversity. How does one speak and connect in an intra-disciplinary way? Using the concept of ‘cut’ the conclusion considers this concern. I argue that an analysis that seeks to recognise life and social processes as mutually intra-dependent has to proceed at the same time as guarding against a reduction to simplistic causal narratives. In so doing, such an analysis has to resist a defensive humanism that exempts physiological processes from analysis or, at minimum, restricts them to metaphorical redescription. These issues are, moreover, politically necessary if we are to think, research and retain critical purchase when forces at the level of neurophysiology and neurochemical distribution are the target of multinational corporate interests. Whilst there is much work to do in finding appropriate analytic and methodological tools to navigate this intra-disciplinary terrain (see Lee and Motzkau, 2010; Williams, 2009), as Barad reflects this is an issue of agential responsibility for each of us to consider.

**Caught up in Nature: intra-activity of young people and the natural world**

**Jocey Quinn, University of Plymouth**

“”We” are not outside observers of the world. Nor are we simply located at particular places i*n* the world; rather we are part *of* the world in its ongoing intra-activity…We do not obtain knowledge by standing outside of the world; we know because “we” are *of* the world” (Barad, 2003, p 828)

This paper will use Karen Barad’s concept of ‘intra-activity’ to explore entanglements of young people and the natural world. It draws on data from a study funded by the EU/ Connexions /Learning and Skills Council and conducted in South West England. This study explored how young people working in ‘jobs without training’ (in farms, hotels, shops, building sites and other low waged occupations ), felt about their lives, their work and their learning (Quinn, Lawy and Diment, 2008). This was a longitudinal, qualitative study which combined 182 telephone and face to face interviews with 114 young people. An unexpected facet of the emerging data was the ways in which the natural world: the sea, the fields, the woods and animals within them were embedded in the daily lives of many of these young people and seemed to have some kind of influence on their attitudes and behaviour. How important is this intra-activity with the natural world in constituting ways of being, thinking and learning for these young people? How can it be understood without positioning them as picturesque? Barad’s ideas help to unpick the pivotal role of the matter of nature in their lives. The paper will also discuss the intra-activity between myself and the estuary-side location where I now live and how moving there produced apparently different ways of knowing, thinking and writing.

**Intra-actions between life and art, entanglements between artistic and academic spaces**

**Maria Tamboukou, Centre for Narrative Research, UK**

**Gali Weiss, Visual Artist**

In this paper, we look back in an art/research experiment of convening an exhibition of eleven women artists and inviting them to a round-table discussion in the context of the annual conference of the British Sociological Association, held in London in April 2007 at the University of East London. The artists who took part in this event had been previously interviewed for an AHRC funded project, entitled ‘In the fold between life and art, a genealogy of women artists’. In taking up Karen Barad’s notion of ‘intra-actions’ we are thus exploring spatial and discursiveentanglements between ‘the art’ and ‘the academy’: How can artistic creativity make connections with academic conventions, how can artists inhabit both worlds and what happens when the artist and the researcher engage in conversation?

1. **Asian women in higher education: support networks, success and aspects of ‘localism’**

**Kalwant Bhopal and Priya Khambhaita , University of Southampton**

This paper will examine the support networks available to Asian women whilst studying at a ‘new’ (post-1992) university. It will explore the strategies of success associated with community membership that Asian women use whilst at university. The paper is based on 45 in-depth interviews carried out with Indian, Sikh and Muslim women who were studying for a Social Sciences or Education Studies degree. All of the interviews were tape-recorded and subsequently transcribed. The findings examine how women form particular communities whilst at university (Bhopal, 2010) – these in effect are translated into ‘communities of practice’ (Wenger, 1998). It is through these ‘communities of practice’ that women are able to support each other by regular interaction, shared language and support for assignments and exams. Part of this ‘community of practice’ is based on the issue of ‘localism’ and ‘critical mass’ and is associated with particular boundaries of membership. Many of the Asian women chose to attend their local university as they felt their experience in higher education would include women who were ‘like them’ and with whom they could identify. Such attendance enabled women to draw support from the communities of practice they were engaged in within the university. The idea of identifying with like minded students encouraged women to draw support from each other in an environment in which many of the women identified as ‘outsiders’.

The paper will also explore quantitative data which supports the notion of ‘localism’. Differences in the accommodation choices made by female students from the White and Asian communities are highlighted. HESA enrolment data for academic years 1998 and 2005 are used in the analysis presented here in order to explore (i) the decision to move out of the parental/guardian home whilst attending university and (ii) the decision to move out of one’s home region conditional on the fact a student is not living in the parental home. Findings suggest that Indian, Pakistani and Bangladeshi female students are all more likely to live in the parental/guardian home than White students. Students from all three Asian groups that do move out are less likely to attend a university outside their home region. These patterns are persistent in both 1998 and 2005. The key changes between this period included an increase in students recorded as living in their parental/guardian home. More students that did move out decided to stay in their region in 2005 than they had done in the earlier year. Finally, in 1998 the Indian group was quite distinct from the other two Asian groups in that it was very similar to the White group in terms of the decision to live in the parental home. In 2005, this gap reduces and the Pakistani and Bangladeshi groups behave more similarly to the Indian and White groups.

1. **Constructing Alternative Identities**: **cigarette smoking and African Caribbean young women**

**Jenny Douglas, Faculty of Health & Social Care, The Open University**

Over the last two decades researchers have focused on young (white) women, identity and cigarette smoking. This research increasingly has incorporated sociological approaches used in girls’ studies which have sought to explore femininity and cigarette smoking and have examined cigarette smoking (and drinking alcohol) as ways of doing ‘girl’. In this research on white girls doing femininity, there is an assumption that the findings and analyses of researchers in this field can be extended to black girls. But is this the case – do black girls do ‘girl’ in the same way as white girls or are they constructing alternative identities? This paper interrogates the relationship between cigarette smoking and the racialised, gendered and classed identities of African-Caribbean young women and considers what this reveals about the ways in which young African-Caribbean women in the UK are constructing their identities.

This paper reports on a mixed-method, multi-disciplinary empirical study. Focus groups were conducted with African Caribbean young women aged between 15 to 16 years old in addition to a cross-sectional school survey which sought to determine the factors which influenced smoking behaviour and the meanings that smoking had for this group of young women and young men and women from several ethnic groups. Using the group interview, information was collected on attitudes to smoking, perceptions, beliefs, pre-dispositions and experiences as well as what it means to be an African-Caribbean young woman in contemporary Britain and any particular pressures or reasons for smoking or not smoking. To date there has been very little data on black and minority ethnic communities and cigarette smoking which shed light on protective factors as well as risk factors. In addition there is limited research in the UK which focuses on African-Caribbean young women and cigarette smoking. This research adds a perspective to U.K. research on gender and smoking which includes the dimensions of ‘race’ and ethnicity, providing information on a previously under-researched and under-theorized area on black and minority ethnic young people and cigarette smoking.

1. **Sex, Hegemony and Resistance in the School: Students constructing gendered, raced, classed and sexualized subjectivities in a Hungarian vocational school**

**Dorottya Redai, Department of Gender Studies, Central European University, Budapest**

For my doctoral research project, I am doing ethnographic fieldwork in a secondary vocational school in Budapest, with the aim of finding out about how the sexual citizenship of adolescents is produced, reproduced and regulated in a specific institutional setting. School is one of the key sites of formal and non-formal production of citizenship, including sexual citizenship. Sexuality, gender, class and race production, reproduction, regulation, policing and resistance are constantly at work in this setting, and it seems that peer influences and the hierarchical streaming of students into different professional tracks are especially significant factors in this process. In this paper I look into focus group interviews I have conducted with students and analyse what they say about sex, relationships, family, sexual and gender identities, bodies, femininity and masculinity, aiming to find out about how gender, sexuality, race and class intersect in the production of these students’ subjectivities and positioning in the hierarchy of the school, and what kind of non-hegemonic, alternative femininities and masculinities they can construct for themselves and for one another out of their identity constellations and positions in the school structure.

As for theoretical and methodological background, my research follows the lines of British critical sociology of education, currently concerned with the construction of particular sorts of raced, classed and gendered school subjects, and the relationship between sexualities, femininities, masculinities and schooling (See: Youdell, 2005). However, my approach is novel in Hungarian educational research, which is mostly quantitative and lacks a gender dimension, let alone inquiry into sexuality in schooling. Currently, scientific inquiry into class and race issues in Hungarian education is limited to the so-called ‘Roma issue’, i.e. the discrimination of Roma children and youth in schooling. I intend to ‘trouble’ this scene with my school ethnography, throwing in new research methods and topics, and expanding existing research dimensions by ‘giving’ gender and sexuality to these raced and classed subjects called ‘Roma students’ and ‘Hungarian/white students’.

1. **‘I’m a geek I am’: negotiating de-industrialization among white, working class academic achievers in the South Wales valleys**

**Mike Ward, Cardiff University**

During the last few decades the South Wales valleys (U.K) have undergone a considerable economic transformation. Alongside industrial change, social, cultural and political traditions have altered youth transitions from school to work. Working class young people in particular have struggled to reinvent themselves in light of these changes. This paper is drawn from a wider ESRC-funded ethnography that explores the diversity of white, working class Welsh masculinities (both in and out of educational institutions) aged between 16 and 18 in a socially and economically disadvantaged community. Its focus is on how young men create their masculinities within the limits of place, the opportunities that are available to them through a disadvantaged social class position and also the bodily performances which these masculinities are performed through. I therefore suggest a relational approach is needed to understand both social identities and social inequalities. After exploring the overall study, research questions and it’s place in the wider literature, this paper concentrates on one group of young men who were the most academic in their year group and self identified themselves as ‘the geeks’. Instead of a group of problematic, white, working class underachieving macho, aggressive, misogynists, as the popular press and political discourse iterates, I suggest that these young men could, despite the many obstacles they face, be termed ‘achieving boys’. These softer masculinities then offer a different way in which to view a disadvantaged community. In this paper I explore how their future aspirations to attend university and to leave the locale are tempered by the historic classed and gender codes that underpin the region.

## The making of manual male identities within the Individual programme at a Swedish Upper Secondary School

**Marianne Dovemark, Department of Education and Special Education, University of Gothenburgh, Sweden**

The paper uses ethnographic research from a Swedish Upper Secondary School to examine how construction of manual masculinities work in everyday life according to conditions and possibilities of treatments, subjects, schedules, locations etc. The paper is about the individual programme in the Swedish Upper Secondary School. The individual programme in the Swedish Upper Secondary School is a kind of 'sink programme' for pupils who for one reason or another have not entered one of the main national programmes or special programmes. Usually this is because they lack the necessary grades from secondary school.

The paper identifies how young men (16-18 years old) drew on various discourses of masculinity in their arguments for and against education participation. The paper discusses and analyses how potential implications upon working-class students’ continued underrepresentation in academically national programmes and how both the young men themselves and staff constructed manual masculinities.

The paper considers how gender and class interact to impact upon working-class students’ negotiations of participation and non-participation in education (Archer et.al. 2001). In line with critical ethnography (Beach, 1997) the paper unpack a dominant conceptualisation of young working-class students and try to understand how the students construct and position themselves within complex power structures (Connell, 1989; Paechter, 1998). Through subtle and uncertain interactions of agency and structures, social groups and individuals come to embody, mediate and enact the operations and results of unequal power.

The analyses are built on observations, interviews and field interviews during the school year 2008/2009. Two groups, one at Chisel and one at Quill, have been extensively focused on. In average two days a week (full or half days packages) were spent in the field during the autumn and spring term. 24 students (17-18 years of age), 10 teachers, one head master and three instructors have been interviewed.

The analysis suggests that the construction of the manual man is made both by staff as well as by the young men themselves. A superior discourse of ‘being manual’ was found where ‘manual’ was considered high status related to an ambivalent attitude towards theoretical studies (Mac An Gail, 1994; Arnot, 2004).

1. **Gender Awareness into Teacher Education: Mission Impossible?**

**Elina Lahelma, University of Helsinki, Finland**

In many European countries, the need to promote gender equality within and through education has been on the agenda, as an important goal for schools and teacher education since the international resolutions and national legislation concerning gender equality have reached educational authorities. In Finland we have, since the 1970s, a history of hundreds of national and international projects and reports that have repeated the same aims, ideas and practical innovations for promoting gender equality, challenging educational segregation, providing girl friendly or boy friendly pedagogies etc. (Brunila 2009). Gender research has sometimes more, and sometimes less openly been used to support this political aim. Very little change has taken place, however. In this paper my aim is to discuss some of the constraints that feminist teachers and teacher educators constantly face in this endeavour.

The paper draws, firstly, from analyses conducted in studies in several institutions of teacher education, within a context of a national project on my leadership Gender Awareness in Teacher Education (TASUKO, 2008-2010, supported by the Ministry of Education). Secondly, I use my own experiences as an actor in the field of gender equality in education since the early 1980s, and related documents, as well as some findings an ethnographically grounded life historical project on young people that I have conducted (e.g. Gordon & Lahelma 2004). Methodologically, I will use ideas from genealogical and discourse analysis. The paper will also be informed by multi-sited ethnography (e.g. Marcus 1995) and auto-ethnographical understandings.

Initially, I am suggesting that there are (at least) four interlinked reasons for the difficulties in including the ideas of gender equality and results and perspectives of feminist studies into Finnish teacher education. Firstly, some teachers and teacher educators regard Finland as a country in which gender equality has been achieved. I will analyse this assumption from the perspective of ‘genderless gender’ (Ronkainen 2001). Secondly, some teachers and teacher educators suggest that gender problem in schools is a problem of boys’ poor achievement, and suppose that feminist studies ignore this problem. I will analyse this assumption as a recurrent political discourse (Lahelma 2005;Arnesen et al 2008). The third theme that I will focus is the difficulty to discuss gender issues because they are so deeply involved in personal lives and subjectivities. Challenging hegemonic masculinities and gender inequalities in schools and in the society might be especially difficult for young women who are actively in search for heterosexual partnership – who have ‘Male in the Head’ (Holland & al. 1999). Finally, I will suggest that the historical background of teacher education and its structures make any changes in the curriculum difficult (e.g. Sunnari 1997).

Finally, in order for a somewhat more optimistic ending, I will describe some of the results of the TASUKO-project.

1. **Gender Inclusiveness in Language Teacher Education in TESOL**

**Sam Hume, Universität Augsburg/University of Exeter**

The aim of this research project was to explore how teacher educators understand the notion of *inclusiveness* and whether modelling inclusiveness with respect to language and culture is a necessary part of language teacher education (LTE). The paper will report the findings of 20 questionnaires on specific aspects of inclusiveness in language and culture, five interviews with experienced educators, asked to comment on their own use of inclusive language and cultural items as well as their views on how necessary it is to model such items when engaging in teacher education, and the results (forthcoming Feb. 2011) of a survey of a group of pre-service teachers on their attitudes on inclusiveness in language and cultural.

The LTE programme where I work in Germany has quite explicit guidelines on discrimination, however, the disparity between that which should be taught and that which I observed in pre-service and in-service teachers’ language use led me to ask a group of teacher educators if, why and how they focussed on inclusiveness in language and culture. The research framework of this small-scale project was explanatory sequential in nature, using a mixed method approach to data collection and analysis. The theoretical framework informing the study is one which combines a critical feminist and poststructuralist approach and incorporates work on feminist linguistic theory (Romaine 1999; Mills 2008), teachers’ beliefs (Borg 2001), and reflective practice (Farrell 2007). The research questions were:

i Why do you correct/not correct the pseudo generic *he*?

ii Which target language samples from alternative lifestyles and cultural heritages do you use and why?

iii Do you consider it important to model non-discriminatory language and cultural issues as a teacher educator?

As a critical feminist, it was important to me to investigate women’s attitudes towards, and experiences of inclusiveness, especially with respect to gender inequalities in the classroom (Weiner 1998; Skelton & Francis 2009; Sunderland 1992; Sunderland 1994; Johnson 2002). Also, from a poststructuralist viewpoint, was there resistance when or if these predominantly women educators tried to implement change? The male-domination of educational institutions means that subjects are often exposed to values which are not necessarily inclusive. With respect to language, this means using discriminatory and exclusive forms and examples. I hoped the subjective experience of the interviewees, their interpretations of their experiences as teacher educators and their language use would shed light on their perspectives on inclusiveness.

Findings showed that the participants believed that teaching about gender and non-discriminatory language was not necessarily part of teaching about culture. They modelled cultural inclusiveness by using a wide variety of materials and highlighting issues explicitly. Gender inclusiveness, as one interviewee pointed out, was simply not on their radar. The belief these educators held was that including cultural variety would be sufficient to promote non-discrimination in other areas (The pre-service teachers comments are forthcoming). It became apparent in the course of this small-scale investigative study that inclusiveness in language still an issue in needs of further inquiry.

1. **Women Head teachers in Greece: Constraints in their career progression**

**Papanastasiou Emmy, London Metropolitan University**

Although women constitute over half of the work force (Dencker 2008), leadership in general had been identified with men (Schein 1994, 2001, Grace 1995). This phenomenon seems to be pervasive through time and has been reported by various researchers and in various countries (Castilla 2005, Fernandez, Castilla and Moore 2000, Gorman 2005, Sanal 2008). The same is noted in educational leadership as well (Blackmore 1989, 1995).

A number of structural and cultural barriers that block career progress for women have been identified, including:

-Dominant masculine hierarchy and paternalistic relationships in schools (Funk 1986, Shakeshaft 1989, Blackmore 1989)

-Women’s reluctance to apply for promotion (Randall 1994) due to either lack of interest (Shakeshaft 2006) or lack of expertise (d’ Arbon et al 2002).

-Lack of mentoring and support systems (Randall 1994, Coleman 2002, Cubillo and Brown 2003).

-Lack of adequate childcare systems and stress caused by role conflict (career-family) (Al Khalifa 1992, d’ Arbon et al 2002)

The reality in primary school management in Greece is that women are under-represented, although they are the majority of the teaching staff.

Despite the fact that there is some literature from other countries, the existing literature in Greece is limited, as there is no in-depth research about the problems that women may be facing when they apply for a managing position.

The present study (part of an ongoing PhD research) focuses on studying the accounts of the personal and professional lives of women head teachers in four distinct areas in Greece, by investigating the experiences of women head teachers, of women teachers who do not wish to apply for headship and the opinions of male head teachers and teachers about women in management positions. Specifically, the aim of this presentation is to investigate the constraints that women in headship positions face.

A qualitative approach is used, based upon semi-structured interviews with female and male head teachers and teachers. Presentation and analysis of the fieldwork has an emphasis on ensuring that the subjects’ voices are heard and prioritised.

The main constraint that is present in this study is the one between the personal and professional lives of women (taking care of the children, domestic responsibilities, attitudes and beliefs of their husbands, and attitudes and beliefs of other people in their environment). Other constraints are the organisational and structural barriers regarding their further development and their performance as head teachers.

This study of the (gendered) organisational and family culture adds to the limited knowledge about women in leadership positions in Greece and their attempts to break through the “glass-ceiling”.

1. **Career Development among Women Assistant Principals in High School - Reasons that they Retain the Position of Assistant Principal and Obstacles in Reaching Senior Management**

**Vered Tamir, Seminar Hakibutzim- Tel aviv**

For the past few decades, the impression in the western world has been that a change has occurred in the status of women—in women’s power, place, and social status (Blackmore, 2000; Powell& Graves, 2003). Thus, in Israeli schools—as in many other countries—the number of women serving as principals and vice-principals has increased, alongside an increase in the rate of women who receive specialized educational training in school administration (Nogay&Beebe, 2008; Oplatka, 2001). Therefore, these facts reflect a process of feminization of the managerial positions in the schools. In spite of this, the rate of women’s progression in the system is still slow (Oplatka & Hertz-Lazarowitz, 2006; Opltka&Tamir, 2009).

To address this gap, which prevails in other occupational fields as well, there is a great need for research on external and internal barriers hindering women in their professional paths. These external barriers include for example, “corridors of power” closed to women due to organizational policies relying on a narrow minded system and prejudices (Davidson & Bruke, 2000). In contrast, research literature reports that intrinsic personal factors—for example: multiple conflicting duties; lack of ambition for upper level management positions and, similarly, gender stereotypes, all hinder and block women’s personal, professional, and social development (Gilligan, 1982; Hickson & Pugh, 2002).

Within the school context, the dilemma of women’s professional development in administrative positions gives rise to questions relating to professional progress. This issue is at the core of the present research, and its main purpose is to examine the source as to the reasons women senior vice-principals’ maintain their same level of professionalism (with at least 10 years seniority) and do not advance to top-level administrative positions in high schools.

Data analysis of the findings was conducted, based on life stories and self reflective observations (vision) of the vice-principal interviewees. These serve as a dynamical essence, comprised of many elements, of different levels, often entailing various components conversing with each other (Lieblich&, Tuval-Mashiach, 1995; Jesselson, 1995; Lincoln& Guba, 1990). The in-depth interview was made in order to reveal and make the personal perspective of the interviewee understandable (Paton, 1990).

The voice of the assistant principal attempts to authentically describe the phenomenon of the totality of barriers: organizational, social, and personality. These break the desire of the “perpetual” vice principal to ascend to the principalship of the school. The factors leading to the vice principals’ decision not to seek promotion stems from three basic factors: 1) objective, internal , organizational factors; 2) behavioral/cultural factors rooted in stereotypes, symbols, perceptions of power, preferred leadership styles, the essence of the psychodynamic relationship between men and women; 3) factors touching on personality traits.

In closing, consideration should be given to studying the relative importance of the administrative experience on the career path of the assistant principals, and whether the impact was helpful or harmful to their future career plans.

1. **A narrative exploration of the experiences of South-Asian adolescent girls: challenges, ethical dilemmas and constraints**

**Geeta Ludhra, Brunel University, West London, School of Sport and Education**

This paper outlines the ethical dilemmas faced by an ‘inside’ researcher as part of her doctoral study with twelve South Asian girls aged between 16-17 years. The research involved a narrative approach to explore how they viewed their ‘cultural’ identities within different spaces of their lives (GEA, 2010). The study was conducted in two London based secondary schools during 2010. The girls were all ambitious and academically driven A’ level students from Hindu, Muslim and Sikh backgrounds.

In line with postmodern, feminist theory, their ‘mini-narratives’ offered valuable insights into their specific cultural and social contexts (Liamputtong, 2007) as well as insights into their career aspirations and future plans. The experiences of Asian women requires an understanding of multiple axes of oppression (or rather challenges) outside of gender and class alone (Gillborn and Youdell, 2009; Mirza, 2009; Shain, 2003).

After critically evaluating Phase One of the doctoral study (a semi- structured interview approach conducted between 2008-2009), the researcher decided to adopt a more open-ended ‘research conversation’ approach to provide spaces for the girls to raise their own ‘research agendas’ and build on reflections over a period of months (Ludhra and Chappell, 2010). Data collection involved in-depth conversations and reflective processes (visual and written reflections in a research journal and e-mail dialogue) between each research visit.

During the process of data collection, the researcher became increasingly aware of the complexity of using a more open-ended approach. She discussed her position, ethical concerns and dilemmas with other academic colleagues. What became clear during the data collection process was the nature and ethics of ‘insider’ research was far more fluid, shifting and entangled than originally anticipated (Rogers and Ludhra, 2010). A critical sensitivity to such a position provided valuable insights into the potential challenges facing South-Asian girls and the researcher experienced a sense of connectedness through her research journey and 'cultural familiarity' through parallel experiences (Bhopal, 2010:25).

Some of the themes to be outlined in the paper will include: perceptions of ‘safe spaces’ for interviews (Whose ‘safe space’?); building relationships and rapport (How far should one delve?); revisiting ‘old ghosts’ (How does the ‘insider’ researcher’s ‘voice’ emerge within the course of the study?) and developing a heightened awareness of ‘ethics in process’ (Laimputtong, 2007).

In relation to moral and ethical dilemmas, the study was full of challenges yet opened up innovative opportunities to explore the lived experiences and aspirations of these girls. At times, the research experience seemed cathartic for the girls and this was expressed in their final reflections at the end of the study.

However, claiming to ‘empower’ research participants in an emancipatory way was by no means an aim of the study; the narratives however revealed otherwise. The girls discussed how they viewed their identities and experiences (and those around them) in new and almost ‘catalytic’ ways (Belenky et. al, 1986).

1. **To dramatize or not to dramatize: that is the question – The perception of gender in a women-only technical college course**

**Birgit Hofstätter, Anita Thaler**

**IFZ – Inter-University Research Centre for Technology, Work and Culture, Klagenfurt University**

Previous research about women-only engineering education argues that a gender-segregated learning environment helps participants to better focus on knowledge acquisition as gender becomes less important, or in other words, gender would be less dramatized (Wetterer 1996, Weiss Sampietro & Ramsauer 2009).

Engineering and technology are so called ‘heavily gendered’ fields, which means that they are strongly associated with masculinity (Wajcman 2000, Wächter 2003). This is especially true for technological ‘hard-core’ disciplines such as mechanical or electrical engineering. As soon as women enter education in these fields, gender becomes relevant due to their status as a minority. Thus women-only engineering education can be seen as a possibility to ‘de-gender’ the field at least in the educational context. But mono-education is not without controversy. Counter-arguments do not only come from persons without gender expertise but from gender scholars as well. Some argue from a certain gender-cultural background, for instance seeing gender-segregation as opposition to gender equality (Dahmen 2005), others are advocates of co-education as a milestone of equal opportunities of males and females in education.

In the study presented in this paper the authors process-evaluated Austria’s first technical college course for women (Hofstätter, Freitag, Thaler 2010) to explore factors of success and non-persistence in women-only engineering education. In a triangulation of quantitative and qualitative methods the inner and outer perspectives on the college course were explored to identify where the monoeducational setting works as a paradoxical intervention in favor of gender equity (Wetterer 1996) and at which point gender is implicitly or explicitly dramatized, resulting in inhibiting learning.

1. **Lines of distinction: gender, class, celebrity and young people’s ‘identity work’**

**Kim Allen and Heather Mendick, Institute for Policy Studies in Education, London Metropolitan University; Goldsmiths, University of London**

In England, as in many Western countries, celebrity culture is increasingly important. Media and policy discussions of young people and celebrity in England contain contradictory messages. Celebrities have been used as ‘role models’ promoting educational initiatives, from footballers endorsing literacy to their ‘Wives And Girlfriends’ praised and paraded for their qualifications. Alongside this, there are growing concerns that young people value fame in and of itself, rather than seeking achievement through hard work or skill. These concerns have been raised by many organisations and individuals, including UK teachers’ unions and politicians: MP Barbara Follet said: ‘Kids nowadays just want to be famous. ...Our society is in danger of being Barbie-dolled’.

We want to interrupt dominant public discourses which either trivialise young people’s celebrity consumption or judge it harmful and antithetical to educational and career ‘success’. Both responses ignore the contemporary significance of celebrity. To do this we draw on three interconnected studies examining young people’s career aspirations. Kim Allen’s (2008) Arts and Humanities Research Council funded doctoral study ‘Young women and the Performing Arts: Creative Education, New Labour and the remaking of the young female self’; Heather Mendick and Katya Williams (2008) British Academy funded study ‘The impact of the depiction of work in TV drama on young people’s career aspirations and choices’; and Heather Mendick, Debbie Epstein and Marie-Pierre Moreau’s (2008) Economic and Social Research Council funded ‘Mathematical Images and Identities’. These studies involved a mix of group and individual interviews with young people aged between 14 and 19 years old. These interview data were audio-recorded, transcribed and analysed discursively. In this way we are contributing to the urgent need to address the social function of celebrity identified by Graeme Turner in the new *Journal of Celebrity Studies* in 2010.

We argue that celebrity operates as a discursive device within young people’s identity work which structures their aspirations. We show that processes of social distinction work through celebrity as celebrities are classified within binary oppositions as proper/improper, deserving/undeserving, talented/talentless and respectable/tacky. We argue that these distinctions reproduce hierarchies of gender and social class.

In contrast with textually-oriented studies of celebrity, which often imply a straightforward take-up of dominant meanings, we show that people’s relationship to celebrity is riddled with contradictions. In particular, some participants produced readings that show ambivalence and even resistance to dominant constructions of ‘improper fame’. We will discuss some of the implications of our analysis of young people’s relationship with celebrity for teachers, careers advisors and other professionals whose work concerns young people’s educational and career choices and aspirations.

1. **Gender in virtual courtships. The position as ´woman´ in online games**

**Elisabet Öhrn and Jonas Linderoth, Department of Education and Special Education, University of Gothenburg.**

During the past five years, computer and video gaming has become more social activities. Large game titles like World of Warcraft, Call of Duty and Left 4 Dead are games based on the idea that players should participate in an online community. In these virtual worlds players from all over the world meet online and play together. The games have become a sort of social media, where people with different backgrounds, different nationalities and different age meet. Previous research proposes that such individual backgrounds pose as especially irrelevant in computer games and consequently, they are arenas for trying or claiming new identities (Whang & Chang, 2004) or explore sexualities (Consalvo, 2003: Flanagan, 2003). Previous observations hold that gender boundaries are commonly transgressed in computer games (MacCallum-Stewart, 2008; Kafai, 2009; Sundén, 2009)and that especially male players cross gender during play (Griffiths, Davies & Chappell, 2003). There are various reasons proposed for this, from the use of female characters to be arbitrary or just one option amongst many to the suggestion that women characters are chosen because they enjoy special attention or a special impact as ‘attractive’ (see Yee, Bailenson & Ducheneaut, 2009). Taking this as a starting point, this paper reports from an interview study with nine young people, five men and four women aged 19-22, who all played computer games online. The results confirm that gaming is an activity where bodily features of the participants can be largely ignored. During gaming the individuals primarily were identified as ‘players’ i.e. what mattered was how well they performed in the game, whereas their social status, income, nationality or other features from the world outside the gaming arena appeared irrelevant. This also included gender in the sense that participants could choose what gender to assume. However, whereas the choice of individual on-line gender (woman or man) could be chosen freely, femininity and the position as woman was represented as rather rigid. The data suggest online gaming partly to be a courtship culture where the position as woman means being treated specially, sometimes to receive ‘favours’ like virtual gold or extra help from on-line male players. Thus ‘woman’ becomes a receiving, rather inflexible and essentialised position. The paper explores this tension between the free choice of a female position and its fixed content in relation to assumptions of the transgressive nature of computer gaming.

***72b) ‘It’s only a joke’: Laughter, humour and teenage girls’ performance of gender and sexual agency***

***Fin Cullen, Brunel University***

Earlier scholarly work on gender, humour and young people has often located it as a space where young men perform, maintain and constitute hegemonic masculinity (Kehily & Nayak, 1997; Nayak & Kehily, 2001). This paper explores how young women use humour as a resource in upholding and transgressing sex-gender boundaries.

I examine young women’s use of humour, in order to examine the various roles and performance of joker identities, the use of humour as small ritual acts of rebellion and conformity in negotiating and producing contextual sex-gender codes. My interest here is in theories of humour, joking and gender for girls. I  want to suggest that young women use humour both as a self-governing disciplinary tool to regulate and scrutiny others gendered and sexual performances, but also as an important space to  uphold and challenge (hetero)normative discourses around  agency, childhood, and sex- gender.

After exploring some key theoretical work on jokes and humour, I reflect on a series of vignettes both from my ethnographic doctoral research work within informal education settings, and autoethnographic work as a youth practitioner on a comedy project. The themes of humour provides a rich seam of material  to explore dominant and normative  sex-gender discourses in play, and  especially how young people adopt, appropriate, resist and /or reject such dominant discourses thorough jokes and wordplay. This paper as work-in-progress can  thus hopefully inform debates around young people’s agency within friendship groups and sex-gender ‘borderwork’ (Thorne, 1993). Finally, I also want to also  very briefly reflect on the potential of humour as an educational tool to explore normative gender with young people.

1. **Feminisms, Women and Universities in Changing Times: A Critical and Passionate Reflection**

**Miriam David, Institute of Education, London**

In this paper I will reflect critically, from a feminist perspective, upon the ways in which universities have expanded globally and internationally, and become massive institutions, over the last 30 years. Drawing on a series of reflective essays that I am preparing for a book for Routledge (2011) which itself is reflective of my passionate commitment to women’s empowerment through education, especially higher education, and forms of women’s studies, I hope to critique how new forms of higher education incorporate women as undergraduate and postgraduate students, and have increased the opportunities for women as academics: but they remain circumscribed. Higher education now plays a fundamental part in the global knowledge economies of the so-called ‘global north’. Teaching women’s studies, and feminism, has become an important subject, and methodological approach, within the arts, humanities and social sciences. It draws its strength from the development of second wave feminism, as part of the women’s movement as a social movement in the fourth quarter of the 20th century. This social movement has arguably been one of the key political changes in the late 20th century, and continues into the 21st century.

Yet the transformations in universities, also taking place in the last third of the 20th century, and into the 21st century, have only incorporated a weak version of the radical social and political critique of the socio-political changes. Indeed, the role that higher education plays in relation to the global knowledge economy, has not transformed the social relations, and forms of stratification, within HE, and the gendered power relations within and across forms of global and local higher education. Rather the transformations in global economies and HE have been towards neo-liberalism and individualization, and focus on the individual rather than the social. Yet the changes are complex, given the massive expansions, and entail and embed feminist elements in terms of pedagogies, especially around women’s studies, feminism and gender. Given my passionate commitment to understanding and changing the social and educational world, I intend to use feminist theories and methodologies, developed from with women’s studies and the arts, humanities and social sciences to elaborate my arguments. I hope to demonstrate about the growth of more women than men as undergraduate or first degree students and their involvement and interest in gender issues; courses in women’s and gender studies, and critical forms of feminism. Nevertheless whilst these pedagogies and practices may be empowering to individuals they may not necessarily be empowered in structural and agentic terms. Indeed there are multifarious contradictory arguments and contradictions about these massive social and structural changes, which I plan to reflect on in this essay. I will conclude by envisioning the ‘university’ of the future: feminisms, gender and pedagogies and practices.

**The themes from my book proposal to Routledge:**

1. Focus on expansion (and so-called massification) of universities and higher education in 20th and into 21st century internationally, but with special reference to emergence of ‘modern’ or ‘academic capitalist’ university in the ‘ global north’ viz Europe and north America, but with implications for the so-called global south ie Africa, Asia and Latin America
2. Use of auto/biography and narrative as approaches linked to reflexivity and reflections, and developments in feminisms. My own family came from across Europe as refugees and spread widely to USA and Latin America as well as Europe; mother’s from eastern Europe at the turn of 20th century; father’s from Nazi Germany, and implications for economy/education/family and future for new generations of refugees and global citizenship.
3. Methodological and theoretical approach about feminism as part of the civil, social and emancipatory movements in relation to the growth of the social sciences from ‘origins’ in Europe (specifically France and Germany) to post-second world war developments/critiques and changing role of universities in relation to types of employment and capitalism: globalisation of higher education.
4. Wider economic and political contexts about socio-economic changes, in relation to families and labour markets, and changing role of women, and changing theories about gender and sexualities or sexual identities. Also importance of higher education in relation to changing global political economy and women’s higher education
5. Draw on my earlier work in books and papers but bring together a series of reflections on the themes of equality, family, gender, social class and/or diversity and disadvantage globally and through changing forms of higher education. Imagine a future for a feminist and liberatory higher education.
6. **Title: Plus ça change? Gender, family and academic work**

**Sandra Acker, Michelle Webber and Elizabeth Smyth (University of Toronto)**

This paper examines the nexus of gender, family and academic work in the context of a study of academic tenure in social science departments in Ontario, Canada. Tenure in North America is a crucial evaluative mechanism that shapes and limits how early-career academics learn their craft. It is an example of Foucault’s (1995/1975) concept of discipline as both external control and self-surveillance. A tenure review occurs approximately five years after the initial hire. It is a rigorous scrutiny of teaching, research and service (administration) that determines if the candidate may continue in his or her position.

A new academic learns to ‘perform’ according to institutional and disciplinary norms (Blackmore & Sachs 2007; Butterwick & Dawson 2005; Søndergaard 2005). Many feminist scholars (e.g. Harley 2003; Howie & Tauchert 2002) argue that the long-term consequences of an over-emphasis on performance/performativity disadvantage women, as the complexities of their lives may be in conflict with the desired straightforward, productive academic path (Acker & Armenti 2004). In Canada, the vast majority of tenure cases are successful (although the experience is no less stressful and the review no less elaborate). Thus we are not examining gender-differentiated success rates. Nevertheless, it is still possible that women may be held to a higher standard to succeed (Wennerås & Wold 1997), or that the experiences inflect differently for women and men, or that the process requires both women and men to employ behaviours such as self-promotion that are more stereotypically attached to men. Further, it is commonly held that research productivity is valued above teaching and considerably above administration. Our previous research (e.g. Acker & Feuerverger 1996) found that women academics did more nurturing and mentoring of students and more department service. Elsewhere we considered “how the gendered division of labour, as an inherited cultural form of ‘symbolic domination’ (Bourdieu, 2001) … has influenced the careers and working lives of women university teachers” (Acker & Dillabough 2007). Such overt and covert divisions of labour with their public/private parallels may indicate how men might be advantaged in indirect ways by everyday practices.

As much has changed in universities since the mid-1990s, we wondered whether such patterns would no longer appear or at least be under new guises in contemporary academe. We interviewed 36 ‘junior faculty’ from 7 universities, in the fields of economics, education, geography, politics and sociology, using a semi-structured interview guide. These individuals were nearing the point of tenure review, going through it, or had recently completed it. In an earlier phase of the study, senior managers appeared to think that gender inequities were ‘a thing of the past’ (Acker, Webber & Smyth 2009; see also Blackmore 1997). But how much has really changed? There are indications that younger men, as well as women, are making career decisions with family and relationships in mind. While such decisions show signs of altering traditional relationships, the gendered division of labour in departments seems to point in the direction of confirming them.

1. **Women Academic Careers in Kenya**

**Pamela Raburu, Dhofar University, OMAN**

This study examines the experiences of women academics in relation to their family background, educational experiences, factors that motivated them towards academia, while highlighting strategies that they have employed to reach their present professional and academic ranks. In addition, the study explores the challenges that women academics encounter when combining career pursuit with family responsibilities.

The study is a contribution to knowledge and the extant literature on women academics’ career experiences which has been under-researched, especially in Kenya (Onsongo, 2005; 2009; Manya, 2000; Kamau, 2004). It claims to have made a contribution to a wider understanding of women academics’ experiences, exposing a significant impact of culture, family –work tensions, the gender role expectations, the male-dominated university culture, lack of role models (Morley, 2006; 1999) and mentors, which contribute to the slow progress of women academics’ careers in Kenyan universities.

Using a qualitative research approach, the researcher used a face –to –face in- depth interviewing technique as in (Cohen et al., 2007; Denzin and Lincoln, 2000) with sixteen women academics from three universities in Kenya, while drawing from a feminist perspective. I used this research methodology because it takes women’s needs, interest and experiences into account and treat research subjects as knowing subjects whose knowledge must be respected.

With the use of thematic analysis according to (Braun and Clarke, 2006), different themes emerged: culture, family-career, gender, education abroad, motivational factors, and strategies. The data I present is part of the study I conducted for my thesis in 2008.

The findings of this research demonstrated that very few women have progressed into senior academic and professional ranks and that, the pace is slow. They continue to be hampered by the socio-cultural attitude (Forster 2001; Currie et al., 2000) towards women and their roles in the Kenyan society.

This is not the full story as some of the women interviewed reported that they had to make personal sacrifices, had to put off marriage for career and likewise, others put on hold or postponed career for family responsibilities as was in (Armenti, 2004; Acker and Armenti, 2004). The women in the study believe that having a family and career is detrimental to their career progress.

To maintain their positions or climb the professional ladder, they therefore, had to employ different strategies such as; working hard, focusing on research and publication for promotion purposes.

The wider implications of these findings are discussed.

1. **White working-class boys’ masculinity class and gender negotiations**

**Garth Stahl, University of Cambridge**

The disaffection of white working-class boys has been a major concern in the British education system since the 18th century. While the quality and provision of education for the working-classes has increased, disengagement remains a persistent – and alarming – problem for educators and policy makers. Although the work in the area is diverse in terms of theoretical perspectives (Marxist, Foucauldian, psychological, etc), methodologies (participant observation, interviews, focus groups, etc) and foci (literacy, subcultures, laddish behaviour, hegemonic masculinity), my qualitative research concentrated on the heterogeneity of white working-class boys’ educational experience. Specifically, the research addressed the questions of what can we learn from white working-class boys’ educational experiences and attitudes today? What does their experience tell us about white working-class education failure? In the gendered and classed identity construction of white working-class boys, what makes boys engage or disengage with education and with learning?

Data was analysed using Bourdieu’s concepts of *habitus, field, agency*, *structure* and *capital* with close attention paid to where identity formation is a barrier to academic engagement, duality of identity and social class identification. The research problematises portrayals of white working-class boys – such as arrogance, idleness, rebellion – which were largely facades masking high levels of anxiety over a lack of power.

1. **What discourses do male students access in explaining male underachievement?**

**Laura Manicom, Nottingham Trent University**

Employing semi-structured interviews to produce a largely qualitative body of data, this practitioner research explores what discourses eight male A-Level students access in explaining male underachievement, and how these compare to the common public discourses. Utilizing discourse analysis and informed by a feminist methodology, the key question behind this research is what discourses do male students access, or present, in explaining male underachievement? It also considers how these compare to public discourses of male underachievement (noted in educational policy and media reporting). Are they similar? If so, how are they? Do the male students produce alternative, unconsidered, discourses? If this is the case, what discourses are presented? In addition to other offerings, it was found that not one student employed a consistent gender discourse throughout, often offering contradictory narratives in their explanations of male underachievement. The male informants also displayed a readiness to explain male underachievement in discourses which emphasize gender inequality, with the notable absence of gender equality, and it was felt that this suggests the need to find strategies which make alternative gender discourses available to male students in order to encourage less discriminatory, and often essentialist, ways of thinking about gender. This small-scale research was never intended to produce generalizations. It does, however, provide illuminations for future research with regards to gender discourses, male underachievement and to perhaps a lesser extent masculinity in education. Understanding the gender discourses students utilize can be seen as helping to address the promotion of gender equality whilst allowing us to critically engage with public discourses of male underachievement.

1. **SYMPOSIUM: Schooling Identity and Exclusion Amongst Girls and Young Women**

This symposium brings together work on girls’ schooling and identity practices as related to different forms of ‘exclusion’. The aims of the symposium are to open up the definition of exclusion in thinking about the different ways in which girls may be excluded and how this relates to their social identities both in-school and out-of -school. The papers by Carlile, George and Clark explore girls’ experiences of exclusion that are all connected to girls’ schooling though not necessarily set within the classroom. These settings include local educational authority committee meetings the intimate politics of girls’ friendship groups, and within sport and physical activity clubs and teams. Exclusion is therefore understood to occur variously as a formal, institutional practice, as an often secretive act related to the breaking or upholding of girls’ moral friendship codes, and as a ‘self-evident’ sorting mechanism based on perceptions of physical ‘ability.’ Each of the papers explores how broader identity categories and positionings work to exclude girls who have been constructed as ‘bad’ friends, as heterosexually suspect subjects or as ‘unable/unwilling’ sporting participants. Importantly, the papers are each concerned with the emotional, physical and academic consequences for girls of being subjected to exclusionary processes and with the ways that girls variously handle and/or resist their positioning as excluded subjects. The symposium therefore hopes to engage in a dialogue about the different ways in which girls may be excluded including self-exclusion through processes that fail to grasp the multiplicity and complexity of girls’ experiences and identifications. The speakers also hope to offer some recommendations in preventing girls’ involuntary exclusion and in assisting girls to understand and cope with these processes.

**Power , Status and Regulation: An exploration of the emotional and social dynamics operating amongst young girls friendship groups**

**Rosalyn George, Goldsmiths University of London**

This paper arises out of a longitudinal study which provides an in-depth exploration into the emotional and social dynamics of pre-adolescent friendship groups. The paper concerns itself with issues of stratification, status and power by considering questions of leadership and popularity. What is it that makes some children seemingly popular? How do individuals within the peer group gain status as leaders? How do particular groups become powerful? The paper also discusses the complex relational work that the girls who form the inner circle of the friendship group have to engage in, in order to secure their position within the group hierarchy alongside a consideration of those girls located on the periphery of the friendship group. . The study took place over a four year period with the primary source of data collection being semi structured interviews with a core group of pre-adolescent inner city girls aged 10-14. Theoretically the paper draws on Alcoff’s notion of subjectivity as positionality which enables an engagement with the idea that the girls in the study were able to ‘occupy a range of social and cultural positions simultaneously’ (Kenway,1993) shedding light on the girls’ fractured and multiple positions both inside and outside of the classroom. The data from the study reveals that leaders in this study were very powerful. They were socially skilled, manipulative and managed the group’s relationships by generating a model of dependency, where their role as leader became central to the effective functioning of the group. One of the distinctive features of the study was that all members had a role to play which was critical to its stability and coherence.

**Bitchy Girls and Silly Boys: gender and exclusion from school**

**Anna Carlile, Goldsmiths University of London**

This paper is about work on gender that forms part of a thesis: An ethnographic study by a local authority Pupil Support Officer of the effects of instances of actual or threatened permanent exclusion from secondary school on pupils, families and professionals in an urban local authority: ‘Enway’.

The paper aims to look the effects that professionals’ assumptions about gender identity and sexuality can have on effective support planning for young people at risk of or subject to permanent exclusion; and the lived experience of these young people with regard to their gender identity and sexuality, with particular regard to how this can contribute towards exclusion. It will begin with a story about Nama, an Iraqi Kurdish student in an urban comprehensive school in England, in order to introduce some of the complex gendered issues experienced by pupils at risk of or subject to a permanent exclusion. I will talk briefly about the connection between habitus, embodiment and the ‘extended body’, before a discussion of sexuality, gender and identity, through three cases of ‘compulsory heterosexuality’. The conclusion will clarify some of the links between gender normativity and instances of threatened or actual permanent exclusion.

**‘Being good at sport’: Talent, Ability and Young Women’s Sporting Participation**

**Sheryl Clark, The Institute of Education**

This paper considers girls’ sporting and gendered identifications in the context of their participation in both school and extracurricular sport. It draws on findings from longitudinal, qualitative research into girls’ sports participation over the transition to secondary school. This research was carried out as part of my PhD and involved tracing the sporting participation of 6 girls over a period of 4 years from when the girls were in Year 5 until Year 8 at various schools in London, England. Sequential, twice-yearly interviews were held with each girl alongside observations in PE lessons, sports clubs and after-school physical activities.

The research found that discourses of ‘talent’ and ‘ability’ were particularly salient for girls’ ongoing sports participation, as exemplified in the idea of ‘being good at sport.’ Within the paper I consider some of the difficulties for these girls in holding onto notions of themselves as ‘good at sports’ and look at the ways in which this identity is both shifting and relational, thus setting up distinctions between ‘able’ and ‘non-able’ participants. Girls’ sporting participation is situated in the context of increasingly focused youth sport initiatives that seek to identify and develop young ‘talent,’ particularly in the lead-up to the 2012 Olympics. I argue that such designations and the focus on ‘talent’ as an innate category works to exclude many would-be young participants in sport. In addition, such designations may place undue pressure on the ‘select’ to maintain ongoing progression along expected lines of development. For girls and other young people who have been positioned outside the dominant construction of heterosexual, masculine sporting ‘ability’(Choi, 2000), it may be particularly difficult to sustain the notion of ‘being good at sport’ and therefore able/ willing to participate in sport and other physical activities.

1. **Explorations of the Gender Attainment Gap in Higher Education**

**Dr. Debby Cotton with Mel Joyner and Rosemary George, The University of Plymouth**

Recent scholarship on gender differences in higher education participation and performance has highlighted the widening gap between male and female students. The Higher Education Initial Participation Rate for 2008-09 is provisionally estimated to be 40% for men and 51% for women (BIS 2010). In terms of attainment, female students now outperform male students in terms of degree outcomes at all levels, with the exception of the proportion gaining firsts - where no statistically significant difference between the two sexes was identified (Broecke and Nicholls, 2008). While previous research (Farsides&Woodfield,2007; Bekhradnia,2007) has explored the influence of prior (school) attainment and subject area on gender attainment patterns, less attention has been paid to the nature of the higher education experience itself and its influence on attainment.

This paper outlines the findings of a recent research project at the University of Plymouth, which aimed to explore gender-based differences in the nature of the student experience and its potential influence on patterns of attainment. The study aimed to explore the similarities and differences in the academic, social and motivational experiences of male and female students at the University. Through a combination of quantitative and qualitative data, the researchers aimed to obtain insights into the ways and extent to which these differences and similarities influenced variations in gender attainment patterns.

Quantitative data were collected from students from six disciplines through a questionnaire and qualitative data were collected through focus group discussions. Qualitative data from staff were also collected in the form of interviews.

The findings from the study showed that there were distinct differences in the academic and social experiences of male and female students, as well as differing expectations. Differences noted in academic experiences included variations in time spent studying, patterns of attendance, part-time work and flexibility in study habits. In terms of motivation and confidence, male students were most likely to overestimate their anticipated degree outcomes. The findings also indicated differences in socialisation patterns, with men prioritising social activities over academic activities. There were also indications that female students were more likely to enjoy peer support for study while male students were more likely to face social barriers to studying. Views of staff members about what makes a ‘successful student’ were frequently gendered, with female students being seen as hard-working and conscientious and as having more advanced writing skills than male students.

In the light of these findings, possible recommendations and strategies to enhance teaching practice and policy to address differential gender attainment patterns will be discussed with participants. Particular emphasis will be paid to the role of staff development in addressing some of these recommendations.

1. **Internalised sexism: an invisible hindrance**

**Monika Kovács, Eötvös Loránd Univeristy, Budapest**

In my research I sought to answer the question: why do status differences between genders remain after finishing higher education despite a similar initial willingness to pursue graduate studies? The dual-impact model of gender and career-related processes (Abele, 2000) was taken as a starting point, was completed with several additional factors, and the final model was empirically tested. 1150 students of different higher educational institutions in Budapest filled in the questionnaire.

Similarities and differences among different types of institutions as well as between men and women who attended those institutions were tested concerning the importance of different types of work values (Pratto, et. al, 1997), gender ideologies (Glick and Fiske, 1996) and stereotypes .

According to my results the preference of the hierarchy-enhancing work values was determined by the more masculine self-schemata (Bem, 1974) among the students of both genders (also women characterised by an androgyn self-schema preferred hierarchy–enhancing work values). At the same time behind the preference of hierarchy-attenuating work values (and those which are indifferent concerning the hierarchy) I could identify the feminine self-schemata. The gender schematic or a-schematic nature of the self has been explained by the processes of identification and des-identification with the parents (based on research of Collins and Read, 1990).

In the case of the female students – in a paradoxical way – the preference of the hierarchy–enhancing work values was also followed by the more masculine self-schemata, the more positive stereotyping of men and the more negative stereotyping of women as well as accepting sexist ideologies. Those women who preferred the hierarchy-attenuating work values were more likely to take a stand against system justification ideologies, like sexism and protestant ethic. Therefore according to my results those women who are pursuing a career of higher social status are less egalitarian and internalised more sexism and the appreciation of masculinity and men in general, than those who are pursuing a – lower status – helping-teaching career.

My results validated the completed dual-impact model. We have to take into account both outside and inside factors for predicting career success. The results - that men much preferred hierarchy–enhancing work values, were less egalitarian, stereotyped women as more negative and traditional and were more sexist, and that women preferred much less hierarchy–enhancing work values, had lower self-esteem and were prone to stereotyping the competing out-group as more positive - can be used to explain the social psychological mechanism of the phenomena of the „glass-ceiling” and the „glass-escalator.”

As a result of this research we can conclude that it would be desirable to offer empowerment training to those women who would like to pursue a high status career. Such psychological support may make them more conscious of outside and inside obstacles to success, and give them a chance to successfully fight these obstacles.

1. **Perception of gender relations and female careers in Mechanical Engineering and Physics**

**Maria Eulina Pessoa de Carvalho, Universidade Federal da Paraíba, Brazil**

**Co-authored paper with Gloria Rabay and Lucimeiry Batista da Silva**

Research on gender and scientific and technological careers is very recent in Brazil. In a big public university in Northeastern Brazil, Mechanical Engineering and Physics are the most masculine courses, with very few females among professors and students. Currently, whereas Physics has a 13% female enrolment, Mechanical Engineering has 8,7 %; in the first semester of 2010 graduation rates per sex were one female for 10 males in Mechanical Engineering and 6 males in Physics, respectively. Mechanical Engineering has had only two female professors along time, both retired, and nowadays has no one; Physics has had 4 professors along time, and currently has two. Based on interviews with female professors, male department heads and course coordinators about their perceptions of gender relations within these predominantly masculine academic fields, this paper points out differences and veiled gender discrimination in the professional development of female professors. The pattern of higher selectivity and bigger obstacles faced by women who succeeded in these masculine academic fields is also illustrated in the case of a Mechanical Engineering female graduate (the best student the course has ever had, among males and females, as referred by the course coordinator), who graduated in 2001 and pursued a career in the market, in the airplane industry. This research on gender and higher education was supported by a CNPq/MCT/Brazil grant.

1. **Catching Butterflies: Circulating Sexualities in a Middle-Class Welsh Nursery**

**Jennifer Lyttleton-Smith, School of Social Sciences, Cardiff University**

This paper aims to disseminate the findings of an ethnographic study into gender and sexuality in a middle-class South Wales nursery. Engaging with queer, feminist, and post-structuralist epistemologies, I address the Foucauldian power-knowledge nexus that attempts to withhold sexuality from children and finds that it fails.

Over recent years a swelling current of sociological research has questioned the suppressive myth of childhood innocence and sought to demand acknowledgement for children’s knowledges and identities as powerful social actors in their own right, as ‘beings, not becomings’ (Qvortrup, 1994). Issues of gender and sexuality in childhood have taken a prominent role, such as in the work of Walkerdine (1981), Davies (1982), Epstein and Johnson (1997), and Renold (2005), who have all found educational institutions to be a key site for gendered and sexual discourses to be circulated, however, until recently the pre-school institution had largely been neglected as a focus. My research, similarly to that of Blaise (2005) and Taylor and Richardson (2005), seeks to increase understanding of early childhood experiences of gender and sexuality and how they co-construct and circulate them.

To achieve this, I used participant observation to produce an ethnographic account of the gender and sexual discourses within a private middle-class nursery. Inspired by Butler’s performativity theory, I focused on the way that these discourses were co-constructed by the children and socially circulated and developed by them, formulating the exploratory research question: how do children between the ages of 3 and 4 engage in relationship cultures through which they construct their gendered and sexualised identities?

This study acted as preparation for my PhD research, for which I am conducting a comparative study addressing the intersections of class, race, gender and sexuality in two South Wales nurseries. Whilst in my PhD I am researching with both middle- and working-class children, this study focuses solely on the attendees at a private middle-class nursery. Taking place over a 5 week period, the resulting data and analysis formed my MSc dissertation. Drawing on rich ethnographic data the dissertation found fluidity and flexibility in the children’s gender and sexual performances, yet also powerful heteronormative discourses that influenced their conceptions of desire and personal aspirations. Whilst the children were susceptible to these influences, their educational advantage seemed linked to an ability to critically read and interpret texts and discourses to an extent that their disadvantaged peers may not, meaning that they were not powerless in the face of heteronormativity.

*Catching Butterflies...* discusses the circulation of heteronormative discourses in the nursery (and the children’s rebellions against them), the classed nature of the children’s readings of these discourses, and the study’s influence on the direction of my PhD research.

1. **Sexuality Education in Australian Primary Schools: Reflecting on the past and**

**imagining the future**

**Associate Professor Lyn Harrison (with Dr Debbie Ollis), Deakin University, Victoria, Australia**

Both authors have a long history in teaching and researching in gender and sexuality education across the primary, secondary and tertiary sectors in education. Although our focus is on Sexuality Education, troubling gender stereotypes and hegemonic discourses

has always been integral to our teaching practice in this area. Recent changes in the structure of our pre-service teacher education program at Deakin University allowed us to develop elective units for the first time within the School of Education. As a result, in 2009 we developed and taught a new elective unit “Teaching Sexuality in the Middle Years” to be delivered in intensive mode over our summer

semester. This was the first dedicated sexuality education unit to be offered at Deakin University for over 20 years. It drew on a range of pedagogical approaches, designed to build knowledge, skills and confidence in teaching sexuality education and to challenge students to think and teach about gender and sexuality differently with a focus on social justice and troubling exclusive discourses and practices. A small Faculty Teaching and Learning Grant has allowed us to document the students’ experiences in 2009 and 2010 with a view to developing a longitudinal study intended to follow students after graduation. In this first phase of our research, survey and focus group methods have been utilised to gather data. Historically, Sexuality Education in Australian schools has had a strong bio-medical underpinning and has focused on topics such as hygiene, menstruation and reproduction. With the appearance of HIV/AIDS in the 1980s this focus was in some respects reinforced while at the same time it allowed discourses that challenged stereotypes around gender and sexuality to emerge in schools. It also allowed homophobia to be discussed and challenged for those with a will to do so.

Much of this work continues today, albeit still reliant on individual teacher interest, knowledge and confidence despite policies that appear to foster a more inclusive and system wide approach. This paper provides a brief history of Sexuality Education in Australian primary schools and charts some significant changes or milestones in curriculum and pedagogy to the present day. Curriculum is not taught in a vacuum however and we examine the proliferation of competing discourses about sexuality and gender and what is and is not

considered ‘suitable’ to teach children in primary schools. Our argument is that contemporary curriculum frameworks open up possibilities for more socially just curriculum and pedagogy while simultaneously allowing the examination of issues such as heterosexism, homophobia, gender and violence and safe sex practices such as masturbation to be ignored. A lack of skills, knowledge and confidence are cited

frequently in the literature as barriers to effective teaching in Sexuality Education that is hard to argue against. However, this explanation serves to individualise the problem and pathologizes individual teachers. The translation of these capacities into practice is complex and we use pre-service teacher education students’ experiences and voices to illustrate our arguments and explore future possibilities for teaching in this important area.

1. **The past in the present: historicising contemporary debates about gender & education**

**Dr Penny Tinkler, University of Manchester and Dr Carolyn Jackson, Lancaster University**

In this presentation we consider some of the ways in which responses to contemporary gender and education issues may benefit from historical sensitivity. Building on insights from our previous comparison of contemporary ‘ladettes’ and ‘modern girls’ of the 1920s (Jackson and Tinkler, 2007), we demonstrate how ‘history throws the contemporary into relief, offering fresh perspectives on the present’ (p. 252). A historical perspective on present-day issues can provide both grounding and an uplifting breath of fresh air. It can, for instance, strip the ‘new’ of its novelty, revealing interesting and important continuities, or expose for scrutiny the implicit comparisons that underpin anxieties about change. It can also facilitate the unravelling of moral panics and, drawing on lessons from the past, offer insights about the future. Drawing on a variety of sources we explore and historicise contemporary fears about gender and education, for example, the feminisation of primary schooling - ‘thousands of boys are being taught solely by women’ (*Daily Mail*, 25 September 2009) – and fears that girls are growing up too quickly.

1. **Genealogies of Adolescence: Gender, race and the cosmopolitan citizen**

**Julie McLeod, Graduate School of Education, University of Melbourne, Australia**

This paper draws from a cultural history on the education of the adolescent (1930s-70s). Its focus is the interwar years in Australian education, and the proliferation of educational reports and programs directed to understanding, governing, educating and enlivening adolescents. ‘Is modern education succeeding from the point of view of character, knowledge and social responsibility?’ asked Miss H. Daniell (MA) in *The Australian Educational Quarterly* in 1930. She responded by describing some of the changes associated with the modern form of education, noting the emergence of a ‘new spirit of freedom’ and a feeling of ‘international brotherhood’. In 1935, Percival Cole, [Teachers College, Sydney] writing in his edited volume on *The Education of the Adolescent in Australia*, reflected that: ’But the greatest transition of all is gradually being made, from an old view of life to a new view of life, from an old educational theory to an new educational theory, from old types of school to new types of school’ (Cole 1935, p.xi). Framed by such imperatives to respond to the call of modernity, many educational programs and reforms conveyed a sense of enormous optimism in the compelling power of schools to foster new personal and social knowledge and transformations in young people’s conduct and dispositions.

Developing a genealogy of the ‘Australian adolescent’, this paper examines debates about the purposes of schooling for adolescents in the 1930s, and exploring theoretical debates concerning gender, citizenship, and cosmopolitanism, the presentation juxtaposes a number of conferences, events and reports on the education of young people in the 1930s. It specifically addresses the teaching of civics and education for ‘independence of thought’ and ‘world-mindedness’ (Hoy 1934) and the different capacities and futures articulated for Indigenous and non-Indigenous youth. The paper explores some of the gendered and racialised effects and erasures in conceptions of a self-consciously new kind of [adolescent] subject.

1. **Gender drought: The discourses around women and gender in American social education**

**Mardi Schmeichel,** **University of Georgia, USA**

Most of the research in the last decade which focuses specifically on women and/in American social studies education indicates that women have been sidelined or excluded through underrepresentation in the curriculum (Crocco, 2006, 2008; Hahn, Bernard-Powers, Crocco, & Woyshner, 2007) the absence of a feminist consciousness (Crocco, 2004, Noddings, 2001) or a lack of recognition regarding women's contributions to the field (Crocco & Davis, 2002). These types of marginalizations are tangible and quantifiable, and the work describing these absences has already been done.  But work detailing the absence of women and gender from the field can only take us so far. In response to Dillabough et al.'s (2008) challenge to trouble the taken-for-granteds and common-senses in this field in order to "offer some alternative or additional ways of seeing and theorising' (p. 304), in this paper I examine the discourses around gender and women within American social studies education in the last decade in order to disrupt the taken-for-granted ways in which gender and women are shaped and constructed both as topics and problems by feminist advocates in the field, and to propose a different way of thinking about these issues.

Using poststructural conceptions of discourse and deploying methods of Foucauldian discourse analysis (Andersen, 2003; Davies, 2003; Foucault, 1975/1995; MacLure, 2003; Mills, 2004; Prior, 2003), I examine *how* feminist scholars in social studies education have shaped the discourses around gender and women that are present in order to ask in what contexts these topics are addressed, categorized, and characterized and how the topics are framed and positioned within the broader field of social studies. For example, the pervasive and consistent description of the 'truth' that attention to gender and women in the field is 'absent', is a particular kind of discursive strategy that may have unintended and problematic consequences. Additionally, the focus on recognition and identity politics within this literature, and the almost complete absence of structural critique, also says something about the kind of feminist and critical work that is and is not being done in social studies. Asking new questions about these issues and examining the ways gender work is being done in social studies might open up new ways of getting at this problem. For example, is a more critical discourse present in Australian, British, or Canadian feminist social education work? Are there more successful models to which American social education feminists can turn? I would propose that feminists and their advocates within the field of social studies education need to answer these and other questions in an effort to understand how we have found ourselves in this gender drought and to begin thinking of new ways to find a way out of it.

1. **WORKSHOP: From gender integration to gender certification – why and how. A workshop on how we work at Lund university, Sweden Project leader**

**Kajsa** **Widen-and Professor Tomas Brage, Lund University Sweden**

The topic will focus on and describe how three institutions (at Lund university) work towards getting a gender certificate. Practical experiences will be shown that will activate the members of a project of this kind.

1. **SYMPOSIUM: Troubling Teacher Education and Imagining a Feminist Future**

**Stephanie Jones, University of Georgia, USA**

One history of teacher education in the United States can be summed up with tongue-in-cheek expressions still heard throughout universities and colleges of education in 2010. “She is here to get her Mrs. Degree” and “It must be nice to spend all day coloring and babysitting” are persistent comments that reflect dominant patriarchal, heterosexist, and infantilizing discourses circulating about women pursuing degrees in education. Much theoretical and pedagogical work has attempted to disrupt anti-intellectual assumptions about women as education majors and as educators even though such work hasn’t always gained the traction necessary to create sustained change. And, we would argue, neoliberal discourses often reify deficit perspectives of women in education and position women teachers to situate their teaching within discourses of patriarchy and colonialism. Three goals are central to this symposia proposal: 1) trouble contemporary discourses/practices in teacher education that reify deficit perspectives of women in education; 2) examine theoretical frameworks that can be used to reframe teacher education students and the work of teacher educators and theorists; 3) argue for widespread postcolonial feminist pedagogy, content, and commitment in teacher education.

The social justice-oriented movement in teacher education over the past two decades in the U.S. claims to better prepare future teachers to be responsive to the diverse sociopolitical contexts in which they will find themselves teaching students who will not be like them in many ways. This literature illustrates a focus of concern for minority and poor children who are frequently marginalized in spaces dominated by whiteness and white privilege, the heteronormativity operating through school materials and social practices creating unsafe spaces for LGBTQ youth, and even the religious diversity of schools where Christianity still shapes the foundation of public schooling. While the claim to advocate for historically marginalized groups of youth and families has been welcomed enthusiastically by researchers and teacher educators alike, the field of justice-oriented teacher education sometimes positions their women students as deficient, anti-intellectual, and overwhelmingly “resistant” to issues of diversity and equity. Blatantly missing from this literature is a focus on gender, feminism, and a critique of neoliberal discourses through postcolonialism.

The three papers in this symposia will spark conversations around gender and feminism in broad teacher education practices (course offerings, syllabi, programmatic structures), engaging women and men in teacher education with a critical feminist body pedagogy, and reconsidering the work of teacher educators through a critical global literacy commitment. Each paper will be presented for 15 minutes, leaving thirty minutes for discussion between the presenters and audience to consider theoretical and practical moves toward growing a feminist commitment in teacher education.

**The Gender Apparatus in Social Studies Teacher Education**

**Mardi Schmeichel, The University of Georgia, United States**

Based on Foucault's description of the apparatus as an "ensemble consisting of discourses, institutions, architectural forms, regulatory decisions…-in short, the said as much as the unsaid" (1977/1980, p. 194), in this paper I will explore the institutions and practices of social studies teacher education which have contributed to the phenomenon to which Hurren (2002) referred when she argued “something gendered is going on in the construction of Social Studies” (para. 18). By examining the practices and procedures which shape the social studies teacher education field, like admissions policies and course requirements, I seek to identify the ways in which the gender apparatus in social studies functions to maintain the marginalization of women in the field (Crocco, 2004). Because future social studies teachers are required to engage in extensive coursework in the social science disciplines, for example, it is useful to consider the way in which these requirements may be gendered:

* Do social studies education programs reinscribe or resist the focus on traditional and male-oriented political and economic history through the social science courses they require of their students?
* Is it possible to fulfill degree requirements with courses in more feminist-friendly and gender-conscious disciplines, like Women's Studies or Sociology?
* Do students in a pre-service teacher education program take advantage of options outside of the traditional canon?

Additionally, I explore the possibility that the courses in social studies teacher preparation programs themselves might contribute to the gendering of the field. As Hurren (2002) has argued, the structure of the social studies curriculum - with a cadre of women teachers teaching social studies concepts like family and community in the elementary grades, and an increasingly male faculty teaching world issues and international relations as student age - "supports a hierarchical framework that privileges public over private, and implies that the study of issues traditionally associated with men require a more sophisticated, mature learner/body than the study of self, family, and community, issues traditionally associated with women" (para 13). An analysis of *who* teaches the courses that prepare social studies educators to implement this framework may yield some important insights into the way that women have been conceived and constructed in the different domains of social studies:

* Are the social studies faculty responsible for the secondary program more likely to be men, for example?
* To whom is the responsibility of teaching the elementary social studies methods courses relegated?

Finally, I conduct a feminist analysis of some social studies teacher education course syllabi in order to consider the ways women and men, as topics, as authors, as teachers, and as students, are positioned within the course plans, readings, and assignments. This kind of gendering may be more subtle, and its influence on actions not as evident as more overtly gendered circumscriptions of our day to day experiences. Nonetheless, the gender apparatus in social studies teacher education shapes students’ and teachers’ lives in real and material ways, and therefore, must be explored.

**Speaking of Bodies in Feminist Justice-Oriented Teacher Education**

**Stephanie Jones, The University of Georgia, United States**

**Hilary Hughes, The University of Georgia, United States**

The United States is a society that is simultaneously consumed - and repulsed - by the body; a society where obsession over a constructed “obesity” epidemic runs alongside obsession over thinness; a society where advertisers manipulate digital images of bodies to present two-dimensional versions of ideal male and female physiques, and plastic surgeons cut, suck, tuck, and fill three-dimensional fleshed versions of those digital images. In this paper we draw on a long history of feminist pedagogies (Cohee, et, al., 1998; Ellsworth, 1993; Grumet, 1988; hooks, 1994, 2000; Maher, 1999; Orner, 2002; Vavrus, 2009) and feminist perspectives of the body (Bordo, 1993; Butler, 1993; Orbach, 2009) to capture a sustained look at, and listen to, the women in our elementary-level teacher education classes.

As teacher educators who were curious to explore what Orner (2002) referred to as the absent presence of the curriculum of the body-- “the controlled, disciplined, micromanaged, and technologized body” (pp. 275-276), we conceptualized and engaged in a critical feminist pedagogy of the body with our preservice students through course assignments and class discussions. For us, a critical feminist pedagogy of the body was two-fold, in that we were trying to work with our students to understand the concealed power that is inscribed on our bodies, something Foucault (1977) referred to as the “direct grip” culture has on the body; and we were also trying to create a pedagogic process that “gives attention to the project of liberation in a way that takes seriously the body as a site for self and social transformation”(Shapiro, 1999, p. x).

To employ a critical feminist pedagogy of the bod*y*, we included books such as *Moose: A Memoir of Fat Camp* (Klein, 2008); *The Brief, Wondrous Life of Oscar Wao* (Diaz, 2008); *The Absolutely True Diary of a Part-Time Indian* (Alexie, 2007); *Persepolis* (Sartripi, 2004); articles for discussion about young girls dieting as early as fourth grade; childhood masturbation; videos such as *Killing Us Softly*; writing critical analyses of advertisements and everyday conversations; discussing “touchy” topics in whole group settings; and encouraging a radical feminist reading of the world with a goal of the end of oppression of all kinds. Across this two-semester study, it was clear that all of the students were wounded by the “skinny-as-normal” discourse that often became heightened in the college years.

We argue that engaging teacher education students with a critical feminist body pedagogy can contribute to a larger project of shaping young women and men who are more comfortable in their bodies, who will engage in critical readings of body-related texts, and – perhaps – can one day help future elementary students construct healthier relationships with their bodies and the larger world through a justice-oriented pedagogy. Given the tremendous impact elementary teachers have on youth and youth’s perceptions of bodies and self-confidence, it is imperative that teacher education tend to the politics and materiality of the body.

**Critical Global Literacy in Education:**

**Engaging Postcolonial, Transnational, and Feminist Perspectives**

**Nina Asher, Louisiana State University, United States**

This paper draws on postcolonial, feminist, and globalization theories to grapple with the issue of fostering critical global literacy as part of continuing decolonizing education work today. In developing the argument that it is critical for students and teachers to become aware of how colonialism, capitalism, and consumerism shape their lives – to read globalization “in a decolonizing way” (Said, 2001, p. 253) – the author discusses the complexities of postcolonial transformations and the role of technology in shaping transnational transactions today. The author draws, for instance, on Swarr and Nagar’s (2010) vision of “transnational feminisms” to consider the challenges of and possibilities for fostering critical global literacy in education. Swarr and Nagar define “transnational feminisms” as:

[A]n intersectional set of understandings, tools, and practices that can: (a) attend to racialized, classed, masculinized, and heteronormative logics and practices of globalization and capitalist patriarchies, and the multiple ways in which they (re)structure colonial and neocolonial relations of domination and subordination; (b) grapple with the complex and contradictory ways in which these processes both inform and are shaped by a range of subjectivities and understandings of individual and collective agency; and (c) interweave critiques, actions, and self-reflexivity… (2010, p. 5)

To this end, synthesizing theory, scholarly and popular works that speak to globalization and legacies of colonialism, and critical reflections on the author’s own pedagogical practice as a teacher educator, the paper considers such questions as: What is the role of education in the twenty-first century context? In a global context of capitalism, consumerism, corporatization, and, privatization how do we, educators, maintain the “public” in public schooling, the role of school in society? In a context of increasing diversity and global interdependence, who constitutes the “public?” What are the implications for equity and justice – for “righting wrongs” (Spivak, 2008) – in terms of gender, race, and nation, in relation to education theory and practice? What, then, are the implications in terms of individual and collective responsibility and agency?

1. **Lifting the veil on female education in the United Arab Emirates**

**Belinda Dolan-Roberts, Institute of Applied Technology Al Ain Female Campus United Arab Emirates, Middle East**

This paper examines the evolution of female educational provision within the Islamic country of the United Arab Emirates (UAE). Through the examination of past and present experiences of UAE women; this paper introduces a landmark project changing that aims to change educational provision for young females. The aim of this paper is to engage participants thinking on past and present provision within the UAE as a means of envisaging future educational opportunities for females.

The discovery of oil and the redevelopment of this countries education system has elevated the UAE to a position as one of the wealthiest countries in the world. Recent reports have highlighted that the UAE was considered within many Middle Eastern countries, as leading the way in its evolving attitude towards education and empowerment of females. An example of this is in the 2009 UNDP’s gender-related development index where the UAE ranked 25th within the world for gender empowerment.

The UAE is slowly accepting women into positions originally considered as the preserve of men. From behind their veils, these young Emirati women are using education as a tool for empowerment. Gradually deconstructing the conservative attitudes and in turn leading the way for future generations of young females. Despite the dichotomy between religious values and educational provision in some more conservative areas, the movement for the empowerment of women is gathering pace. Recent

examples of this are in the report on women in the UAE (2008) which highlights the UAE’s intention to establish a new benchmark for gender empowerment in the region.

It was the late UAE founder HH Sheikh Zayed bin Sultan Al Nahyan who offered that in line the tenets of Islam “nothing could delight me more than to see women taking up her distinctive position in society... like men, women deserve the right to occupy high positions, according to their capabilities and qualifications” (Ministry of State for Federal National Council Affairs, 2009).

It is through the vision of the late Sheikh Zayed that the Institute of Applied Technology was introduced. The first of its kind career technical education school with a vision to “create a world-class Career Technological Education system that will produce the scientists, engineers and technicians needed for the UAE to build a knowledge-based economy”.

[Until 2009, the focus of this school had been on specialized education for men only. The drive to promote womens education in the UAE let to the extension of those programs to include young women from grade 9 to grade 11 in 2009. In 2011 grade 12 students will be included. /](http://point.iat.ac.ae/en/Pages/ContactUs.aspx)

This paper aims to introduce this project to session participants in order to create awareness of how education for females is being shaped and its future impact on Emirati females. Session participants are encouraged to bring their own examples of the challenges and barriers they face in the realm of female educational provision within their own contexts. Discussion will focus on exchanging ideas from various settings and countries on effective strategies for empowering female learners through education.

1. **Reconstructing identities: A story about maiden names**

**Natalie Honein, University of Bristol**

This is a story about names; names of Arab women; Lebanese women in particular. The name options available for married women are of course many. Women can choose to keep their name after marriage, take on their husband’s name, or follow the more recent Anglophone practice of spouses adopting each other’s surnames, or merging their names. Yet conversations about maiden names in this part of the world have largely been ignored both socially and academically. For generations, Lebanese women have resigned to unwittingly following tradition by giving up their maiden names. What is more, the average married Lebanese woman acquires three social identities in her lifetime: at birth, during marriage, and upon her death. These changes in social identity often cause internal conflicts for the woman, but also confusion for everyone around her. She may be one person on paper, legally under the law, but another person at work, another at home, and yet another to her high school friends, to her child’s teacher, and so on. This multiplicity of selves gives women more identities and options, but hesitation and confusion for all, nevertheless.

In writing this text, I opened up the discussion of maiden names to a small group of Lebanese women. I created a space for myself and these women to have this conversation and reflect on our place in our lives and in the lives of our children. The conversations were prompted by an email to a friend, followed up with phone discussions with her and 25 other women. By so doing, I am creating a space for readers and listeners to question their own position vis-à-vis their maiden name or that of their spouse, mother, sister or daughter. I hope to be able to “move writers and readers, subjects and objects, tellers and listeners into this space of dialogue, debate and change” (Holman-Jones, 2005, 764). Needless to say, the motivation behind choosing this topic is driven by personal confusion and uncertainties about the choices I have made with regard to my own maiden name. “Autoethnography is, whatever else it may or may not be, about things that matter a great deal to the autoethnographer” (Delamont, 2009, 57). One can then safely say that this is a story about struggling with a name, which falls within the larger story of gendered domination and patriarchy in the Arab world: “Self-defense always drives autobiography.” (Miller, 2007, 336). But most of all, I am driven to research, discuss and write about this issue out of concern for my daughters' future as women and mothers in this part of the world.

In my paper, I present a short auto-ethnography from a member researcher status, based on Anderson’s (2006) five analytic auto-ethnography criteria: using analytic reflexivity; offering a narrative visibility of myself as a researcher; incorporating dialogue with others; and incorporating theoretical analysis (p. 378). Using my own life experience, I blend ethnography (a critical study of a culture) and autobiography (the writing of our own lives). Through analytic reflexivity, I reflect on my own place within my research, as I explore the relationship between a personal lived experience, namely a struggle with my own maiden name, and its place within the larger society, as presented through the voices of other women.

1. **Higher Education and Female Status in Urban India: Does More “Development” Lead to More Value for Girls?**

**Sucharita S Mukherjee, College of Saint Benedict/Saint John’s University, Minnesota, USA**

Gender discrimination has been a persistent issue in the economic history of India. Girl children are valued less than boys resulting in a masculine sex ratio in the country, in sharp contrast to the feminine sex ratio in most parts of the globe. A majority of girl children lose their lives during infancy and with the aid of modern technology, even before their birth. Gender biases are often thought to be a feature of backward rural communities with little access to education and other opportunities. Accordingly treatment of women is assumed to improve with urbanization and economic development. In particular, higher education has commonly been suggested and recommended as an important component of female empowerment with the belief that increasing levels of female education would result in higher female autonomy and consequently improve the status and value of female children. An empirical country-wide study based on data from the Census of India however suggests that discrimination against girls is strongest in the urban areas of the country and in areas where levels of female education are among the highest. On further investigation, this counter-intuitive result shows that higher education by itself is neither necessary nor sufficient for reducing gender gaps and may on the other hand perpetuate these gaps by reinforcing traditional gender stereotypes. In such contexts, education may function merely as a status marker serving to raise marriage market value of girls. The weak link between higher education and female employment further confirms this conclusion. Notions of female inferiority have their roots in patriarchal traditions such as dowry. Instead of weakening with rapid economic progress of the kind being experienced by India at present, these traditions may instead grow stronger with greater availability of consumer goods translating to higher dowry demands. Women themselves may play an active role in transmitting these biases as mothers of sons. It is imperative to modify both the content and objective of higher education imparted to young and older girls, if it is indeed to be a force altering the prevailing attitudes towards them. Such changes would allow for more active labour market participation, access to income and a greater role in decision making for Indian women.

1. **Female Education and Use of Family Planning: Implications for Fertility Control in Nigeria**.

**Dr. Adeyemi Ezekiel Oluwagbemiga, Lagos State University, Nigeria**

Women empowerment is perhaps the most critical determinant of changes in demographic and health behaviour. While assessing some dimensions of women empowerment in relation with fertility behaviour, education, is seen as a focal factor for use of family planning and fertility control. Despite the campaign on family planning methods, yet it has not produced the desired results in Nigeria. Although a decline has been observed in the fertility level still the fertility level is high when compared with other countries. The level of education may not be the only factor for fertility control but there is a minimum level of education that must be achieved before a significant reduction in fertility will be recorded. The paper therefore examine the impact of female educational attainment measured by the completed years of schooling among the women on the use of family planning methods as a panacea for fertility control in Nigeria.

Methods

The paper was based on 2008 Nigeria’s Demographic and Heath Survey data (NDHS). Representative sampling of 33,385 women aged 15-59 years were interviewed. The data was analyzed using Statistical Package and Software Solutions (SPSS 16.0). Three levels of analysis were used in this paper, the univariate analysis is used to explain the socio-demographic variables and fertility behaviour while bivariate and multivariate analysis were used to identify education as a decisive factor for using family planning methods among women in Nigeria.

Findings

The study reveals that 92% of the women with no education did not use any family planning methods, while 56% did not have the knowledge of any family planning methods. Among those with higher education 51% are currently using at least one methods of family planning. Partner’s education also influences the use of family planning methods among women. Women with no education were more likely to have higher number of children when compared with other categories. Sixty-three percent of women with no education married at the age between 14-18 years which also one of the reason for the high fertility rate in the country. The multivariate analyses indicate that age at marriage, female education and desire for more children will influenced the use of family planning and family size in the study area.

Concussion and Recommendation

This study has revealed that education is a crucial factor in the use of family planning and fertility control in Nigeria. Education will increase the knowledge of respondents about family planning methods especially with respect to birth control. It is also a known fact that family planning, prenatal health services and child health will improve the survival and quality of life for mothers and children. It is therefore necessary to encourage female education up to secondary school, this will delay age at marriage and will also enable women to have adequate knowledge about child spacing, maternal and child health. It is also hope that this will enable women to have voices in reproductive decision making in Nigeria

1. **A Comparative Case Study of Institutional Responsiveness to Mainstreaming of Pregnant Learners in formal Education**

**Tawanda Runhare, University of Venda, South Africa**

The purpose of this study was to explore how social institutions in South Africa and Zimbabwe respond to the mainstreaming of pregnant learners in formal education. A case study was used as the strategy of inquiry (Hancock & Algozzine, 2006). Utilising a phenomenological, social constructivist and interpretivist lens (Seamark & Lings, 2004), and guided by a theoretical framework of action science theory (Argyris & Schon, 1974; Argyris, 1990), this exploratory qualitative case study set out to investigate and compare how various education stakeholders in South Africa and Zimbabwe respond to the policy of mainstreaming pregnant learners in formal schools.

The study explored the following questions:

* How do education stakeholders in South Africa and Zimbabwe conceptualise and perceive policy guidelines on the mainstreaming of pregnant learners in formal education?
* How are pregnant learners perceived and treated in the school, in the family and in the community?

1. **Account of the Developing of the Research “Brazilian Women Writers from Colonial Age”: an Approach Focused on Gender, Memory and Education Questions.**

**Edilene Ribeiro Batista, Universidade Federal do Ceará – UFC/Brazil**

During centuries Brazilian literary canon has been dominated, mostly for male figures. This situation happens because our society, phallocentric and sexist, silenced our women writers speeches since the beginning of 20th Century. Wondering to change this conception, since until the present time the High Schools and Universities in Brazil, keep unchanged about this aspect, (our didactic books, for example, continue without the woman’s inclusion until the end of 19th Century, at Brazilian Literary Studies), we are developing the research “Brazilian Women Writers from Colonial Age” as an initial action to supply this gap existent at the cultural/literary training of our nation. Our study aim also, among other aspects, search to answer questions such as: in such a way the gender and memory studies can help at the analysis and post rescue of women writers from Brazilian Colonial Age? How the inclusion of these women writers in our canon can contribute, in educational scope, for a different view of the social relation that is established nowadays among men and women? We hope to contribute with the rescue of the women writers’ production, in Brazil, that is found between the 17th Century and 18th Century, asking the evaluative and partial criterion established by men about aesthetic and literature, opening, so, ways for the possibility of studies that relate the following themes: gender, memory and education, using bibliographic research based on theoretical studies developed by Mary Del Priori, Zahidé Lupinacci Muzart, Michelle Perrot, Monteserrat Moreno, Guacira Lopes Louro, among others.

1. **Beyond *Horses, Women, Wars…***

**Nadja Duhacek, Institute for Women’s Studies, University of Granada**

Since Lydia Sklevicky pointed out that history textbooks in Yugoslavia had more illustrations of horses, than of women (Sklevicky 1987), she opened the space for critical analysis of textbooks, and by extension, the education system in that country. Part of the preparation for research I intend to carry out in my (present-day) home-country, Serbia, is a literature review tracing previous research in that particular context. Although I will draw on the work of British, American and Australian researchers and theorists (Valerie Walkerdine, Barrie Thorne, Mary Jane Kehily, Debbie Epstein, Emma Renold, R.W. Connell, etc.), I also needed to map out local research. I my presentation, I plan to discuss these findings, especially paying attention to what is there and what is missing.

After Sklevicky’s ground-breaking *Horses, Women, Wars* (1987),most feminist educational research in Serbia during the 1990’s used a critical approach adopted by independent researchers and intellectuals who recognized the importance of educational institutions in (re)producing a patriarchal and nationalist value system (Rosandić and Pešić 1994, Jarić 2000). In contrast with these texts, the most recent research on gender and education was commissioned by a state institution (The Directorate for Gender Equality). It is a study of the relatively recent school subject Civic education (Đorić et al. 2010). There are numerous problematic points in the theoretical grounding and methodological choices made by this research team. At the same time, this research project is a broader in-depth study than any of the previous ones, and politically it is a signal from the state that gender is becoming an acknowledged relevant topic.

Educational research in Serbia in the last twenty years has centered on analysis of textbooks. The question remains why? The most obvious reason is practical and financial, it is easier to analyze text, and the results are faster than it would be to interview students or teachers. The most time-consuming and thus most expensive method is ethnography. However, I would argue that there are further reasons. Education remains a centralized system and even though common sense dictates that there are variations in different classrooms and among different groups of students, current research seems to ignore this. In fact, some researchers openly point out that the discourse within a textbook is all that is needed in order to show the forms of knowledge the state legitimizes through its education system (Kolarić 2008).

Even though a feminist movement, in terms of activism, as well as theory exists in Serbia, one cannot speak of ‘gender and education’ as an existing field. The past that we can draw on, is the analysis of textbooks, which has consistently uncovered a bias of state schools against promoting gender equality. However, a possible future would be to add qualitative, primarily ethnographic research which may or may not show agency on the part of students and teachers in resisting centralized state programs in ways that may have subverted patriarchal values in the past, as well as point to strategies for the future.

1. **Gender Politics in 21st Century Literacy Reform**

**Kay Bishop, The University of Queensland**

This paper is concerned with the relationship between gender and a significant literacy reform in the Australian State of Queensland. Over the past decade, Australian federal and State governments, like many other governments in countries across the globe, have invested millions of dollars in programs aimed at improving the levels of literacy of all students. In Australia, the Australian National Assessment Program – Literacy and Numeracy (NAPLAN) confirms that the problem continues to remain challenging particularly in Queensland where, because of isolation and poverty, many students fall below expected benchmarks. The teaching of literacy has become a highly charged political battleground in many locations. Queensland has not been an exception to this.

My research, undertaken from a feminist poststructuralist perspective, involves critical analysis of discourses of production, distribution and consumption of a major and often controversial literacy reform in Queensland, Literate Futures, conducted from 2001 to 2004. Literate Futures was a theoretically informed professional development model designed to address the literacy demands of the predicted changing work and lifestyle patterns brought about by the move to knowledge-based economies. The approach adopted sought to promote a socio-cultural understanding of literate practices and focused on building teacher competency through collaboratively developing whole-school literacy planning, improving the teaching of reading and multiliteracies, and responding to diversity. Schools were to be supported by Learning and Development Centres established across the state and a model of teacher learning that favoured feminist pedagogies (Boler, 1999) was promoted. Preliminary analysis of data gathered has revealed that a gendered structure surrounded the development and implementation of the reform intended to bring about improvements in the teaching of reading. As the teaching of reading has predominantly been the domain of women, it was surprising and troubling to find how women were situated in the processes, and how the knowledge and work associated with the teaching of reading was managed. At the time in Queensland many women were moving into leadership positions in schools and Anna Bligh was Minister for Education, and soon to be Queensland’s first female premier. On the surface it appeared that women in Queensland were benefiting from the achievements of second-wave feminism.

However, from the interviews conducted with key participants at the levels of production, distribution and consumption, it became apparent that gender equity in educational policy development and implementation had not been achieved. This is particularly problematic when fields where women dominate, such as the teaching of reading, become major political issues. Interviewing participants revealed intense passion for their work. I was surprised by the passion with which women involved spoke of their experiences, even though five years had passed since the project was drawn to a close.

My theoretical approach was initially informed by Chris Weedon(1997).This paper further draws on the work of feminists including Nancy Fraser’s (2008; , 2009) account of justice and Megan Boler’s work on emotion in discourse. I am also using Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) based in the work of M.A.K. Halliday (2004). In this presentation I will share and discuss some findings and reflections from the field and consider gender implications for future reform in the area of literacy.

1. **‘Othering’ experiences of female mathematics majors at a Canadian university**

**Jennifer Hall, University of Ottawa, Canada**

In Canada, women have always been a minority in university-level mathematical fields, and their proportion has declined in recent years (Statistics Canada, 2010a, 2010b). Due to my concern about this situation, I investigated the mathematics experiences of female mathematics majors, in order to better understand supports and challenges they faced in this male-dominated field. Specifically, I addressed the following research question: In what ways do women who were educated in Canada and who are nearing completion of undergraduate mathematics degrees feel they have been supported and challenged in their high school and university mathematics experiences? The study was framed by my view of gender issues in mathematics as connected to social and cultural factors regarding conceptions of gender and the image of mathematics.

Data were collected through individual semi-structured interviews with six female mathematics majors at a Canadian university. The interviews focused on four dimensions: family, peers, formal educational experiences, and personal characteristics. Prior research (e.g., Gavin, 1996; Herzig, 2004; Rodd & Bartholomew, 2006) has demonstrated that these dimensions impact female students’ relationships with and perseverance in mathematics. Several common challenges were raised by the participants; in this paper, I focus on ‘othering’. ‘Othering’ is “that process which serves to mark and name those thought to be different from oneself” (Weis, 1995, p. 18). Broadly, the participants are considered atypical (i.e., ‘others’) due to their participation in university-level mathematics, a historically male-dominated field. Currently, 4% of undergraduate students in Canada are in mathematical fields, and of these students, only one-quarter are women (Statistics Canada, 2010a, 2010b). The participants’ awareness of this othering was reflected in their perceptions of the male/female ratio in their classes and identification as being ‘one of the few’ women in mathematics.

Reaction to this othering was evident in the participants’ gender positioning. Notably, the participants all positioned themselves strongly as either very stereotypically ‘girly’ or tomboyish. This aligns with prior research that found women in male-dominated fields may attempt to fit in with the dominant group (i.e., males; Kanter, 1977) or assert their femininity as “a defense against the frightening possibility of stepping over the gender divide” (Walkerdine, 1989, p. 276; see also Riviere, 1985). While attempting to fit in with males may minimize one’s otherness as a woman, asserting femininity may do the converse.

The participants themselves were complicit in othering – surprisingly, they othered their female classmates, whom they described as shy, unfriendly, lacking social skills, and solely focused on mathematics. In describing the ‘others’ as such (essentially, ‘othering’ within an ‘othered’ group), the participants marked the other women as different and thus separated themselves from these negative characteristics, which are often associated with mathematicians (Damarin, 2000; Picker & Berry, 2000, 2001).

Women in university-level mathematics may be both subjected to and may subject others to ‘othering’ based on issues related to conceptions of gender and mathematics. Understanding the complex role of ‘othering’ may help us to better understand these women’s experiences.

1. **Pathways to becoming women doctors in Iran**

**Mastoureh Fathi, School of Humanities and Social Sciences,University of East London**

This paper introduces three main issues relating the pathways of becoming an Iranian woman doctor in Iran. Firstly, it looks at the ways in which ‘truth’ and knowledge have been produced and how these knowledges construct the ways Iranian women think about themselves as educated subjects in the last 30 years in Iran. The paper argues that certain historical events were detrimental to the creation of classed selves and how individuals’ practices in the past led to the production of ‘truths’ about themselves and provided possibilities of becoming educated subjects. Secondly in this paper, I engage with how becoming scientific selves is possible through different discourses around institutional education for women which have been proposed by the Iranian Islamic government and how studying medicine has been facilitated widely for women as part of the agenda for sex-segregation in the society. Finally, this paper will focus on gendered spaces in Iran and women’s struggle to form an assemblage of locales where they learned and constructed their identities as doctors and how through understanding themselves in these spaces, they challenged the pre-defined *Islamic subjects* and took on new roles as *female doctors*.

1. **Gender and Methodology: Revealing power/knowledge and positioning within Scottish independent schooling**

**Joan Forbes (University of Aberdeen) and Gaby Weiner (University of Umea/University of Edinburgh)**

The main aim of the paper is to analyse the methodological considerations relating to processes of production and exchange of gender knowledge which emerged from research into Scottish independent schooling (Forbes et al, 2008; Forbes and Weiner, 2008; Horne et al forthcoming; Lingard et al forthcoming).The question that frames this paper is: what are the effects of specific school gender regimes for empirical research? Here the ‘revealing’ of the title is interpreted in two ways: we seek to ‘unmask’ gender relations and at the same time ‘inform’ educational research. The first part of the paper contextualises the research and analysis by providing an overview of policy in Scotland in relation to categories of gender, race and social class. It is argued that gender regimes are likely to be hidden in Scotland in the sense that the country’s policy and governance take little account of the intersectional nature of equalities issues, thus placing the un-gendered, individualised child at the heart of schooling (Forbes, Öhrn & Weiner, in press). The second part of the paper investigates a specific gendered school regime and the effects of that regime for research, in particular, in relation to access, researcher identification and positioning, and research power/knowledge relationships (Gordon, 1980; Howard, 2008; Humes, 1986; Walford, 1994).

The authors draw on data gathered in a single independent school site case-study considered to typify the sector in Scotland, augmented by background data collected in two further sites representing the different orientations of schools in the sector. The paper provides a discourse-based analysis of policy and of the interview, questionnaire, focus group and observation data gathered to show how the school constructs itself and its ‘assumptive world’ (Ball, 2001; Foucault, 1972), and draws in particular on the work of Foucault into power/knowledge (Foucault, 1972; Gordon, 1980) and Agnes Van Zanten on the socially productive and reproductive work of elite schools (Van Zanten, 2010).

The paper concludes that school gender regimes need to be taken into consideration in selecting research methodology. This is especially important in the case of elite or privileged settings where individuals in positions of power will often seek to extend that power to the research process and output.

1. **Developing Future Women Leaders within the Girls’ School Context**

**Nicole Archard , Macquarie University, Sydney**

In a global context where the representation of male and female leaders is not congruent with the percentage of women in the workforce and the percentage of women undertaking higher education, the need to address the present and future leadership potential of women is paramount (Carli & Eagly, 2001; Kenway & Willis, 1995; Yates, 1993). In order to explore how education may address the inequitable gender balance of leaders in society, a study of girls’ schools from Australia and New Zealand has taken place. Through a qualitative sequential study, involving document analysis, survey, focus groups and interviews, an understanding of how girls’ schools are preparing future leaders has been sought. This understanding will then be compared against societal perceptions of leadership in order to ascertain if schools are preparing leaders for this context. As a result of this investigation, a Leadership Framework, aimed at providing a whole school structure for enhancing girls’ leadership, will be developed.

The impact that education might have on women’s leadership potential is worthy of investigation. Arnot’s (2002) ‘gender code’ theory warns of the potential of schools to transmit specific gendered views through knowledge and pedagogic structures. Arnot is of the opinion that this transference of gendered values and assumptions provides the boundary to which students can then negotiate their own gender identities and therefore place in society. Kenway (1990; 1995) has focussed on the area of ‘gender justice’ and the role of education in challenging the gender stratification of the workforce, consequently widening the horizons for women regarding work opportunities. Untenhalter (2007) is concerned with the function of education in achieving gender equity on a global scale. She has acknowledged the role of education in assisting women’s access to political participation, thus moving women into important decision making positions in society. Each theory adds to the compilation of ideas regarding how education may contribute to the absence of women leaders in society and thus should be taken into consideration when addressing issues regarding the education of girls.

**Research Design**

In order to approach the ideas raised above from a methodological perspective, a qualitative approach has been employed. Qualitative research is designed to provide in-depth descriptions of programs, practice, or settings (Mertens, 1997). This study will therefore attempt to describe educational settings through school documents as well as the voices of staff and students. In order to achieve this outcome the following research questions have been addressed:

1. How is leadership conceptualised within girls’ schools?
2. How are these conceptualisations implemented by schools and practised by students?
3. What effect do these practices have on students’ understanding and practice of leadership?
4. To what extent are these practices aligned with societal understandings of women’s leadership?

**Conclusions**

As a result of answering these questions, a Girls’ School Leadership Framework will be developed with the objective of providing a guiding map to be utilised by schools in addressing leadership development. It is hoped that this framework will guide schools in developing a holistic educational practice that will enhance the leadership potential of female students so that they may become the best possible leaders of tomorrow.

1. **Feminist epistemology in the context of education: the role of situated knowledges and inquiry into curriculum**

**Valerija Vendramin, Educational Research Institute, Ljubljana, Slovenia**

The article is based on broadly defined feminist theory, which I here describe as a struggle for common knowledge, and on more narrowly defined feminist epistemology and its concept of situated knowledges (in short, ways of knowing that are self-reflective concerning the conditions under which they came into being). It goes on to investigate its specific relevance for the field of education. I first present some fundamental starting-points or postulates highlighting the socially embedded knowing subject and problems related to the notion of objectivity, and critically evaluate them.

In further text, with the help of this theoretical framework, I present the hidden curriculum as an extremely important concept in researching education that enables "methodological flexibility and context-specific understandings", and guards "against overwriting individual specificities with externally imposed ‘objective’ systems of meaning" (as pointed out by Henwood and Pidgeon 1995, p. 10, in a slightly different context). I treat the hidden curriculum as an epistemological topic, on the basis of which I illustrate the range of the approach taking into consideration the politics of situated knowledges– which I take to be an appropriate and influential "cognitive and political tool for more adequate knowledge judged by the nonessentialist, historically contingent, situated standards" (Haraway 1997, p. 198).

By concentrating on the category of gender (but not excluding other social axes of domination) I try to tackle the common sense preventing an insight into the specificity of context and (self)reflection on how we reached understanding, what the tacit cultural premises are and which power relations co-define our views.

1. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
2. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)