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'Why are we kicking up and they are not?'
Teacher education students' constructions of femininity and masculinity

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Abstract

This paper reports on an aspect of a longitudinal study (currently in its third year), which is providing important information regarding teacher education students' beliefs and understandings concerning gender. Ways in which these constructions of gender inform the student's curriculum experiences and teaching performance in primary schools is a major focus of this paper.

Findings from the data are being interpreted using concepts from feminist poststructural theory as a means to understand the various positions of the students. In this paper, we begin to explore how eight students in the third year of their B.Ed (Primary) course construct their own understandings of 'appropriate' masculinity and femininity by considering their comments during two interviews which took place in May and in September, 1994. Their observations, made during their school experiences, concerning gender relations are reported on as are their reactions to the way in which the teacher education curriculum has and should address issues of gender. We consider the implications of some of this data for feminist educators working for curriculum change.

Introduction

I think that's the real problem in the feminist movement, that it's very much seen as about women, and it's mainly about men actually. They need to get their act together and change much more than women do...men should be jumping up and down saying 'We don't want to be macho men. We want to be who we are.' Why aren't they? Why are we kicking up and they're not? Because men start off with the power... (Interview 1/Justine/ May, 1992)

'Justine' was a first year student in the Bachelor of Education (Primary) course when she made the above comments, in 1992. She is one of the 145 students at the Institute of Education, University of Melbourne, who have participated over the last three years in a study which considers teacher education students' understandings of gender. This Australian Research Council-funded project, A Longitudinal Study Of Student Understandings Of Gender Issues In and Through the Teacher Education Curriculum aims to investigate the different ways in which students' understandings concerning gender relations are enhanced through their experiences of the teacher education course.

In undertaking this research, we, as a collaborative team, started from our own commitment and concern about the ways in which gender relations

operate in and through education to construct and endorse particular understandings about 'appropriate' feminine and masculine behaviours. We believed that teacher education needed to provide students with skills and competencies that would enable them to better address the gender dynamics of the classroom. However, in order to know where to start, it seemed necessary to explore with our students their personal understandings of gender. This was an attempt to recognise the individual and collective discourses in which our students positioned themselves in relation to gender constructions. Rather than simply 'tell' them what they 'should' be doing, we sought to engage with them in an exploration of their own understandings, and to use their comments as a means of making the curriculum more responsive to their starting points.

'Justine's' comments, concerns and understandings about masculinity, about feminism, even her comments concerning power were out of the ordinary when compared to many of the other students who were interviewed in the first year of this three year study. For one thing, Justine seemed to us to be actively engaged in examining gender relations. She had clear ideas concerning her own understandings of masculinity and femininity, and was definite about what she expected to gain from being in the course in terms of preparing her to deal with gender relations among children.

However, Justine's comments, when located alongside many of her student colleagues, marked her as 'different' from them as regards her awareness of gender as an educational issues (Cooper, Allard, Hurworth, 1994). For the most part, the students, female and male, in the first year of the B.Ed Primary course did not share Justine's understandings concerning gender relations nor her commitment to action. Justine, in her first year of the course, questioned why so few men 'kick up' about current gender relations. She might also have been asking the same question of the women who were her student peers.

Three years later, what do Justine's student peers now say concerning

their understandings about gender relations? What, if any, difference has their involvement in the course made regarding their understandings about how gender relations are constituted in and through discourses of education?

In an attempt to explore these questions and for the purpose of this paper, we have focused on the comments of eight students', in their third year of the course, who were interviewed individually in May, 1994 and again in September.

Theoretical Framework of the Study

As a means of understanding the diversity of ideas and concerns of our students and the positions they take up regarding gender, we drew upon a number of concepts from post-structural feminist theory. This has proved useful as a means of analysing the ways in which students locate themselves within a variety of discourses and how they make sense of their personal and professional experiences.

Post-structuralist feminist writers (for example, Davies, 1989, 1993; Weedon, 1987) argue that, individually and collectively, we construct understandings concerning femininity/masculinity. Within this framework, as Davies points out:

...the individual is not so much the product of some process of social construction that results in some relatively fixed end-product but is constituted and reconstituted through the various discursive practices

in which they participate (Davies, 1989:229).

Using the theoretical framework of gender as a construction, it is possible to consider the variety of ways in which our students negotiate their own understandings in light of a range of factors including experience, age, ethnic background and socio-economic class. This framework also enables us to explore how their constructions of masculinities and femininities are endorsed, resisted, contradicted and challenged through their participation in the 'discursive practices' of teacher education.

Additionally, how the students see change within their own gender understandings is also opened up through post-structuralist feminism; this enables us as teacher educators and researchers to draw on their voices in order to adapt and evaluate the course and to work to enhance these various understandings.

As teachers and researchers, we also bring our own understandings of gender to the research and are complicit with the ways in which the curriculum program privileges particular discourses. We acknowledge that our interpretations of students' comments are drawn from our own

individual and collective discourses as white, middle-class, anglo-celtic, educated feminists. We present the variety of student voices and our accompanying interpretations of their voices, not as finite truths but as ways of trying to gain a better, deeper understanding of who our students 'are' and, in particular, how they see themselves as regards gender relations. We seek their views and interpret their ideas in order to renegotiate the teacher education curriculum so that it can take account of such multiple discourses; such discourses can inform how the curriculum itself needs to change.

Additionally, as researchers and teachers, we have drawn on current research in the area of educational change, in particular, those writers who recognise the importance of collaboration and the ways in which ongoing and effective consultation with all involved can contribute to meaningful change and ownership of the outcomes. Fullan and Hargreaves, (1992: 57) elaborate on this approach:

Effective collaborations operate in the world of ideas, examining existing practices critically, seeking better alternatives and working hard together at bringing about improvements and assessing their worth. We believe this is one of the key challenges for collaborative working and professional development in the future.

Thus, we see the interviews which we have done with the students, as not only a 'data-gathering' exercise, but also an opportunity for us to engage with them in meaningful dialogue, to seek their ideas and responses and to actively listen to their critiques of the course. While such 'collaboration' is sporadic, many of the students we have interviewed have become involved in other aspects of the research and are keen to discuss with us the progress and findings of the project.

The Context

Data collected for the three year longitudinal study has included: annual questionnaires to all continuing students (1992, n= 145; 1993 n = 120; 1994, n= 105), staff interviews, work samples, journal entries, and researchers' observation notes.

The in-depth interviews, carried out with students who volunteered each year, covered aspects such as family background and influence,

experience of sexual harassment, definitions of common equity terms, key areas in the course and in school experience as these relate to students' perceptions concerning gender. By analysing the students' ideas and concerns, the ways by which particular social constructions of gender are privileged by students became clearer.

While this paper focuses only on data gathered with eight of the third

year students, in order to understand the context of the interviews, it should be emphasised that as part of the ongoing research project a number of intervention strategies into the curriculum program of the teacher education course have been instigated at the first and second year levels. Many of these strategies have been introduced in response to what students have said on their annual questionnaires concerning issues of gender.

Thus, students by the third year of their course have experienced a number of lectures and workshops which focused explicitly on gender and education; have experienced a number of subjects in which gender relations was an integral aspect of the program (eg., Foundation Studies of Science; and Language and Literacy); a few of the students have taken individual subjects which focussed specifically on gender; and many of the students have also undertaken group projects and research into aspects of gender out of their own interest.

Before the first interview this year, (May, 1994) all students also have spent approximately ten weeks in supervised school experience, in first, second and third year, during which they were asked to observe gender relations in the classroom.

The Approach

While interviews have taken place over the three years of the project, this is the first time we have interviewed a small group twice in one year. This group of eight volunteers, comprises a wide range of perspectives, knowledge and interest levels concerning gender issues in education, although of course, because of the small numbers they can not be representative of the student group as a whole. We offer their comments as one means of exploring how they see themselves in terms of abilities to address gender issues in educational settings.

The data presented in this paper was drawn from the two sets of interviews; all interviews were transcribed fully and the data was analysed by using a Miles and Huberman (1994) matrix as a means to organise the data. The data presented here is a selection rather than a comprehensive reporting. In reporting our findings we have endeavoured to present both the individual voices and an overview of the general themes which emerged. We have used pseudonyms for the students and included some additional information, albeit very brief, about each participant as a way of providing more detail with which their comments might be interpreted. (See Appendix 1)

Through the interviews, we sought to explore the extent to which particular intervention strategies concerning gender issues in education challenged or enhanced the students' understandings. We were particularly interested in the students' responses and reactions to information concerning gender inclusive curriculum which was

presented in a lecture and workshop, immediately before their July teaching rounds.

About the 'lecture' and workshop

We use the term 'lecture' broadly. The hour long session focussed on

'Planning a Gender Inclusive Unit of Work' and was divided into three sections. The first twenty minutes included an outline of the purposes of the lecture; these were: to begin to address one of the assessment criteria which would be used during the forthcoming teaching practice; this criteria was for students to "demonstrate an awareness of the need for an inclusive teaching approach"; and to respond to requests made on the annual questionnaire by many of the students for information on

- gender in relation to school experience;
- inclusive teaching/learning strategies;
- examples of gender-related classroom situations; and
- relevant resource materials.

Additionally, a somewhat brief presentation of definitions, eg., 'curriculum', 'gender inclusive curriculum'; 'gender as a construction' were given and accompanied by a discussion on the differences between sex-role theory and the concept of gender as a construction as ways of thinking about gender relations.

The need for teachers to consider their own assumptions and beliefs concerning 'appropriate' gender behaviours, as well as the need to recognise that children bring to the classroom their own constructions, was touched upon. The ways in which the classroom environment might work to challenge, endorse, resist, enhance commonly held assumptions concerning gender 'appropriate' behaviours, and why this was important, were also highlighted. This part was presented by one of the research team.

The second part consisted of a male lecturer, who worked with third year students, presenting a 'scenario' of a school situation in which a teacher observes a grade six boy calling one of the girls 'a blonde bimbo'. The teacher in the scenario recounts her conversation with the boy and with the girl concerning this. (This 'scenario' was written by a teacher based on a true experience. See Allard, Cooper, Hildebrand, Wealands, forthcoming).

All of the students had seen the scenario before as it was included in the annual questionnaire. This was followed up by asking the students to reflect and comment on the ways in which 'appropriate' gendered behaviours were being enacted in this situation. What assumptions/beliefs about masculinity and femininity were evidenced by the behaviour of the boy, the girl and the teacher? What implications did this have for gender relations? What might the teacher do in this situation? Some students were able to offer a variety of comments and propose a range of strategies.

In the last part of the lecture, the member of the research team

presented 'Planning a Gender Inclusive Unit of Work: A guide to assist in curriculum planning' (1). This covered questions to consider when: choosing a topic, developing aims and understandings for the topic; deciding on classroom organisation; developing new skills; choosing appropriate teaching strategies; focussing on inclusive language; selecting materials and books; using a range of assessment procedures and using teacher reflections to monitor and evaluate the unit. Whenever possible, practical examples were given of how these areas could address gender issues through curriculum planning.

Questions and comments from students concerning the material presented concluded the 'lecture'. Students were also told that in their two hour workshops in the following week, they would received a copy of the questions and undertake an activity using them.

In the following week, all of the students spent two hours working in small, cooperative groups. Each group was given a 'situation', ie., "You are a teacher at Greenwood Primary in Grade 3/4. Design a gender inclusive activity which makes distinctions between human wants and

needs". Relevant resources were provided and toward the end of the workshop session, each small group was asked to share the activity they planned in accordance with their 'situation' and to explain why they thought it addressed the questions outlined in the hand-out.

Along with considering their reactions to the lecture and workshop, through the individual student interviews, we also wished to investigate how their school experiences worked to influence their ideas about gender and to consider their reflections on the ways in which school practices operate to privilege particular constructions.

Finally, in the interviews, we also focused on how the students were able to incorporate (new) ideas concerning gender inclusive curriculum into their teaching, as a demonstration of their own attitudes and understandings.

In July, between the first interview (May) and the second (September), the students spent four weeks in schools doing teaching practice.

In summary, as part of each interview, students were asked to comment on:

- what they had observed concerning gender relations in their school experiences, in relation to children and to their supervising teacher;
- the usefulness of the lecture and the workshop which centred on developing a gender inclusive unit of work;
- what suggestions from this they had been able to apply to their own school practice;
- what strategies they used which they considered gender inclusive; and

finally, what they believed needed to be included in the fourth year of the course in order for them to feel competent with gender inclusive curriculum.

The Findings

Students' observations: May

In the first interview (May,) the eight students were asked "Reflecting on your school experiences, what have you observed or learned about issues of gender in school?"

Six of the eight students' observations focussed on the different behaviours of the boys. For example, Alex stated, "I still think we see the boys as the more dominant group within the class."

Jennifer commented that "I think that the boys get asked questions a lot more...because they are more confident in answering the question. In my own lessons, boys answer more often."

Diane observed that she had seen many incidents of the "boys being nasty to the girls and the girls just accepting it."

However Margaret commented that "all participate equally in things--the girls just know how to stand up for themselves now."

Comments on sport and physical education

While no specific question was asked about sport or P.E. , it was interesting to note how often sport, an area that has been identified as critical to the construction of masculinity (eg., Connell, 1983; Mac an Ghail, 1994)

emerged from the interview data. In the first round of interviews, for example, students reported that "The boys play sport more." (Tom)

"The girls will play netball, where the guys will play football."
(Alex) "Boys played basketball and girls didn't." (Barbara)

Marlene told us an interesting anecdote about an experience at the country school where she was doing her February teaching round. At the time, there was great excitement as a new cricket pitch had been laid. Marlene said, "Looking out of the staffroom window, the teacher said, 'Look at all the kids using the cricket pitch.' And I said, 'Yeah, it's great for the boys, but how many girls are out there using the space? Not one'. The gender differences were just enormous there."

Comments on teachers' behaviours

In the May interview, Diane offered a telling observation concerning one teacher's interactions with his students. "I was in a class with a male teacher. I hated his reference to the boys. He would call them,

'Hey, Muscles' and the girls would be 'Princess'. He would split up the class with the girls working on some things and the boys working on other things."

Four of the eight students observed that the boys received more attention from their teachers than did the girls.

There were a number of positive observations, as well. For example, Marlene said of her supervising teacher: "She was great. She often talked about gender issues with the kids and how we behave, because at the start of the year, there was a bit of a problem between the boys and the girls."

Margaret noted that the teacher used a range of different grouping strategies in an effort to be gender inclusive. "She paired the quieter boys with the quieter girls for example..."

However, Margaret was also fairly critical of some of the strategies she saw being enacted, saying: "A lot of teachers can't see past the classroom management issue--calling on one boy and one girl, sharing resources, that sort of gender issue, rather than looking deeper into the way curriculum is developed..."

Student strategies: May interview

In the May interview, students were asked to comment on their own attempts to address gender relations in the classroom during their February teaching round.

Tom stated "I am conscious of it but I wouldn't go over the top. However, it is an issue because we're building a future society."

Barbara noted, "Even though gender is something I'm interested in, I'm more interested in getting through the lesson plan. I do talk to the boys more, even though I don't want to."

A number of students discussed their beliefs about the importance of getting the girls and boys to interact while doing different activities. Several mentioned the use of different cooperative learning strategies as methods they had tried in order to achieve the mix.

Turn taking when responding to questions was also mentioned by Naomi as a strategy she had tried.

Margaret, who had been critical of teachers' emphasis on classroom management as a means to address gender relations, discussed her own attempts to 'elicit children's views about gender' and her curriculum

focus on paid and unpaid work.

Two of the students, Tom and Jennifer, did not offer any comments on how they addressed the issues.

Student recommendations re the future directions for the course: May interview

In both the May and the September interviews students were asked to comment as to what information, resources or skills concerning gender in education they would see as valuable.

In May, five of the eight were clear about wanting more specific classroom based, practical activities to implement which would help them address the issues. Several stated that they now needed more than general discussions concerning the issues, eg., more than 'shedding light' on what the issues are. They wanted to know how to actually deal with inequitable gender relations in schools.

Clearly they felt that they had heard enough of the issues and now wanted to move into exploring practices in classroom.

Barbara stated "We need more tutorials so that people wake up to the issues a bit more. A lot think everything is all right now."

Marlene also supported this view. She suggested that there needed to be ways to help students reflect on 'how far they've come.' Marlene also suggested the need for indepth and ongoing discussions about particular aspects/experiences of students in schools. She felt that upon returning from teaching rounds, there was not enough sharing of their school experiences and in particular how these related to gender.

Diane suggested that male staff should give some of the lectures which pertained to gender, otherwise "these will be seen 'as just another feminist lecture'." She went on to say that the issues needed to be addressed more clearly so that students understood the 'seriousness' of the issues and added "otherwise the students just say, 'Oh here we go again.'"

Certainly, while she was the only one of the eight to raise this in the May interview, we had heard the suggestion concerning the need for a male lecturer many times in the previous two years from different students.

Margaret suggested that there was a need to explore policy, legal requirements and how schools plan for gender inclusive curriculum.

Two students, Naomi and Margaret, also requested a history of gender issues in education, a way of placing their learnings into a context.

These comments corresponded with the areas identified as important in the 1994 annual survey of all students in the cohort.

In an effort to take account of the students' requests, the research team, working closely with the five staff members responsible for the third year School Studies program, planned a lecture and a follow up tutorial activity for early June. The aim was to provide students with more specific and practical approaches to inclusive curriculum. While one lecture and workshop may seem minimal, it should be noted that the five teaching staff involved in the School Studies program, believed that they integrated discussions of gender issues into a range of the third year topics. All of the involved staff members also saw it as important to incorporate a focus lecture and follow-up workshop on

planning a gender inclusive unit of work into an already crowded program.

After some debate amongst the research team and amongst the teaching staff, it was agreed that one of the male lecturers would present part of the lecture.

Student Observations: September

After the work done on gender inclusive curriculum planning and their four weeks in schools, we believed that the students comments during their September interview suggested that most, not all, of the eight, had become more perceptive in their observations of gender relations. Rather than simply commenting on children's behaviours, they seemed more able to analyse these as regards gender relations. Most were able to reflect about different teaching strategies they saw being used. Several of them were also able to comment at greater length and in detail about how teachers coped with gender issues in the classroom.

For example, Alex described an incident that occurred with a specialist teacher taking a class in bicycle education, noting that the teacher (who did not have enough bikes for the number of students) directed the girls to 'watch the boys ride the bikes first.' Alex commented on the girls' reactions: "I could see the girls' faces---like 'oh I think I could ride just the same'. But the girls didn't say anything...you could sort of tell from what I could see in the classroom and the way the girls interacted during normal P.E., that what this teacher had done went against what they have been doing..."

In the September interviews, sport and P.E. again emerged as a key theme around which their observations of children centred. In her second interview, Margaret commented also on the way in which sport works in schools to exclude girls. She stated: "In P.E. classes, girls were excluded just through the nature of the activity. The school celebrated the football grand final which excluded a lot of the girls."

Naomi detailed a story which she found particularly provocative.

"Three AFL football players took P.E. sessions and they separated the boys and the girls. They gave the girls a softer ball and assumed that the girls couldn't kick and that the boys would know how...I felt really angry that they used those sorts of grouping strategies. I thought some of girls skills' in handling the ball are quite good already. I couldn't believe all this." This was quite different from her previous interviews, including the one in May, where Naomi struggled to make any comment concerning observations about gender relations in schools.

September interviews concerning teachers' behaviours.

Margaret's concern to look deeper than the classroom management issues in order to address gender relations in the classroom was commented on by her supervising teacher during the July teaching rounds. In her September interview, Margaret reported that her supervising teacher "often verbally commented throughout the teaching round that I was aware...and it was more than just gender inclusiveness, it was trying to include children of different abilities...she wrote something along those lines in the report. A few times she said, 'I haven't thought of that.' I felt she actually learned a few things from me...she was always open to suggestion, admitting that she was not up to speed with a lot of inclusive strategies that we are learning here. She is really open about that. She wants to learn."

By the September interviews, observations concerning teachers had moved

away from behavioural interactions to noting strategies that teachers did--or didn't --use. For example, Naomi noted that her supervising teacher "was quite aware of gender issues...she made sure that she reviewed the books that she was going to read before she actually read them to the children to make sure there wasn't any favouritism toward men and women in different roles. Even if she did read a book that put women in 'this' role and men in 'that' role, she made it known to the children that men and women can do both of these."

Strategies students tried: September

In the September interviews, the students appeared to be much more specific about their endeavours. Six of the eight students talked about using a number of strategies that had been discussed in the lecture and workshop. These included, for example, consideration of girls' interests as well as boys' when selecting topics or themes to be taught; the use of cooperative learning strategies as a means of giving girls a better chance to participate. Science, drama and physical education were specifically mentioned as curriculum areas where the students endeavoured to plan lessons that would be of interest to girls as well as boys.

Four of the students mentioned their attempts to use inclusive language.

However, from our interpretation, only one of the students seemed to have taken on a more 'process' approach to addressing gender relations, to seeing the ongoing ways in which gender relations inform schooling practice. This student, Marlene, commented: "I think it (gender inclusive planning) is a way that you operate....always include those issues about gender...I would like to think I do it in every situation."

Barbara again noted the difficulty she experienced in trying to link what she 'knows' about gender to putting it into practice during her teaching rounds. In her September interview she again stated, "I do try and think about it but then I just get lost."

This was also echoed by Alex who said he "didn't get a huge chance to implement (strategies) due to time constraints."

Students' reflections on the lecture and the workshop: September
In the September interviews, the students were asked to recall and comment on their reactions to the lecture and workshop on planning a gender inclusive unit. The following are examples of some of the students' reflections.

"What is happening is really good because everyone seems to be getting a good idea of what a gender inclusive curriculum is....the lecture gave strategies that we could use." (Alex)

"I think it was a very good reminder to people (about) what you can do....there is a structure to it and you know it is possible."
(Marlene)

"Well it recapped everything for me. The message that she (the lecturer) was trying to put across for every situation, I think...she suggested a lot of activities rather than just the theories. I did use it in my planning." (Diane)

"Brought everything more into perspective. Quite beneficial." (Naomi)

There were no negative comments and overall seven of the eight students

were very positive and satisfied with the provision of ideas for practical activities. The hand-out of questions, which were covered in the lecture and which formed the basis of the workshop, was also seen as useful. It is interesting to note, given the information covered in the 'lecture' and workshop, (see outline above) that the students' comments only focussed on the practical aspects and none of them referenced the scenario, for example. Nor was the use of a male staff member to present part of the lecture commented on in the September interviews.

Student recommendations regarding the future directions for the course:
September

Finally, in making recommendations for the course, the comments included: "I have no idea", (Jennifer)

"We need less theory and more practical strategies... must know how to apply the strategies ... it needs to become part of one's educational philosophy." (Margaret)

"We need to address the issue of confronting inappropriate teacher behaviour without being rude and jeopardising the student teacher position." (Alex)

"Knowing what to say, knowing the language to use and being reminded of it all the time... To be aware of it is one thing; we have to act on it. That is the more difficult thing and that is what we need to teach our students--and me." (Marlene)

Discussion

While we have endeavoured to present the students' ideas through their own comments and to indicate where they themselves saw change, a brief summary of our interpretation regarding the change (or lack of) in students' understandings concerning gender is as follows: on the basis of the comments from these eight students, most of them appear to demonstrate a deeper understanding of gender relations in education during their second interview.

Three of them , Margaret, Marlene and Diane perhaps had spent more time and had a deeper personal commitment to the issues as evidenced from comments in their first interviews. Therefore, their understandings seemed to have changed less than others, such as Alex, Tom and Naomi, who initially had little to say concerning their observations and understandings. However, we believe that by the second interview, Alex, Tom and Naomi were clearly more able to discuss and analyse more consistently and to endeavour to make some small changes.

Jennifer didn't see gender as an issue in her May interview and for the most part, her beliefs had not changed over the five months in between.

She had skipped the lecture session but did note that she found the handout for the workshop of some value. When asked, however, she was still quite uncertain of why gender might be an important consideration in teaching.

Barbara demonstrated a clear understanding about the nature of the problem, in both her May and September interviews, but felt so overwhelmed by her professional (and perhaps her private) commitments, she saw herself as unable to make even a start on changing gender relations. Nevertheless, her observations concerning gender relations

seemed to be more detailed and insightful during her September interview.

We also find it interesting that among these eight students who all volunteered to be a part of the project, there is this diversity. While they were prepared to be involved in this research, not all of them saw gender as an important issue to take up in their professional training. A range of positions/multiple discourses operate here and students have positioned themselves differently.

Our reflections

This diversity has implications for the course. Clearly it is important to give space to students' voices, enabling them to vocalise and explore a range of different understandings; there is a need for them to 'own' the issues/see the relevance to their own teaching if they are going to be willing to take these issues up in classrooms. Yet, given the diverse understandings, how can the course best cater for and work to enhance and challenge these students? How can we acknowledge their voices and still challenge them to see the relevance of gender to professional practice? Obviously, as far as Jennifer is concerned, we have not succeeded.

We recognise that change in this area is never so straight forward. For example, in the student interviews and in the annual questionnaires, students frequently asked for practical gender inclusive strategies for use in the classroom. We aimed to take account of this expressed need when we offered the lecture and workshop sessions. We gave them strategies. However, such strategies may be understood as answers in themselves, eg., 'if I do this, then I am gender inclusive and I don't need to worry any more--as long as I use the strategy'. This 'band-aid' approach to change may not enable students to achieve a deeper analysis and indeed, may close down the deeper analysis needed to change the dynamics of the relationships in classrooms. That is, while the hand-out of questions provided a starting point for some of the student teachers to develop better planning procedures, will these work to change children's constructions of gender? Without a process of monitoring, evaluating, retrialling, a process that has not been explicitly considered or presented, change in students' understandings concerning gender may only be superficial.

Much of the work done throughout the course to raise student awareness and to skill them in strategies to explore gender relations, (including the lecture and workshop offered which was reported on in this paper), focuses on individualistic classroom practice. While we acknowledge this is an extremely important concern for student-teachers, gender relations are not limited to classroom practice but are constituted and reconstituted in other practices of schooling as well, including relations among staff and the ways in which schools operate and are organised. Students rarely have the opportunity to explore these

processes. While they are often asked to comment on the culture of the school they work in, rarely do these comments focus on gender relations. There is little if any exploration of the ways in which power relations in school inform gender relations. When this does occur, it seems to happen because of the commitment of the individual teacher educator rather than because it is an inbuilt part of the course.

This leads to another dilemma which has been identified through the project. Teacher education staff need to feel able to do the above in an ongoing and integrated way. The opportunity for staff to move beyond the one-off approach, toward integrating an analysis of gender relations, in an ongoing manner, into all aspects of the course, is needed. Staff also need to find ways to make explicit these issues rather than assuming that students will be able to transfer 'good teaching' into an analysis of gender inclusive teaching. Perhaps, if

students saw this approach used, then they in turn may feel better able to take it on and to develop a deeper understanding of how gender issues can be addressed through the curriculum.

With particular reference to school experience: while criteria was included in student assessments, only a few of the students' performances regarding inclusive curriculum planning and implementation were actually commented on by their supervising teachers. Naomi and Margaret did receive specific feedback. Marlene believed that she'd 'taught' the teacher. This carries some implications concerning the role of supervising teachers and the need to be explicit about the practices they use to address gender relations. While this is outside the scope of the course, and the project, it does suggest an area that needs further exploration and development.

Using student recommendations concerning what they see as needed and how they wish the fourth year of the course to deal with gender in education issues and strategies, and based on an audit of current practices to explore issues of gender which all teaching staff have contributed to, we are currently developing a 'Framework for Addressing Gender in the B.Ed (Primary) Course'. This will identify where and how issues, strategies, skills and reflections concerning gender can be better developed in a sequential manner over the four years of the course. This aims to take account of students voices, those who have been interviewed as well as all those who have contributed through the annual questionnaire.

Finally, we recognise the complexity of the area, the structural difficulties in trying to address the issues holistically throughout the course, and the resistance, from many perspectives, both staff and students, to challenging deeply felt beliefs concerning 'appropriate' gender behaviours. We are concerned to involve students and staff in a

collaborative manner whenever possible in order to better acknowledge the variety of voices. We remain committed to the importance of changing gender relations in and through education. We are encouraged by the energy, thoughtfulness and honesty of the students with whom we worked. We wish to acknowledge the ways in which they have taught us.

'Justine', whose comments opened this paper, did not participate in the second interviews this year as she had accelerated into her final year and was completing her last teaching round. In her May interview, however, she was fairly critical of the course, and in her opinion, saw it as failing to address adequately the significance of gender in education. Interestingly, she also commented that the only time she felt 'challenged' concerning her understandings about gender relations was during her hour long, annual interview as part of this research project. Her comments suggest the importance of staff and students entering into meaningful dialogue concerning gender relations and as well, highlight how much more work there remains to be done.

Notes

1. This was adapted and developed by the authors from 'Planning a work unit to include women and girls' in Commonwealth Schools Commission, 1988. Gender Equity in Mathematics and Science (GAMAST) Professional Development Manual. Canberra: Curriculum Development Centre, p. 57-59. Copy of adaptation available from the authors.

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APPENDIX 1: Some background information about the students and their school experiences.

Margaret, 35 years old, is a mature age student with young children. Before pursuing studies in teaching, Margaret worked as a town planner. Margaret recently taught grade 4/5/6 children in an inner city, high migrant school. Prior to this Margaret taught grade prep to two children in an inner city, open plan middle class school.

Barbara, 27, is a single mother in her late 20's with two young children. She had a mixed schooling comprising a public co-ed and private single sex school. Prior to her teacher training studies Barbara was actively involved in student politics, and was employed within the area of forest protection. Barbara recently taught in the South-Eastern suburbs in a traditional school with grade 3/4 children. Prior to that she taught in a similar school with grade prep/one children.

Diane, 20, recently taught prep through grade four children in a multi-age, progressive, middle class school in Melbourne's Western suburbs. Prior to this she taught grade prep/one children in an outer

western school which services a new suburb.

Naomi, 21, is a young student who went to a co-ed high school. She recently taught in the Western suburbs in a low socio-economic area.

The school has adopted a progressive curriculum, and Naomi taught in the grade 3/4 class. Prior to this Naomi taught grade prep/one children in the Eastern suburbs.

Marlene, 36, is a mature age student who is expecting her first child. She recently taught in the Western suburbs in a progressive multi-age middle class school. At this school Marlene taught grade prep through six. Prior to this Marlene taught grade prep to two children in a small country school.

Tom, 22, is a young student who went to an independent all boys school for his secondary education. Most recently, he has taught in an affluent, independent single-sex girls school.

Jennifer, 23, did her most recent teaching placement at a middle-class, eastern suburbs school with Prep-Grade one class. Prior to this she taught at an inner city Catholic school which has a high migrant student population.

Alex, 22, taught most recently at a middle size county school. His earlier teaching was at an outer eastern suburbs, middle class school.