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Introduction

This paper reports on research in progress examining the gendered reflections of undergraduate students in the Faculty of Education at Deakin University. The project extends an on-going interest in gender inclusiveness of a large and diverse group of staff members from most Departments in the School of Primary Teaching. A collaborative team representing a range of feminist interests and expertise implemented this research. In the first instance we aimed to influence the current practice of Teacher Education by translating the gender inclusive curriculum to a tertiary context. We adopted this paradigm after Fowler (1983) conceptualising it as a framework which by its contents and methodologies valued the female as equally valid as the male. In responding to current Government policies we hoped to utilise this model and identify its significance in Teacher Education. The team chose to focus upon examining the perceived and pre-existing gendered knowledge of our students as they began their teaching qualification. We expected that this would form an appropriate base for our eventual goal of discovering their perceptions of the gendered process of Teacher Education. We began the research task by attempting to uncover what our students could tell us was the gendered nature of their schooling both at the primary and secondary levels. In doing so we devised a wide ranging series of open-ended questions to form an interview schedule. These questions focussed upon issues of policy, language, culture, knowledge and harassment in an attempt to uncover statements of how gender was constructed in schools for and by our students.

In our post-modern times naming the problem is seen to be a significant dilemma. How do we name the students we have interviewed. Do we identify our respondents as girls? Women? Females? In seeking the most appropriate naming of our subjects we looked to the Government policies in Gender Equality. The key policies in our area clearly refer to the education of Girls:

1975 Girls School and Society

1984 Girls and Tomorrow

1987/1989 The National Policy for the Education of Girls.

Nevertheless we view the focus of our research is on uncovering our tertiary students memories of their schooling experience, as a basis for analysing their responses to Teacher Education. As such they are adults subjectively constructing gender through their memories and current positionings. Therefore we name them as women and men.

theorizing women's knowledge and gendered relations in schooling

The theoretical agendas of this research project are twofold:

- (1) From an empirical base of interviews with 40 teacher education students, to build theories about women's knowledge and memories of the process of schooling;
- (2) To provide an account of theorizing women's knowledge that will provide a framework for our understanding of change in schools and tertiary institutions.

In terms of the empirical base of the project, there is little information available on current women's memories, knowledge and reflections on the experience of schooling. Research that has been done on training teachers

and their knowledge has tended to quantify and categorize attitudes and ideas, and rest on complacent or self-reinforcing studies of 'gender-stereotyped' attitudinal surveys, the 'victimology' of girls' experiences in schools, or the conservative nature of teachers' perceptions of 'gender roles' and 'gender identity'.

The theoretical perspective framing this research project intends to push these assured parameters of understanding women students' knowledge much further. Along a trajectory of experience, memory, reflection and knowledge, we intend to argue for a problematized and situated understanding of our own and our students' knowledge. This approach does not imply the development of a theoretical apparatus outside of the research data, that is then read back on to the texts of the students' memories. We do not intend as outsiders to expose, or uncover weaknesses, blindspots or disguises in our students' memories and knowledge but to project a range of understandings through and inside the texts, in context of our broader aim of analysing knowledge as a basis for change. A key

focus throughout the paper is thus movement, development, reform, and the agenda that will allow space for these to occur.

The point of departure in our interviews on the gendered relations of schooling was personal experience. Since the early stages of the second wave women's movement, when the personal was defined as the political, the realities of women's personal lives have been a crucial factor in making knowledge and consciousness. But the notion of unmediated experience, unproblematised in the raw, is no longer helpful in locating women's knowledge. As Weedon has commented, women's 'lived reality', or experience, is constituted by social-material practices and the formation and processes of subjectivity:

re them ... (Weedon, 1987, 8-9)

Experience-in-itself a limiting concept, it must be located as related, process, a site or position, or as embodiment of social practices and institutions in and through it.

Experience must be conceptualized as projected memory and is thus refracted through time. Haug has summed this up as 'women's lived practice in the memory of a self-constructed identity' thus the intervention of the self and identity through time is our construction of experience" (Haug, 1987).

de Lauretis (1990) has highlighted this concept as 'historical consciousness', whereby she argues that our understanding of self, identity and subject is made through the historical process of successive displacements and transformations. In framing historical change as important for the feminist subject, de Lauretis draws on the autobiographical reflections of Pratt, who speaks of her life as the continual 'reanchoring' of self, and the 'rewriting' of self or the narrative of autobiography over time (de Lauretis, 1990). Personal experience, as memory and knowledge, is thus constituted, located, and must be analysed as such: this theme will recur throughout the paper, specifically in our comments on 'gender' and 'gender identity'.

In broad terms, there are three movements within current feminist theory that situate experience and knowledge. In our view, each can make a

contribution to the aims of this paper, despite some contradictory positions within and between varying approaches. The oldest tradition draws on the legacy of class-based theories of culture, where knowledge is defined as the product of the material and the social, specifically, the means of production in a capitalist society. Culture may be analysed as the production or the reproduction of the ideologies of a specific society, the work of the 'superstructure' of institutions or the social apparatus of the time. For the purposes of this paper, the work of Frigga Haug (1987) and others on the theorization of 'memory work' provides a useful example of feminists working within this tradition. In the dynamic or the dialectic between the self and the social, Haug gives the impetus and control to pre-given, existing social relations as the determinants of women's knowledge. She concludes that the role of the individual is in 'appropriating', 'negotiating' or 'reproducing' within the given structure. If there is space for the individual subject, in Haug's terms it is only space to 'construct the self into existing relations', or to 'grow into' the structures of society (Haug, 1987). This is the language of other theorists of ideology who describe the individual 'interpellated' into ideology. There is, however, more momentum in Haug's memory-work than appears from the rather over-determined portrait above. A strong motif is specific concrete and material details, which are made significant through memory as 'practices of subjugation': the close examination of specific practices is a useful feature of our research project. Haug also draws on theories of ideology as disguise, or false consciousness, but presents a specific tension in this experience for women, that we find is relevant. She argues that the process of forming knowledge for women is bound to be fraught with self-imolation, or the destruction of self, or the withdrawal from reality. These tensions and dangers for women arise directly from the tensions, dangers and contradictions of their lived experience, and women's only resort in aligning knowledge with reality is to ignore, omit or gloss over contradictions:

At every point, where we have indulged in self-delusion, refused to confront issues face to face, avoided conflicts, refuted connections ... we

have in so doing by-passed potential for our future. (Haug, 1987, p.) There is an important element of collective authorship, ownership and memory in Haug's analysis that is not as clearly reflected in the research of our project. Our source material has been produced by other women's memories, however, we as collective authors participated in interviews and analysis. Haug's theorizing of women's knowledge separates consciousness from reality, and truth from consciousness, in a way that raises problems. But the sense of rationalisation, withdrawal, in other words the political purpose served by making women's knowledge remains an important referent for our research.

This point, where we focus on the political purpose, or ends served by the construction of women's knowledge, is taken up and reinforced in the work of current American feminist theorists, Nancy Hartsock and Sandra Harding. In their focus on the politics of women's knowledge they invert the

relations between individual and society proposed by Haug to say that it is the 'standpoint' of women that must be our reference in exposing the power relations in a society. As the class-based view of oppression taken by the proletariat is the legitimate position from which to understand class, so the standpoint of women allows us to understand the power of patriarchy. Another way of explaining this is to say that first hand experience and knowledge of oppression - the speaking position of women - is our only valid access to analysing power.

This is a view of women's knowledge which is more active and empowering, than that of Haug, because of its positive view of the construction, production and expression of women's points of view. It has the effect of legitimating, if not valorizing women's points of view, allowing space for subjugated knowledge and experience. As a frame for research such as our current project, this positive view of women's knowledge validates the collection of women's reflections, as the 'epistemology of power' derived from the standpoint of oppression.

This is the concept of women's knowledge that we find most useful, for beyond this Hartsock and others go on to privilege the standpoint of women, in an essentializing and reductive mode. They propose for example that the world view of women expresses a continuum beyond dualities, a unity of mental and manual labour, which is based on women's reproductive work. As di Stefano (1990) has pointed out, this is premised on a view of women as coherent social subjects, and 'women' as a potentially oppressive and totalizing fiction, excluding difference. Flax's extended critique is in similar terms: that Hartsock assumes the otherness that men assign women, by assuming that women, unlike men, can be free of their own participation in relations of domination (Flax, 1990).

While these critiques of the standpoint theorists of women's knowledge have some purchase, the work of Harding and Hartsock provides an important return to the imperative of women's points of view, and a sustained focus on the systemic relations of power that construct women's knowledge and memories.

The third approach to theorizing women's knowledge and memory takes as a framework assumptions about the momentum, movement and fracturing of the knowledge, experience and memory contexts. Feminists engaged with varieties of postmodernist theorizing write in a mode that takes its political engagement beyond the problematic dualities of self and structure of both the Marxist and Standpoint theorists. They offer a third frame for the research of this project, for they allow us access beyond a static reading of the texts of our students' memories and some understanding of women's resistance to gendered discourses and meanings. They also constrain us in the project of establishing a given reality established through the texts of our students' memories.

Women's knowledge and memory must be read as both a site, and an embodiment of relations of power, dominance and subjugation. The contestation involved in such a motif involves reading for contradictions beyond any notions of disguise, rationalisation or co-option. Women's knowledge is emergent, changing, not only through time but through its refraction of relations of power throughout. Dorothy Smith has developed this point further to argue that the 'texts' of women's knowledge have an active role

themselves as a material presence in social relations. Not only does women's language, and other cultural texts and artefacts reproduce reality

but they are active agents themselves in structuring that social reality, changing meaning for all (Smith, 1990).

An approach that recognises women's knowledge as a site or text also shifts our understandings of identity and subjectivity. Hutcheon's view is that the personal or the self is constructed by 'positionality' or a referenced property of experience (Hutcheon, 1989). Others describe identity located as a flux, or multiplicity, heterogeneity or plurality of different axes beyond any single subject position created by a unitary symbol, such as 'woman'. In our reading of women's texts we have to go beyond simple conceptions of 'gender identity' and 'women's experience' which we may 'read back' into our students' language. As Wendy Brown has persuasively put it, we must move beyond the mantle of truth worn beyond identity-based speech, to a more political view of women's knowledge:

We have learned well to articulate and identify our 'subject positions' - we have become experts at politicizing the 'I' that is produced through multiple vectors of power and subordination. But the very practice so crucial in making these elements of power visible and subjectively political may be partly at odds with the requisites for developing political conversation among a complex and diverse 'we'. (Brown, W., 1991, p. 81)

The theoretical perspective framing this research project thus draws on a strategic move made by Toril Moi (T. Lovell, 1991, p. 375) to push beyond the impasse of opposing positions, and to draw out not only what is most practically useful for our current project, but approaches to understanding our students' memories that together provide us with a broadbased view of the potential for change.

Language

Feminist research has found that we can begin to understand better the position of women in society through the study of language and discourse (Cameron, Poynton, Gilbert, Spender, Threadgold). There are many different views of how language places women within society and therefore in relation to men. However, much of this research (Cameron, Fairclough, Poynton, Spender) centres around power relationships and how women through language have been alienated or oppressed in a patriarchal society. It is men who have the means to oppress, silence and marginalise women through language by denying them access to the most influential and prestigious registers of language in a particular culture (Cameron, 1985). It is the institutional and bureaucratic control of language that silences and oppresses subcultures, such as women and ethnic minorities, within a society. We construct meaning differently because each individual has a different experience, but more generally, because in patriarchal societies males and females are allowed a different range of experiences.

For feminist poststructuralism, it is language in the form of conflicting discourses which constitutes us as conscious thinking subjects and enables us to give meaning to the world and to act to transform it. (Weedon, 1987, p32)

Girls and boys are very specifically socialised into female and male gender roles (Walkerdine, Gilbert,). This socialisation can be examined through the discursive formation of the subject through the use of language. How we communicate about and to females and males has been shown to be different (Cameron, Poynton, Spender). Research of, for example, grammatical constructions, lexical sets, use of intonation and discourse styles are often judged as being more or less acceptable, according to whether you are female or male. This then realises power relationships which can be expressed through common sense understandings and ideology. Fairclough(1990) discusses these connections between language use and unequal relations of power and the effect that class and ethnicity have in maintaining these unequal relationships.

The extent to which ideological variation becomes a social struggle can be better understood by studying the language. Fairclough(1990) highlights how communication is constrained by the structures and forces of the social institutions in which we live and function. In these interviews these are the school and those who work within it, the women students' peer group and their families.

Keeping in mind that it is the memories of the first year students and

their perceptions of their years of schooling, it is important to reflect on how the kind of analysis that we engage in is influenced by our role as listener. It is true to say that there will never be equal relationships in any conversation given the role of speaker and hearer. The number and place of agreement, interruption, request for clarification etc,.. will always influence how a person constructs and positions themselves. In any conversational analysis both parties' language should be taken into account, however, in these interviews I am concentrating not on the relationship between the interviewer and interviewee, but rather the social relationships which the interviewees conversation reveals about themselves and their 'real world'.

How a person is positioned within society can be influenced by whether you are female or male. Bronwyn Davies makes an understanding of how the female students in these interviews have positioned themselves and have been positioned by other people.

Discourse always requires a speaking position -a position from which authority is exercised - and a spoken subject, a person brought into existence through the exercising of this authority. (Gilbert, 1991, p. 42)

These interviews show the extent to which the students subjectivity and their interpretations of their schooling experiences are shaped by the discourses of gender to which they have access, namely provided by their teachers, and peer group and which they have taken up as their own (Davies). It is revealed that these students have been interpellated (Althusser) into the social world via the dominant discourse of gender which serves to keep the male/female dualism in tact and in fact they have taken these discourses on as their own. They have learned to interpret their own lives and the lives of others within these dominant discourses.

teachers' positioning of students

When we compare the language used about girls by girls and the male other, the instances of sexual harassment and the accepted behaviour of boys by teachers discussed in this paper, the teachers' expectations and positioning is somewhat extreme.

The language CN11 uses to describe an occurrence whilst on school camp and which culminated in one girl's face being slapped by another's as she came out from her cabin illustrates how girls take on the all inclusive 'we' 'we' were told off really badly.....'we' were told off because 'we' acted terribly.... and that 'we' should have known,"

even though the "really bad bitch fight" only involved two girls, and their 'helpers', fighting over a mutual boyfriend, "... the girls were suspended for a week - both of them" and through mob-type language positions the 'accused' by the use of demeaning language "and their two little helpers, each had two little helpers. Bodyguards we called them."

CN11 reinforces the different attitudes of society to how boys and girls should behave:

because we've been brought up to believe that we're so different, there's always been 'oh boys are meant to do that, and you're a girl and you're meant to do that', and that's the way we've been brought up.

It was also common for girls to be positioned into the quieter, less dominant one through the teacher's language

The teachers used to say 'look at the girls they're sitting nicely and quietly' (C.N.9&10).

well you're just a vegetable.. (CN14)

that's not the way a girl acts.... like they'd tell her (a friend) 'yes, you're a tomboy, I expect this of Darren or I expect this of but not you'.

They expected the girls to be very nice and serene and quiet and the boys they were expecting to be a bit more noisy and so forth.. (CN16)

Some teachers say, 'I expect the boys to be noisy, I don't expect the girls to be. (L.B.)

Gilbert (1991) says gender identity is centred on appearance and sexuality, and media texts are central in the construction of this identity. This is illustrated by the following remark (underlined) made by the headmaster of a co-educational school when he told the class off

'our class was being told off pretty badly... and he called us barbarians raiding villages or something, and all of you Big M girls, with your little mini skirts...' (CN16)

"The content of adult talk may contain one set of messages but the discursive practices engaged in may encode, through metaphor or through habitual and unexamined language use, an entirely different set of messages"

students' positioning of themselves

During the interviews it was common for the women students to place themselves into incompetent positions (see CN14 above underlined) and in many cases used the pronoun 'I' rather than 'we' .

For computers I was hopeless at computers I was just terrible, he just thought I was a total complete idiot, because I couldn't understand how these computers worked, that was just towards me because I couldn't pick it up I was just so dumb but I don't think he ever thought it was us females being dumb just me." (CN11)

A11 does align herself as being one of the girls "us females" but isolates herself through the contradictory phrase "just me".

The poststructuralist world argues that the person is not socialised into the social world but interpellated into it. That is they are not passively shaped by active others, rather they actively take up as their own the discourses through which they are shaped.

'girls can do it as well as boys' assuming that boys do it well all of the time and is therefore putting girls down. (CN8)

Examples of girls using derogatory language towards each other was quite common. The language used was usually borrowed from the terms boys used as derogatory remarks towards girls.

Slut, moll, bitch, especially in high school among the girls, 'she's a bitch, or she's a slut' Used: "If she was going out with somebody else's boyfriend, or she done something behind another girl. It had to do with boys mainly." (C.N. 11)

Some of the language girls used to name their actions and to name themselves and other girls in their classes placed them in a negative position

"..we had one really bad bitch fight..."

"...their two little helpers..."

"... a total complete idiot..."

".. cat fights. The usual 'bitch' and things like that" (A16)

'..there were a lot of what I would call very bitchy females.."

CN14 when asked about name calling agreed that whilst in Primary school it was

just the usual things like (the boys said) 'you haven't got a hope in catching this ball' or 'you can't kick' and 'you're a sissy' and all those sorts of things, it was just the normal things that they say.

(However it is noted that in Secondary school CN14 becomes so intimidated by the teasing she cannot contest her position.)

oh don't choose girls"

oh yuk, girls - germs " and "You can't play here -you're a girl." (D.G.)

Of three boys who had started ballet classes when offered at their recently formed private co-ed school only one remained at the end of second term.

These boys were ridiculed in what is seen to be the worst insult you can

pay a man by calling him feminine (Campling, 1989) "oh, you're a sissy, you're doing ballet".

The discursive positions allowed by these girls (and boys) during their Primary and Secondary schooling were limited by the schools attitude to boys and their stereotypic positioning of girls by their male and female peer group and their teachers.

The ways in which discourse constitutes the minds and bodies of individuals is always part of a wider network of power relations, often with institutional bases. (Weedon, 1987, p108).

contradictions in language

Although society has always recognised contradiction as a logical concept naming a relation between propositions it has also been a general metaphor for incompatibilities of many kinds (Davies and Harre,1990). However, the deconstruction of modernity(Weedon, 1987, Walkerdine,1985, Haug, 1987) has allowed us to question the interpretation of contradiction.

In a poststructuralist analysis, the person who makes a contradictory statement is more likely to be seen as being positioned within and constituted through contradictory discourses. (Davies and Harre, 1990, p4).

A person who appears to be making contradictory statements is seen to be inconsistent, not understanding or interpreting the social world 'appropriately'.

The guys were much louder, the girls would talk among themselves in their little groups, the guys would yell from one side of the room to one another. The teacher was quiet and didn't know what she was doing, the guys would yell and pick her to bits and the girls would just talk quietly and nastily about her or him. (C.N.8)

However when asked about who took over in class, C.N. 8 reveals details of her own particular class which had "5 guys and 14 girls" and although she says the boys were loud and vociferous

"the girls definitely took over they were in control of everything.....
(Interviewer:Was it easy to have a turn?) "When the guys got to it , no."
(CN8)

C.N.16 when discussing how students behaved in maths:

However C.N. 14 also states that when she was constantly teased in the playground

So it was easier to fight against the teachers rather than fight against the boys in the classroom. It was alright to be "a disagreeable child" but teasing in the playground was too powerful to be fought against.

Davies and Harre (1990) state it is the discourses with their contradictory assumptions or imperatives, rather than the person who may need remediation. These female students speak from many different subject positions. They see themselves in different roles at different times moving from adolescence to adulthood, from a student at school to tertiary student, involved in different relationships- girlfriend - boyfriend, girlfriend-girlfriend, mother - daughter, father - daughter and, having to interpret the difference between feminism and femininity.

Students positioning of themselves is very contradictory. While society is still presenting a feminine subservient position our research has shown how

difficult it is for students to take up any other positions. This is an area that the gender inclusive curriculum needs to address.
cross cultural understandings of gender positioning
it was O.K for boys, but not girls.

Whilst Federal and state policies are in place concerning the education of girls, and recent Ministry figures indicate that there are increasing numbers of students of non English speaking background in schools, the policies are written from the dominant Anglo-Celtic perspectives. The students fall into a number of different categories, from the recently arrived immigrants and refugees, to those students born in Australia whose family language and community contact outside school is for the most part non English speaking and culturally non Anglo-Celtic. These students have been identified by DSE as requiring specialised assistance, and some are provided with specialist teaching. If the DSE sees being of non English speaking background a disadvantage in our schools rather than an additional resource, then it is appropriate to examine gender equity policies appropriateness for the education of girls from non English speaking backgrounds from a similar perspective.

The 1975 policy document *Girls, School and Society* which has had far reaching implications for the education of girls, was working from a deficit model. To be a girl of non English speaking background was to be seen as at a disadvantage. To what extent has that position changed today? When one considers the policies in relation to the gender inclusive curriculum and the education of girls there appears to be remarkably little research and even less which takes into account the different backgrounds of the students in schools and the implications of this for such policy development. (Tsolidis 1988, Kenway 1990). There is a 'significant silence' concerning the response of parents, students and teachers on the implementation of these policies (Kenway 1990).

Before making any comment on students of non English speaking background it should be pointed out that in attempting to form any generalisations from the research we must at the same time resist any resulting stereotyping in terms of cultural difference. Students of non English speaking background in schools represent a wide diversity of backgrounds in terms of class, educational backgrounds as well as ethnicity and gender (Tsolidis 1988). Keeping this in mind, parents of these students will hold a wide range of values with regards the education of their daughters, as indeed, do all parents.

I suppose different values at home and that sort of thing. When you come into contact with the school, I've been taught differently at home.

(A9)

For some groups in our community higher education for women is still not an option. Thus the only women interviewed in this project came from families where tertiary education for women, albeit only in certain fields, is an option.

Although there are a considerable number of students of NESB in the first year enrolment only a few students were interviewed in the random sample.

The findings were similar to much other research in the area in that almost all students in this group commented on their parents concern over the seemingly 'free' behaviour between boys and girls in secondary school, in public and within the Angloceltic community in general. A number of girls had been placed in single sex secondary schools as their parents believed that this would 'protect them' from the inappropriate behaviour in co-educational schools.

Previous research (Tsolidis1988, Kalantzis et al 1990) has shown that in many immigrant families gender positions for girls are strongly defined by their own cultural positions and at times these attitudes are contrary to the policies put in place in schools.

...progressivism and multiculturalism are only rhetorically open doctrines. Rather ironically, the liberal culture which is ostensibly so open to difference and change, finds itself at odds with those traditional immigrant cultures which are not open, those which believe that school is a place where fixed knowledge is imparted in an authoritarian structure, those which include a long tradition of sexism and racism and so on. (Kalantzis et al 1989)

Whereas in primary schools NESB girls mix freely with all groups of students, in secondary schools, when parental values seem to the girls to come into most conflict with the everyday life of secondary students, girls tend to mix more with other NESB girls as there is a shared understanding

of their dual value system..(Kalantzis 1990)

Most immigrant groups maintain very tight control over their girls social life and treat the boys quite differently.

Boys said that when they got married their wife won't work. Or they expect to have a virgin. (A1)

As a result some girls found their only opportunity for any social life whilst at school was within the close confines of family approval. Thus some found the freedom they encountered at University came as a welcome relief to their school experience, whilst others felt their parents attitudes still interfered with them having any independent social life.. Although some women students expressed frustration at their parents attitudes few contested them. Some did go to great length, usually with the cooperation of male relatives, to have more 'freedom than their parents would have approved of. However for many of the girls this left them in a somewhat powerless position with these boys who were thus able to wield a certain amount of control over these girls during their school days. Some women commented that this 'supervision ' remained at University, to their frustration.

The range of careers deemed 'suitable' for young women of NESB appears more restricted than for other students. (Kalantzis et al) The most suitable courses for women appear from this sample to be law and business. Nursing and other health professions, so often seen as traditional 'female 'professions, are not considered suitable for these students by their parents. Some families opposed their daughters entering teaching, but most approved. At the time of research the entry score for teaching was quite low, so that in many cases, this was the only course to which the women

gained entry. Teaching has traditionally been a male working class and female middle-class profession amongst the Anglo-Celtic group. (Blackmore) This class and gender positioning amongst this sample group could be further examined in the future.

Many of the students appeared to have no knowledge of any gender inclusive policies or practices at their school although they were well aware of equal opportunity policy and practice. They did not relate these policies to themselves in terms of supporting their own or family values, but did notice some inconsistencies in teachers' behaviour in this area, in this case in teaching 'reproduction' in Science.

Several commented on the 'hassling' that girls experience but seem to accept this as a natural part of schooling rather than something that 'should be dealt with'.

I think I found your family background played a big role there, where you lived and your ethnicity, all that sort of portrays heavily on whether you do use terms like that. (A4)

There seems to be a view that such 'hassling' should be controlled by the individual classroom teacher, and stopped by the teacher rather than have a broad school based policy. In this women from all backgrounds held similar views. Several expressed anger and frustration that they did not enjoy this behaviour and that this unruliness supported their parents' view that the schools were jungles and their own values did not have much credence within the school system (Tsolidis)

The gap between parental expectations of and attitudes towards schools by parents of students of NESB does not appear to have narrowed much over the last twenty years.

It wasn't until my late years at high school that I went to Camp. It clashed with their values. I remember I did everything against it, I asked teachers to come and talk to my parents, but no, that's my answer. (A9&10) Most schools still deny ethnicity in practice in that they rarely give support for cultural, language or religious maintenance and few schools teach the students' own languages. In practice all students are somehow expected to fit some ideal 'norm' which appears to be that of the dominant Anglo-Celtic group. To accept such differing values in real terms in our schools would challenge many of the accepted positions held in the policies purporting to offer 'equal opportunity'. At the same time schools must resist falling into the pattern of celebrating difference whilst re-enforcing the dominant ideology.

One can find today many examples of 'good practice' with regard to schools' attempts to involve their community in participation and decision making. But while the every day practices of the schools seem to the parents to be at odds with their own values, one cannot see the distance between the two groups lessening. Whilst in primary school, many women spoke of how easy it was to have friendships with girls of all cultural backgrounds, in secondary school, when their parents became more aware of how their

daughter's peer group behaviours appeared to be at odds with their expectations and norms, it was easier to form friendships only with girls of similar cultural backgrounds, who were experiencing similar concerns from their parents, than to try to sustain friendships with girls from Anglo backgrounds and have to all the time be explaining why you were not allowed to do something. Thus school, rather than breaking down the barriers between the groups, served to reinforce them.

It seems that one interpretation for this situation could be that the curriculum theorising on which current curriculum policy and practice is based has been shown to be inadequate in catering for the diverse groups of students within the schools and with individuals within those groups. The National Policy mentions that it should 'include the contribution of women from all ethnic backgrounds and social groups (p51). Whilst policy which is claiming to maximise the involvement of the stake holders the students, parents and teachers, but many of the parents and and students from cultural backgrounds other than the dominant Anglo -Celtic, see the activities and practices of the school other than those with which they can identify, this disjunction will continue.

Previous research has shown resistance to the curriculum by 'disadvantaged groups of girls (Jones, Anyon, Lather, Ellsworth, Tsolidis, Kenway) questioning the way in which certain groups are objectified in education. Rather, the inability of schools and teachers to provide an environment in which difference can be accepted, supported and theorised, raises more serious questions about curriculum theorising today. Perhaps it is time to look again at progressivism in terms of curriculum theory, in the light that this approach to curriculum renders students of difference, whether by ethnicity, class or gender, invisible. (Walkerdine 1987, Kenway 1990). Progressivism makes the product of oppression, powerless, invisible. It is rendered invisible because within the naturalised discourse it is rendered unnatural, abnormal. (Walkerdine, 1987)

Resistance to such a curriculum is seen as regressive, and not given credence. If individuals or groups are seen to be 'irrational' in their resistance to the dominant, liberatory ideology, then the possibilities of resistance for girls coming from such marginal groups, are severely limited.

One of the ironies of the culture of liberalism, working with concepts like 'rights', participation, control and empowerment', is that, whatever the practical virtues of getting parents involved, and however much they connote community access, they are themselves culturally alien, even culturally threatening, terms to many people. They work well in the culture of the liberal individual, confidently able to avail themselves of their rights of participation. (Kalantzis et al)

To develop a curriculum which was truly inclusive of cultural difference would challenge the 'rationality' of many accepted educational principles. It is time to re-examine the role of the curriculum in reproducing inequality within our school systems and in supporting students, parents and teachers in their attempts to contest, construct and find a voice for their own views on a gender inclusive curriculum.

sexual harassment

Sexual harassment has been conceptualized as the confluence of authority (power) relations and sexuality (or sexism) in a society stratified by gender (Fitzgerald, 1990, p. 38). The 'power' referred to by Fitzgerald is of two kinds: one deriving from a formal role, for example, teacher and the other, an informal kind which arises from the male sexual prerogative implying that men have the unfettered right to initiate sexual interactions or to assert the primacy of woman's gender role over that of others roles, for example, student (Fitzgerald, 1990, p. 38).

The consequences of sexual harassment are not insignificant to victims. Psychological problems, physical illness and lowered educational aspirations have been noted (Paludi, 1990). In addition, acts of sexual harassment signify to victims that they are seen primarily as sexual objects, are not being taken seriously as students and are not being accorded the personal respect that they are entitled to expect of others (Davies and Campbell, 1985).

In schools, sexual harassment is expressed in a number of forms. For instance, boys frequently make insulting and abusive remarks - often sexually focussed to girls. This happens in the school grounds, as the students move around inside school buildings and in classrooms (Dwyer, 1990, p. 24). It may also involve physical contact as, for example when a girl/woman is patted, stroked, hugged or held against her will. It can involve being pinched, squeezed, grabbed, groped along with more serious sexual assaults. However, it does not necessarily involve contact.

According to Halson,

Sexual harassment may be verbal or psychological: staring, leering, standing too close, being followed, threatening body postures, sexual remarks or taunting, obscene gestures or jokes, explicit conversations about sex which cause offence as well as subtle or explicit pressure for sexual activity. (p. 131, 1990)

Similarly the Commonwealth Government's National Policy for the Education of Girls defines harassment as:

unwelcome language and/or conduct of a sexual nature which does or might disadvantage the victim in employment or education. This kind of behaviour takes as many forms in schools as in the wider community, ranging from so-called teasing and bullying of a sexist kind both verbal and physical, through to harassment of a more explicit sexual nature. Although it extends to both sexes, girls are the main victims. (p. 54-55)

One of the particular difficulties in dealing with the more common forms of sexual harassment is that they are often trivialized or dismissed as 'inoffensive' or 'friendly' or 'just teasing'. This attitude functions then to absolve teachers from any responsibility to intervene. However as Clark (1989, p. 4) points out sexual harassment is not the same as teasing: It is not an individual act of meanness by one child to another, because there is a power dimension involved. There is a fundamental difference between put-downs based on differences of power (gender, class, race, and ethnic based harassment by a member of a powerful group to a member of a less powerful group) and put-downs which are individual acts of meanness and disrespect. The former might be done by one individual to another but

they affect members of both groups and legitimate the power differences between them. Sometimes boys use sexual harassment to keep girls in what is viewed as "their place".

Clearly the key issue in distinguishing between friendly banter or flirtation is that it is not mutual. More to the point, it is unwelcome, offensive and/or threatening. On this view what is defined as offensive falls within the ambit of the victim. But how accurately do victims perceive and identify harassment?

Recent reports (Halson, 1989; Brodkey & Fine, 1990) point to evidence of confusion and denial when young women encounter sexual harassment. The statement "I don't think he meant it" occurs repeatedly in victims' accounts. At the same time Brodkey and Fine note a tendency for young women to reflect on their experiences in a disembodied fashion. Victims separated their minds, thoughts and feelings from their bodies' actual physical 'presence' during the incidents - presumably in an effort to suspend ethical and moral judgement on their male mentors/supervisors. As Halson (1989, p. 133) points out, there is a widely held (albeit mistaken) view that sexual attraction (not men exercising power over women) is the basis for such behaviour.

In the context of the present study it is therefore appropriate to focus on four main issues:

1. Awareness of the broad range of behaviours which comprise sexual harassment. That is, how do young women and men perceive sexual harassment in schools?
 2. Support provided by school personnel for contestation of sexual harassment by victims. That is, how do teachers respond to such events?
 3. The types of attributions made for sexual harassment. That is, how do young women and men explain sexual harassment?
 4. Possibilities for change. That is, how do young women and men see the possibilities for changing the societal and educational practices which give rise to sexual harassment?
- students' awareness of sexual harassment

Opinions expressed about about verbal and physical harassment ranged from moral indignation that it might happen: "Some girls were unjustly referred to as sluts, tarts, bitches" through victim-blaming: "They deserved to be called names because the way they dress or wear make-up was inappropriate" to denial: "It won't happen to me".

Also prevalent was an unwillingness to attribute responsibility to boys. Having witnessed an incident in which a girl was accosted and verbally abused when advances were rejected by boys in the playground, one young woman was able to dismiss this behaviour: "I'm sure they didn't know what they were saying." (LD)

Having observed a teacher fondling a girl's bottom, another young man stated that: "It was probably an accident, he probably meant to touch the table." (LG)

There was a belief possibly based on prior experience of parents' and teachers' reactions to such stories that victims could justifiably be blamed for provoking harassment. In an out-of-school incident one young woman explained how a friend who was working in a milk bar was threatened with job loss if she refused to co-operate sexually. She didn't tell her parents because they would probably say: "You must have done something to lead him on". (C4)

Describing an incident which was said to have happened in school, one young woman said of the victim, "It was rumoured that she was raped ... but she had a lot of problems, skipped classes, was different, way-out and daring." (C4)

Similarly following a sexual assault in the school gymnasium, the compliance of the victim was alleged. Although many parents withdrew daughters from the school until offenders were dealt with, no public discussion regarding sexual harassment took place in its wake. (LD)

Denial was also apparent in this account involving a teacher who "used to always walk into the P.E. changeroom while the girls were half-dressed". There were quite a few complaints, "They sort of didn't believe us ... they just thought 'stupid kids, they don't know what they're talking about'." (A6) The disbelief which this student encountered eventually led her to question her own reactions.

"I don't know if it was all our imagination or not later on ... but he did seem to come in, stick his head in 'oh are you ready yet' or something when he could have knocked or talked through the door. ... the teachers they sort of put it into your head that he wouldn't do something like that 'it's in your minds, you don't know what you're talking about'. So I suppose when he used to do that we'd feel really uncomfortable ... because he didn't touch you or anything like that, just sort of open the door. ... He's still there. ... I think they should kick them out." (A6)

As Herbert (1989) observes, such strategies contribute to the silencing of victims of sexual harassment. This outcome is also facilitated by the language of verbal harassment as previously noted. To the extent that girls join in the practices, they are unknowingly participating in male-controlling strategies (Herbert, 1989).

There was a degree of ambiguity apparent in the following when referring to punishment for incidents of harassment: "depends on severity - whether it was intentional or not." One student describes incident where two boys tried to kiss her in grade 6: "So they were pushing me around a bit but you know, they weren't too rough or anything. Nothing I couldn't handle." (A3)

teachers' reactions to sexual harassment

The response of teachers to verbal and physical harassment in the classroom is interesting in so far that such behaviours are frequently left unchallenged.

Teachers pretend not to see this behaviour and let it go unremarked hence unpunished, thus rendering invisible both the discomfort and humiliation of the girls and the aggression, hostility and bullying of the boys. (Dwyer, 1991, p. 24).

Moreover, teachers "often appear to be unaware of physical harassment referred to as 'touching up' of girls which some boys use to make sure

girls do not step out of line. By ignoring these activities, teachers are allowing girls' bodies and sexuality to be used for social regulation of girls by boys." (Dwyer, 1991. p. 24)

In general the more serious forms of harassment, for example, assault or misconduct by teachers were met with sanctions imposed by the school. However there were accounts where grossly unacceptable behaviours by boys to girls were ignored. Verbal harassment, for instance, rarely invoked

reprimands. Indeed a number of victims were ambivalent about wanting the intervention of school staff. Typical accounts of school responses were: "Co-ordinator did see these guys and pull them into line." "A couple of them knew about it, they said to the guys "Look something went on at lunchtime, and we don't want to see that happen again. That was the end of the discussion." (Interestingly, the "something" remains unnamed.) This respondent claimed to be satisfied with this intervention simply because it did not recur. Further action was opposed on the grounds that it had been "half friendly, half serious and it turned out all right ... so it didn't matter." (A3)

The deterrent value of sanctions for some was voiced by one young man insofar that: "I was too scared to [verbally harass] ... there was a lot of it ... a lot of blatant comments made by male to female. The consequences were either a trip to the principal's office or a note home." (A)

For some Greek-speaking girls, the effect of challenging verbal harassment was to send it underground, "Sometimes it was picked up by the teacher in English, but then when it continued on in Greek the teacher didn't have a clue what was going on ... but we did. We wanted them to do something." (A8)

Where teachers saw little problem, and a "boys will be boys" attitude prevailed, or where verbal harassment was seen as "just a joking type of thing", then they did not customarily intervene. (A4) According to one subject, "Most of my teachers were male anyway." This response appears to presuppose an inherent difficulty in problematizing sexist comment or behaviour. This was not exclusive to male teachers however, since one student recounted an incident of a friend having been pelted with oranges by boys during a maths class. She described the teacher's response as: "No real effort made to stop the boys, because she [the teacher] was more afraid of them [the boys] than [concerned about] her." (EF) Another girl described an incident in which boys made use of "water diviners" to locate girls' with large breasts. There was apparently no challenge to this playground "entertainment". (T)

attributions for sexual harassment

Sometimes harassment is accepted and interpreted as "just natural":
I was teased but it was natural, I wear glasses and I'm short. I'm a target. They teased me but I gave back as much as I got. It wasn't a real cruel teasing. It was done for fun, it was fun. (A7)

A popular view is that harassment has a developmental element:

The possibility that sexist language is perhaps a deliberate form of verbal harassment practised at school and which subsequently develops into more

aggressive forms seems to have escaped the young men and women in this study.

In the present study many teacher education students were able to locate power as a central element in sexual harassment:

I think it's probably escalated since women are more independent and starting to exert themselves ... and the guys just do it sometimes out of self-defence mechanism if they suddenly feel threatened by some girl ...

(A4)

If boys are teased by their peers about not having girlfriends then this is one way of regaining power, that is putting girls down. (SC)

I think a lot has to do with power, you know wanting to be the dominant person or feeling that you've got some sort of authority over someone else.

(A3)

Male dominance, back to the apes, just male dominance, man degrading women, it's just that the male ego is so far in the clouds it's unreal. A lot of males just think that they're ... if no one else is with them [the girls] they can do whatever they want. Sometimes if they have got a guy with them they still do it. (A5)

possibility of change

Opinions varied on how sexism and sexual harassment might be eradicated.

I think it should be talked about more honestly and it's definitely not something to be made fun of. But it's got to be talked about more seriously ... it's something which is going to increase. Maybe I'm just uninformed. (C4)

I think it does need to be changed just a bit more; make them a bit more

aware just so the guys tone down a bit. Just controlling the class better. One young man called for the return of the cane as an answer to harassment, but this time to be administered without bias to both sexes. Another chose to invoke the long arm of the law:

Active sexual harassment should be dealt with very severely. At primary school level compulsory classes ... if you're abusing a girl it should be two classes a term, like at the middle and the end and you have to go with your parents' consent to get lectured on equality issues. In the secondary school, ... I've heard reports like hearsay, like other schools - it really should lead to expulsion at least, if not lead to civil suit. (A5)

There was also some ambivalence about whether schools were an appropriate forum for intervention. The case for non-intervention is expressed in this way:

You can't really change it because I think it's just natural. It's natural for boys to say things about girls and degrade girls and it's natural for girls to degrade boys, not so much degrade, but say sexist things about them. It's just a natural part of life. Kids have got to accept it; take it with a pinch of salt, not take it personally. (A7)

There are also risks in putting such issues into insensitive hands. One young woman recalled how a male teacher publicly questioned a girl (who had shown disinterest in her class lesson) about whether she had her "rags" this week. (C1)

Others saw the curriculum as the most appropriate vehicle:

It came up in high school in human relations but concentrated on the work place ... the girls had their views ... I think the boys like everyone's view was, it shouldn't happen ... we used to hear stories and we thought how could anyone do that ... It's seen as immoral. (C4)

and more specifically,

Probably introduce classes, even integrate it into the syllabus. Make it as much a part as language and health, appreciate men and women because the point has to be really reinforced in those younger days. (A5)

By contrast one can only admire the perceptiveness of the following observation on the possibility of change. The significance of schools in potentiating change is underscored:

It'll be a very slow process, there are lots of ingrained beliefs to come through; you've got your grandmother whose idea of being a good mother is to feed up the family big, and iron everything from your undies to your tablecloth. It's sort of happening already with women taking more high powered roles and things, but it's got to be more of an attitude fostered in schools, more than anything; an attitude that's just ingrained in kids of equality, you can't really write a textbook on equality as a subject for kids, it's got to be moral awareness, that type of thing. (A4)

conclusions

The dominant views about sexual harassment expressed in this study may be summarised as:

1. Sexual harassment is viewed as gross assault rather than as a continuum of behaviours which include sexist comment and abuse.
2. Related to this is the notion that gender-based (usually verbal) harassment is somehow separate from the more serious forms of sexual harassment.
3. The view that harassment is to be expected, in other words is just a natural part of schooling, is widespread. However a few young men and women were able to identify power as a central factor in the origin and expression of sexual harassment.

Additional observations include:

1. Teachers are themselves contributing to forms of harassment by failing to challenge and contest traditional views of masculinity and femininity. Secondly they are occasionally guilty of practising it directly themselves.
2. Young women themselves participate unwittingly in forms of masculine control by joining in the denigration of their peers.
3. Schools often fail to take up opportunities to publicly affirm their opposition to sexual harassment in all its guises.

co-education and segregation

Co-education was a significant issue in theorising the gender position of our students. Co-education was not interpreted as sexed and schools were seen as 'equal' simply because they enrolled students from both sexes.

We can see that co-education constituted a shifting nexus of multiple positions for our respondents. This is exemplified in the comments made by the following women students:

"I'd have preferred ... a co-ed school ... I just think it's better ... you have contact with boys ... being only girls they treated us all as equals

way." (A13)

"I knew that some of my friends who went to a boys/girls school ... they used to hate speaking up in class because they would have been looked at. We hardly ever talked about the opposite sex which is bad. I know if I had of [gone to a co-ed school] I'd always be conscious of my appearance (A11)

More definite opinions are evident, and a typical view of our women students was:

"I like the co-education. Because we're surrounded by boys. We know how they act ... When you've gone to a single-sex school you won't know things"(A1)

"I'm glad I didn't go to a single sex school ... in the world you're with girls and boys. It's good to get use to it" (A2)

It would appear that reasons for valuing co-education included a perception that decoding the male gender IS perceived as central knowledge. In addition, single-sex schooling is rejected rather than co-education accepted. Other women agreed describing girls' schools as preoccupied with the stereotypical 'feminine' state. This attitude is particularly interesting given how extensively a male dominated curriculum has been shown to operate in schools (A Fair Go For All, 1990, passim). Indeed the effects of this was recognised by one of our women students:

Girls have a problem with going to classrooms where they know it's male dominated; because there's a whole group of boys there and you know what a whole group of boys can do when they're put together you know, and it automatically makes you feel a bit insecure. If the teachers put a stop to that ... there wouldn't be a problem. (A17)

Yet to some extent we could have anticipated this opinion as earlier data gathered in student autobiographies included the notion that girls' schools are worthless because they offer "no real experience with the male gender in a normal social setting."

The very recent proliferation of traditionally single-sex schools becoming co-educational institutions were problematic for several of our women students. From our respondents' experience these co-educational experiments have not yet succeeded:

"I didn't like it at all, it was ... very set in its ways ... they had been there quite some time and had just taught boys ... it was a males' school practically ... being a female you really had to fight to get anything ... they deliberately used to sit you ... opposite a boy ... I'd get kicked ... you just had to sit there and take it. Nothing was ever really done about it." (A14)

However co-education was not given unqualified support by our women; although not apparently sourced in a deconstruction of gender and education. For instance several stated that gender issues could not exist in a single sex school as the interest of girls would 'naturally' be represented. This idea prevailed in spite of direct evidence to the contrary which they later gave us about the male centred curriculum which operated in their schools. Nevertheless one woman was able to recognise

that:

"Being in a girls school ... if you wanted to do something which was typically male they'd encourage you." (C6)

Others argued for single-sex classes saying that it would have been a lot better for equitable resource allocation (A18) and:

"It's not as intimidating, you get to answer more questions ... and it's just evener." (A14)

Gender segregation was observed by our students, but not as a reason for rejecting co-education. Comments which were indicative included:

"We'd never sort of mix." (A9/10)

"Boys in one corner, girls in another. Rare occasions when we'd involve girls." (A5)

"Didn't have much to do with the boys." (A9/10)

"We just sort of stuck together" [in our sexes] (A17)

So gender segregation seemed absolute at times verifying earlier research by Deem (1980) who noted that pupils could be classified by gender up to twenty times a day - day after day. This involved gender segregation of areas, facilities, activities, records, tasks - indeed most aspects of school life. It could be argued that co-education operates in our schools

in a superficial sense only and that what our students experience is more of an adjacent educational system; according to gender.

Subject segregation did represent a potential source of criticism of co-education by our women students. While not adopting strident terms or making structural links, they did lament the unfairness of the attempted exclusion of them from the Maths/Sciences discipline saying:

"I would have really liked to have done men's subjects." (A11)

[re. physics] "It was sort of 'this is a boys' subject ... you weren't supposed to be in here." (A7)

The most obvious neglect felt by our women was in the subject of Physical Education. This example of subject segregation was mentioned the most frequently - again while potential existed in our minds most of our students did not develop this into a critique of co-education. This segregation revolved around the sexist allocation of Physical Education equipment, which was appropriated as 'male'.

I love sport, you didn't really get much chance to play because the boys would always hog the ball. (A18)

However, most of our students emphatically stated that the equipment was available, making this acceptable to them in terms of equal opportunity; as some women students reflected:

It wasn't that they did it consciously, it was because the boys sort of pushed in first and got all the good equipment and then we were left.

(A18)

"I think it's a bit hard ... it's usually the boys that take the equipment any way. It certainly wasn't said that only the boys can have the footballs ... it was there for whoever wanted to use it ... but usually the girls wouldn't ... But there certainly wasn't any reason why the girls couldn't have . There was nothing stopping us." (A14)

However some conceded that girls literally had to fight to have a game and

that this behaviour was not challenged by teachers: "They never said you should give it (i.e. the equipment) back to the girls" (A18). One woman student even reported that if girls complained teachers would reply "too bad they were there first" (A6).

The concept of sport being antithetical to that of the feminine seems important to us. Merely noting the depth of emotion in the following resignation, "couldn't play football, couldn't do nothing - you are a girl" (A8), shows us the significance of Physical Education with the many perjorative insults we collected about the unfortunately labelled 'tomboys' in our sample.

behaviour expectations and teacher attention

Such gendered behaviour expectations became another issue. Being "girlish" was more than just not being seen as too "sporty". As mentioned previously in the section on Language, girls are positioned into passive positionings. Our women students reported that they were expected to be polite, well-behaved young ladies. This meant that: "Being a girls was being a girl, playing with dolls and stuff like that." (A11)

This gender stereotyping and labelling allowed girls less latitude in their classroom behaviours:

They tolerate more disruptions from the boys than the girls, because if a girl was disruptive then she was quickly dealt with, and if the boys were disruptive they just took it for granted that boys were disruptive. (A17) She'd tell us to be quiet, and then we could keep talking and she'd yell at us ... with the boys if they were noisy ... she'd turn her back. (A18)

Nevertheless we can highlight one remarkable incident of possible counter-sexism:

"They used to tell us [girls] to be a little more noisy ... we didn't speak enough and we had to learn how to communicate." (A3)

Yet as may be expected after the work of Spender (1984), gendered behaviour expectations of boys was very different, as shown by:

"If something goes wrong in class the teacher would expect a boy to be the troublemaker." (C4)

We uncovered many gendered reflections of sex differentials in punishments for the same behaviours, how sex was used as an organisational criteria for punishments and how the sexes differed in their receptions of various punishments. However for this paper we will only note that our respondents stated overwhelmingly that boys needed more warnings and more severe

punishments before their behaviour complied with the teacher's expectations.

A complex interrelationship seemed to exist between expectations of behaviour and teacher attention. We can describe an entangled web of teacher accommodation and yet simultaneous resistance to boys defining classroom relations by their negative attention-seeking behaviour in the responses of our women students as they talked about their classroom experiences:

Yes because although there were a lot more boys in the class, on average the boys got more but I think it was pretty even handed. The boys were very intimidating. ...The boys really did dominate but the girls still got

a lot out of the class and the boys definitely did dominate. (E3)
The girls had their say too ... teachers always chose the boys a lot of the time ... [out of] brighter boys and girls, usually the boys was favourite. [Interviewer: Who dominated?] The brighter ones. (A9/10)
[Interviewer: Was there equal attention given to boys and girls?] I think so, I can't think of any instances ...
[Interviewer: Did boys gain more attention because of their disruptions?] Yeah because the teacher would have to stop or go and help them, and just leave girls to their own. (A17)
However most of our women students were unequivocal in their opinions of girls' behaviour and boys' misbehaviour earning the boys teacher attention as discriminatory, although a variety of positions varying from the tentative to the assertive is discernible:
It was always the boys that were the loud noisy ones, so that you had to keep them quiet.
(Interviewer: Did boys/girls get equal attention?) No it was always the boys ... because they were so noisy. (A18)
The teachers always seemed to be talking to the boys more. Like singling them out." (A11)
"The girls wouldn't get as much attention because they wouldn't be doing much out of the ordinary." (C5)
"They took more time ... the teacher had to spend more time with them because they were seeking for attention. ... While you had your hand up and you knew the answer and you'd never be picked because this boy had called out." (A11)
This last comment identifies an important shift for us. It indicates how gender differentials in teacher attention explicitly influenced the formal curriculum focus of learning and teaching. It also serves to highlight the negative consequences of lesser teacher attention for girls. On questioning our women students they were able to cite many examples of teachers giving preferential attention and thus treatment to boys. Again responses ranged in their degree of tentativeness.
"They seemed more partial to boys." (A6)
"They sort of paid more attention to the boys and if the girls were doing anything, well they were just doing it." (A7)
"Boys had more chance to answer questions; if a girl answered she would be expected to explain how she got her answer, boys answers were just accepted." (A1)
"... they didn't like girls ... you're just a girl, sort of, out of the way

Similar to the results noted on segregation, the discipline of Maths/Science evoked the most frequent and critical incidents of inequitable teacher attention for our women. When asked if unequal teacher attention was more noticeable in any particular subject one woman student replied:

Maths - there was a lot of attention to the boys, because they'd always play up. (A18)

Many described teachers of these subject areas as "more male oriented"

(A7), saying that if girls wanted or needed teacher attention in these classes they had to deliberately seek it. Indeed in our sample male teachers were especially criticised:

It was horrible, because at the start we were so self-conscious ... I mean because the teacher was a male. (A18)

The male teachers did prefer the guys. (C3)

He'd give time to the guys but girls were just dumb and silly to him ... He sometimes said it, but his actions spoke louder than that. You'd really have to fight to be noticed. ... Guys they can do it, he'll have a lot of time, but girls fine if they can catch up, but if they can't, they're just a typical girl, not to worry about that. (A8)

We can locate these results. Even if teachers are apparently unaware of the preferential attention they offer male pupils in the classroom interactions, Spender (1984) has shown that students are cognisant of this discriminatory division in classroom discourse:

In 1981 a research team asked the students ... who received the attention in class ... and the students indicated that it was overwhelmingly boys who received the attention and who were given the knowledge that they were important and liked. In classroom discussion, said the students, boys predominated ... When teachers asked questions they asked two boys to every one girl, and when teachers provided praise and encouragement three boys received it to every one girl ... The students themselves provided the data that the boys asked twice as many questions as the girls and made twice as many demands of the teachers' time. (Spender, 1984, p. 55)

More recently Kelly (1988) reviewed gender differences in teacher-pupil interactions. In this meta-analytic review Kelly found that girls are consistently under-represented in teacher-pupil interaction concluding that "It is now beyond dispute that girls receive less of the teachers' attention in class." (p. 20).

conclusion

In spite of the emerging area of scholarship examining Gender and Education, little is known about the attitudes of Teacher Education students towards gender. This project begins to address this problem. What we have begun to observe in this report on research in progress compares with other recent studies (Allard et al, 1992). Our students seemed to deflect or deny gender and even to resist the realities of a gendered schooling experience. This was frequently expressed by an apparent lack of gender awareness and a proliferation of unexamined assumptions.

This was not however the full story. Unlike Jones (1989) who cites Smith and Bailey (1982) we have not found that the beliefs of our pre-service teachers are replete with stereotypes. Indeed we have uncovered some active resistance shown by our students to sexist schooling practices. Nevertheless we conclude as we began. We brought to this research project a belief in the significance of Teacher Education for gender equity in schools. We are now in a better position to agree with Christensen and Massey (1989) when they state the need for Teacher Education to help students examine "the assumptions about gender which ... [they] bring with them" (p. 266). We accept Arnesen's (1992) assertion that "the real challenge is to alert ... students who ... do not perceive any problem."

(p. 13).

It seems clear to us as a result of these initial interviews that in spite of much research and many Equal Opportunity initiatives, little real long term change is occurring in the schools. This for us leads to a necessary focus on Teacher Education. The unique influence Teacher Education has on the gendered construction of knowledge itself has been acknowledged in European Economic Community policy and enacted through curriculum research

conducted by the Association of Teacher Education in Europe (Arnesen and Charthaigh, 1992).

Given that we accept Jones' view that "Teacher Educators must take the first steps to ensure Educational Equality" (1989, p. 38), we will begin the second stage of our research project. The task is to record the gendered reflections of our students' experience of their Teacher Education qualification and begin to examine how Teacher Education and Teacher Education students construct gender as knowledge.

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Älanguage

h of salt, not take it personally.

There are also risks in putting such issues into insensitive hands: While clearly shocked by sexist derogatory terms, M.D. seemed undecided as to whether schools ought to teach children that such language was u~~~~

~~~Feminist research has found that we can begin to understand better the position of women in society though the study of language and discourse (Cameron, 1985, Poynton, 1985, Gilbert, 1991, Threadgold, 1986). There are many different views of how language places women within society and therefore in relation to men. However, much of this research (Cameron, 1985, Fairclough, 1990, Poynton, 1985,) centres around power relationships and how women through language have been alienated or oppressed in a patriarchal society. It is men who have the means to oppress, silence and marginilise women through language by denying them access to the most influential and prestigious registers of language in a particular culture (Cameron, 1985). It is the institutional and

bureaucratic control of language that silences and oppresses subcultures, such as women and ethnic minorities, within a society. We construct meaning differently because each individual has a different experience, but more generally, because in patriarchal societies males and females are allowed a different range of experiences.

For feminist poststructuralism, it is language in the form of conflicting discourses which constitutes us as conscious thinking subjects and enables us to give meaning to the world and to act to transform it. (Weedon, 1987, p32)

Girls and boys are very specifically socialised into female and male gender roles (Walkerdine, Gilbert, ). This socialisation can be examined through the discursive formation of the subject through the use of language. How we communicate about and to females and males can be shown to be different (Poynton, 1985, Spender). Research of, for example, grammatical constructions, lexical sets, use of intonation and discourse styles are often judged as being more or less acceptable, according to whether you are female or male. This then realises power relationships which can be expressed through common sense understandings and ideology.

Fairclough(1990) discusses these connections between language use and unequal relations of power and the effect that class and ethnicity have in maintaining these unequal relationships.

The extent to which ideological variation becomes a social struggle can be better understood by studying the language. Fairclough(1990) highlights how communication is constrained by the structures and forces of the social institutions in which we live and function. In these interviews these are the school and those who work within it, the women students' peer group and their families.

Given that it is the memories and perceptions of first year students it is important to reflect on how the kind of analysis that we engage in is influenced by our role as listener. It is true to say that there will never be equal relationships in any conversation given the role of speaker and hearer and as Roberts (1988) states that a true feminist interview never takes place. For example the number and place of agreement, interruption or request for clarification will always influence how a person constructs and positions themselves. In any conversational analysis both parties' language should be taken into account, however, in these interviews I am concentrating not on the relationship between the interviewer and interviewee, but rather the social relationships which the interviewees' conversation reveals about themselves and their 'lived reality'.

Discourse always requires a speaking position -a position from which authority is exercised - and a spoken subject, a person brought into existence through the exercising of this authority. (Gilbert, 1991, p. 42)

How a person is positioned within society can be influenced by whether you are female or male. These interviews show the multiple subject positions

that these women students take up during their schooling and the extent to which their subjectivity and their interpretations of their schooling

experiences are shaped by the discourses of gender to which they have access, namely provided by their teachers, and peer group. They have been interpellated into the social world via the dominant discourse of gender which serves to keep the male/female dualism in tact and in fact they have taken these discourses on as their own. They have learned to interpret their own lives and the lives of others within these dominant discourses.

teacher's positioning of students  
In the following examples we can see how the teachers positioned the girls through their language into the quieter, less dominant one.

"The teachers used to say 'look at the girls they're sitting nicely and quietly'" (A.9&10).

"well you're just a vegetable.." (A.14)

"that's not the way a girl acts.... like they'd tell her (a friend) 'yes, you're a tomboy, I expect this of Darren or I expect this of ..... but not you'.

They expected the girls to be very nice and serene and quiet and the boys they were expecting to be a bit more noisy and so forth." (A.16)

"Some teachers say, 'I expect the boys to be noisy, I don't expect the girls to be.'" (L.B.)

and the use of the process "expect" as a natural order for girls and boys' behaviour.

Gilbert (1991) says gender identity is centred on appearance and sexuality, ".he (the teacher) said she was a 'tart' in the classroom... or comments like 'what would you know you're only a female.'" (A.14)

which A14 accepts as unimportant and almost trivial

"Just little things like that"(A.14)

and media texts which are central in the construction of this identity. The following remark (highlighted) was made by the headmaster of a co-educational school when he told the class off

'our class was being told off pretty badly... and he called us barbarians raiding villages or something, and all of you Big M girls, with your little mini skirts..." (A.16)

When we compare the language used about girls by girls and boys, the instances of sexual harrasment and the accepted behaviour of boys by teachers discussed in this paper, the teachers' expectations and positioning is somewhat extreme.

Students also talked of how society offers limited subject positions within a disourse

because we've been brought up to believe that we're so different, there's always been 'oh boys are meant to do that, and you're a girl and you're meant to do that', and that's the way we've been brought up.(A11)

students' positioning of themselves

During the interviews it was common for the women students to place themselves into incompetent positions and frequently used the pronoun 'I' in contrast to the all inclusive 'we' which was used when discussing other girls wrong doings(see A11below)

For computers I was hopeless at computers I was just terrible, he just

thought I was a total complete idiot, because I couldn't understand how these computers worked, that was just towards me because I couldn't pick it up I was just so dumb but I don't think he ever thought it was us females being dumb just me." (A. 11)

A11 does align herself as being one of the girls "us females" but isolates herself again through the phrase "just me". This is in contrast to A11's description of an occurrence whilst on school camp which culminated in one girl's face being slapped by another's as she came out from her cabin. During this description A11 has taken on the all inclusive 'we' 'we' were told off really badly.....'we' were told off because 'we' acted terribly.... and that 'we' should have known," even though the "really bad bitch fight" only involved two girls, and their 'helpers', fighting over a mutual boyfriend, "... the girls were suspended for a week - both of them" and then through mob-type language

positions the 'accused' through the use of diminutive (highlighted) and demeaning language

"and their two little helpers, each had two little helpers. Bodyguards we called them."

Again the student takes on the use of "I" when talking about considered incompetencies and positions herself into a disagreeable, weak child

"The poststructuralist world argues that the person is not socialised into the social world but interpellated into it. That is they are not passively shaped by active others, rather they actively take up as their own the discourses through which they are shaped. " (Davies, 1991)

The use of sexist terms, for example, slut, moll, bitch was very frequent and not confined to boys. It seems that the derogation of females implicit in their use is no deterrent to their use by girls to their peers:

"Slut, moll, bitch, especially in high school among the girls, 'she's a bitch, or she's a slut'" Used "If she was going out with somebody else's boyfriend, or she done something behind another girl. It had to do with boys mainly." (A11)

"Girls do it (use sexist language) just as much back to boys - more in humour, not taken seriously" (A4)

"Popular girls, seen as sluts, cows, bitches and stuff because they were conceited" (A3)

"..we had one really bad bitch fight..."(A11)

"...their two little helpers..."(A11)

"... a total complete idiot..."(A11)

".. cat fights. The usual 'bitch' and things like that" (A16)

'..there were a lot of what I would call very bitchy females..' (A2)

A14 when asked about name calling and how the boys referred to the girls for inclusion in activities described it as 'normal' and 'usual' in Primary school

just the usual things like (the boys said) 'you haven't got a hope in catching this ball' or 'you can't kick' and 'you're a sissy' and all those sorts of things, it was just the normal things that they say.

This was reinforced and continued on into Secondary school

"oh don't choose girls"(A2)

" 'oh don't touch' and the boy germs and girls germs. But it was usually the boys 'we're stronger than you', 'we're better than you' " (A14)

"of yuk, girls - germs" and "you can't play here - you're a girl" (C5)

The discursive positions allowed by these girls during their Primary and Secondary schooling were limited by the schools attitude to boys and their stereotypic positioning of girls by their male and female peer group and their teachers.

The ways in which discourse constitutes the minds and bodies of individuals is always part of a wider network of power relations, often with institutional bases. (Weedon, 1987, p108).

contradictions in language

Although society has always recognised contradiction as a logical concept naming a relation between propositions it has also been a general metaphor for incompatibilities of many kinds (Davies and Harre,1990). However, the deconstruction of modernity(Weedon, 1987, Walkerdine,1985, Haug, 1987) has allowed us to question the interpretation of contradiction.

In a poststructuralist analysis, the person who makes a contradictory statement is more likely to be seen as being positioned within and constituted through contradictory discourses. ( Davies and Harre, 1990, p4).

A person who appears to be making contradictory statements is seen to be inconsistent, not understanding or interpreting the social world 'appropriately'.

The guys were much louder, the girls would talk among themselves in their little groups, the guys would yell from one side of the room to one another. The teacher was quiet and didn't know what she was doing, the guys would yell and pick her to bits and the girls would just talk quietly and nastily about her or him. (A8)

However when asked about who took over in class, A8 reveals details of her own particular class which had "5 guys and 14 girls" and although she says the boys were loud and vociferous

A8 "the girls definitely took over they were in control of everything....."

(Interviewer:Was it easy to have a turn?) "When the guys got to it , no."

A16 when discussing how students behaved in maths:

However A14 also states that when she was constantly teased in the playground

So it was easier to fight against the teachers rather than fight against

the boys in the classroom. It was alright to be "a disagreeable child" but teasing in the playground was too powerful to be fought against. Davies and Harre(1990) state it is the discourses with their contradictory assumptions or imperatives, rather than the person who may need remediation. These female students speak from many different subject positions. They see themselves in different roles at different times moving from adolescence to adulthood, from a student at school to tertiary student, involved in different relationships- girlfriend - boyfriend, girlfriend-girlfriend, mother - daughter, father - daughter and, having to interpret the difference between feminism and femininity.

conclusion:

Students positioning of themselves is very contradictory. While society is still presenting a feminine subservient position through the use of language and limited subject positioning it is difficult for women to take up a more powerful, emancipated position. This is an area that the gender inclusive curriculum needs to address.

F1

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naming the problem  
'girls'.

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