The Equitable Inclusion of Women in Higher Education: Some Consequences for Teaching

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Although admission of women to higher education has increased, equitable inclusion of women in the academy has not kept pace. Women often experience marginality in the classroom because they may have different styles of learning and because women's experiences are not represented in mainstream knowledge. We suggest a narrative, inductive teaching strategy that deliberately acknowledges women's differences and that will contribute to knowledge. This strategy requires teaching practices aimed at (1) establishing an affirming student/teacher relationship, (2) facilitating relationships among students, (3) enabling students to articulate their knowledge and experience, and (4) helping students to engage meaningfully with course content. This approach raises new difficulties for teachers, difficulties to be overcome in pursuing the equitable inclusion of women in higher education.

Bien que de plus en plus de femmes poursuivent des études supérieures, l'inclusion équitable des femmes dans les corps professoraux laisse à désirer. La marginalité dont font l'expérience les femmes dans les salles de cours tient peut-être au fait qu'elles ont des styles d'apprentissage différents et que les expériences des femmes ne sont pas représentées dans les connaissances courantes. Nous proposons une stratégie pédagogique narrative et inductive qui reconnaît délibérément les différences des femmes et qui contribuera à l'évolution des connaissances. Cette stratégie exige des méthodes d'enseignement qui visent (1) à établir une relation manifeste entre l'étudiant et le professeur, (2) à faciliter les relations entre les étudiants, (3) à permettre aux étudiants d'articuler leurs connaissances et leurs expériences et (4) à aider les étudiants à s'engager d'une manière féconde vis-à-vis de la matière du cours. Cette approche pose de nouvelles difficultés aux professeurs, difficultés qui seront surmontées par l'inclusion équitable des femmes dans l'enseignement supérieur.

Although women are entering higher education in increasing numbers, the quality of their experiences and barriers to their learning in the classroom have attracted relatively little attention. Universities, their curricula, and their practices were historically created by men for men. Although the inclusion of women by simple admission has been achieved in this century, we suggest that equitable inclusion has not, and this is especially true of women in other underrepresented groups.

The university is still primarily a repository of white, abled, middle-class, heterosexual male experiences, perspectives, priorities, and approaches. Traditionally excluded groups have adapted to their exclusion, accepting that we must accommodate to the university rather than expect any modification by the university. Although this accommodation is successful if measured simply by the quantity of degrees granted (at least at the undergraduate level), we propose that these achievements come at great cost to women. We struggle more than our male colleagues for identity and self-esteem in this male world. Many of us think ourselves incompetent and fraudulent even after having achieved the highest honours. Only through extraordinary effort will we belong, if then.

The academy is a foreign world in subtle but pervasive ways. The subtleties make it possible, indeed obligatory, for both men and women to ignore the "non-fit" of women. Equitable inclusion will be accomplished when the academy is diverse in perspectives, priorities, and approaches, thus allowing *all* students to feel primordially at home in the academy regardless of gender, race, class, sexual orientation, age, and disability. When it is accomplished, there will be respectful recognition and acceptance of differences in approaches and needs in learning. A further implication is that there will also be changes in what counts as knowledge. The vast proportion of governing ideas in the disciplines has been created by white middle-class men. The equitable inclusion of women implies change in the epistemic traditions of the academy as well as in relationships among people in the classroom.

We consider the issue of equitable inclusion of women in higher education by exploring changes in the form and content of education that seem essential. We also discuss in concrete terms some approaches teachers can take in the classroom to invite women to participate fully. We contend that full participation can be facilitated by a practice of respect for women's knowledge, enabling them to participate in a dialogue, not simply listen to a monologue. If the voices of women and others traditionally underrepresented in the academy are encouraged, their knowledge will be transformative, since knowledge is conditional on the historical and social context of the knower. Mainstream knowledge, with its white middle-class male historical and social perspective, and with its aura of universality, must no longer silence those whose lives have lead them to fundamentally different perspectives on the world. Our goal is, as Jean O'Barr (1989) urges,

not simply exercises in redressing the historical absences of women from the curriculum, but rather transformative experiences in restoring to women the power and ability to influence/control the representation of knowledge and ideology. (p. 6)

Accordingly, we argue the importance of narrative form as the starting point in an inductive process of sense-making in the classroom. We believe this process facilitates the construction and integration of women's formulations of their experiences as part of academic dialogue. By "narrative," we mean story or story-telling; by "inductive," we mean working from the particular to the general. Different narratives may well lead to different conceptualizations and new perspectives that can be compared to and contrasted with other perspectives. We suggest that an approach beginning with learners' stories and moving to conceptual and theoretical levels fosters inclusion of women more fully than simple admission to higher education.

Some preliminary comments: We are white, middle-class women university teachers. Our standpoint is inherent to our experience as teachers and a formative aspect of our interactions with students in their diverse gender and race orientations. It also informs our perspective in this paper. Further, the teaching issues and innovations we present are drawn from our experience as social science teachers. Quite obviously, each discipline and profession presents unique impediments to women. We offer analysis and approaches that may be adaptable to or suggestive of a process by which traditional teaching might be reviewed and revised for the full inclusion of women in higher education.

As a demonstration of the narrative, inductive strategy for which we argue, we start with two stories from our own teaching experience in social science classrooms.

TWO STORIES

The Story of Margaret

This incident occurred in an introductory course on social intervention. In the course, concepts and principles of intervention are learned by applying them to specific social problems. In one class, students discussed youth prostitution after they had seen "Street Kids," a National Film Board documentary about homeless teenagers in Vancouver. The film confronts viewers with the stark and brutal reality of life on the streets. In close-ups, interviews, and conversations with and among a few street kids over several days on the streets, their grim and excruciatingly painful pasts are revealed: young lives scarred by physical, sexual, and psychological abuse. For these kids, life on the street, which is frequently synonymous with prostitution, seems safer than life at home had been.

When the film ended, the students were silent for several minutes. In response to questions about how they felt, a few students began to talk very

tentatively. After a while, as others joined in, the conversation focused on an analysis of causes of teen prostitution. At the time, it seemed that the creation of abstract explanations for what they had witnessed in the film allowed students to distance themselves from the malaise that such a film evokes. The ensuing exchange led to speculation that one causes could be the personality structures of teen prostitutes. One student, despairing at what he had seen, suggested that teen prostitutes were probably beyond help, that the damage was irreparable and their future prospects bleak. At that point a young woman, Margaret, who was usually quite reserved, spoke out. "That just isn't so," she insisted. "I've worked the streets. I've been there. I just can't sit here and listen, I just can't stand it any more. What you are saying about prostitutes just isn't so," she repeated.

The class fell silent once again until the student who had made the earlier comment attempted to mitigate its impact by suggesting that what he had really meant was that only *some* of the teen prostitutes were irretrievable. The class, seemingly perplexed and embarrassed, allowed the discussion to die, and the young woman's disclosure was never addressed.

The Story of Kathy

In a graduate course in social work that included a section on working with children, a play therapist was invited to present videotapes of her work with disabled children. Students did not respond after the presentation, but the professor didn't know why until several students told her after class that one woman had left in tears. That student came to see the professor the next day. Kathy explained that she had a disabled child and that the way the presenter had discussed mothers had upset her. She described herself as having left the classroom crying and shaking at what she felt to be a critical, blaming, and uninformed perspective on mothers with disabled children. She had been supported later by three other mothers in the class who also had disabled children.

In discussing the issues, Kathy wavered between guilt, self-blame, and anger. She described the common expert orientation to mothers as one that allows about six months after the child's birth to grieve about the disability. At that point, mothers are expected to have "resolved" their grief and to have "moved on." She rather shamefully told the teacher about her daughter's birth and her subsequent reactions. The climax of her story was her confession that she had never really resolved her grief, that it recurred, and that perhaps she had ruined her daughter's chance at normalcy by her inability to "get over it." Yet her story also contained hints of rage at the callous lack of fit between the expert orientation and her own experience. Kathy wanted to leave the issue behind, saying, "hey—that's just my thing."

Reflection

Both stories illustrate women's experience of marginality through the "non-fit" of what, on one hand, they have learned from living, and, on the other, they are being told in the classroom. The occasions are watershed moments in teaching. In these stories, the students involved are poised either at the precipice of a disempowering experience or at the threshold of an empowering one. There is no neutral ground. Disempowerment is the experience of increased marginality and unacceptability. Margaret's and Kathy's experiences intrude as disruptive contradictions to the dominant perspectives in the classroom held by authorities and/or other students. Since so many dimensions of women's experience remain unrepresented in or assimilated to these dominant perspectives, we may expect that as unfamiliar voices they will be, to some degree, intrusive, disruptive, and, as such, unwelcome. This response can be traumatic for a person who already feels marginal in the classroom.

The stories of Margaret and Kathy are particularly significant since they represent female positions in society that have been assiduously excluded from the public domain: the street woman/prostitute and the mother with the double jeopardy of having a disabled child. These instances may be considered dramatic, but as Jean Baker Miller (1976) has pointed out, women in all female roles have human dimensions of sexuality and vulnerability that are profoundly disruptive in the public domain. Recognition of these realities has been excluded from virtually all public institutions in this culture. In Margaret's class, the students' notions that causes of teen prostitution have their inalterable origins in either the individuals' personalities or their abusive families, are widely held. This view protects mainstream everyday life from the problem of street kids, thus relieving it of any responsibility in the matter. It is a comfortable interpretation. Margaret's disclosure plunked the problem down in the midst of the class, very much in the public domain and the mainstream, shattering this comfortable interpretation by her very presence in the university classroom.

The silence that followed might well be thought of as having at least four layers of discomfort: (1) embarrassment of being proven in error; (2) chagrin at having espoused an interpretation that would have "written off" another real person in the class; (3) distress at having to confront, in more complexity and with more involvement, the problem that had been conveniently removed from attention; and (4) confusion deriving from the absence of socially acceptable ways of engaging with the private domain in a classroom. These layers of discomfort provide a starting point for creating a new classroom in which the experience and knowledge of women would be greeted with more ease and acceptability.

Turning to Kathy's experience, how can we understand her silence during the play therapy presentation? In the class, Kathy was split between private and public presentations of self. The public presentation was a student

whose job was to obey proper academic form by dispassionately taking in the knowledge necessary to become a professional. Her self as mother of a disabled child was private, and it was in private that she experienced and conceptualized the need to revisit sorrow about the disability during important moments in her child's development. The play therapist described mothers who fail to resolve grief as causes of children's emotional difficulties. Kathy experienced this expert knowledge as an attack not only on her mothering but on her knowledge about mothering a disabled child. However, for her to articulate this in the public forum of the class would have jeopardized her role as a student and ultimately a professional.

Rules developed by men in the academy about what counts as knowledge leave women like Kathy in a crazy-making position. She was trying to appropriate theories about the importance of mothers in psychological development while suppressing the importance of her own experience as a mother. Kathy's dismissal of her personal knowledge as "just [her own] thing" is an act structured by the rules of mainstream knowledge at great cost to women.

Unless educators consciously teach for equitable inclusion of women in the classroom, Margaret and Kathy will, alone, bear the strain of entering into the public record the knowledge that they have derived from their own experiences, or, alternatively, will withdraw farther from the classroom.

To clarify what we mean by teaching for equitable inclusion through a narrative, inductive strategy, we offer an analogy. Let us consider the course content to be a mural that stands as the dominant feature of the classroom. Many of us have learned to see the mural as neutral, universal, and authoritative, even though our experiences are subtly denigrated or are not even visible on the mural. Engagement with the mural and relationships among students and teacher produce what we shall call the socio-emotional space of the classroom. Our individual histories in education, shaped as they are by the social organization of such differences as class, race, and gender, influence the position we take in the socio-emotional space. The socio-emotional space is a pivotal aspect of the experience of formal education, usually ignored, which includes students' feelings of relative safety, confidence, and entitlement in the class vis-à-vis the course content, peers, and the teacher.

White male students, whose experiences may be isomorphic with the mural, will take a position in the socio-emotional space proximate to the mural, with the consequent freedom to speak of and even for it with authority. Women, whose perspectives are not represented in the mural, and who may experience multiple jeopardies in underrepresentation, occupy positions that show the harm done to them through exclusion from the mural. Some women may be frozen at the margins of the socio-emotional space, disconnected from formal knowledge and from interaction with other learners. Others are situated close to the mural, seeking mastery of the discipline at the cost of disconnecting from their sense of self.

A narrative, inductive strategy aims to relieve the mural of its power to determine positions in the socio-emotional space. When learners are empowered by greater choice and mobility in the socio-emotional space of the classroom, multiple perspectives can begin to inform the mural. We believe empowerment can occur when a teacher exposes the mural as a representation of the experiences and interests of those who hold the power to create it. This claim regarding the conditional nature of knowledge directs students' gaze at both what is on the mural and what is not. Thus a space opens up for the experiences of those not represented in the mural. This is the space in which students can begin to describe the particulars of their experiences. Their stories challenge the mural, for they contain the emotion and passion that accompanies the revelation of one's exclusion, and the demand to be recognized and visible as knowers who contribute to a larger social vision.

In our analogy, the teacher's own position in the socio-emotional space is crucial to the process of empowerment. As teachers, we struggle to maintain conscious ambivalence in relation to the mural. At times we are close to it, inspecting it minutely, engaging with its questions and statements as resources for our own thinking. At other times we are distant from it, while we focus on dismantling its universalistic character. We recast the use of authority, moving from speaking for the unconditional knowledge of the mural, to using our authority to choose our relation to it. The position we choose is not fixed, but allows us mobility. In this way, we attempt to model choice and mobility in the socio-emotional space rather than advocate for a greater privilege of one position over another. Choice and mobility do not mean leaving behind one's history and social location. Rather, learners can feel more powerful in the socio-emotional space of the classroom when the operation of power through knowledge and identity is acknowledged.

As the mural's power is contested by the visibility of its construction from white, middle-class heterosexual male experience, and as the teacher's authority is used to determine her choices in relation to knowledge rather than to represent knowledge, power in the class is redistributed and mobility is facilitated. Movement in the socio-emotional space makes interaction among students possible. Student-student and student-teacher interaction becomes integral to shaping each one's relationship to the mural. This more dynamic educational space is essential to the equitable inclusion of women and members of other underrepresented groups in the academy. The ultimate goal of such inclusion is that over time, the canon of the academy will become more justly constituted.

We have provided this analogy to sketch the broad outlines of a very complex process. We want to acknowledge that our approach entails new difficulties for us as teachers. Welcoming divergent perspectives into the classroom may lead to conflictual interaction, with which we must assist students to work constructively. Additionally, there are considerable limitations to what we can achieve in one course. We have not the power to make

people mobile. We do work at creating the conditions, described in the analogy, in which people may decide to move. This happens at some times with some people, in maddeningly unpredictable, fragmented ways. We also have a responsibility to convey to our students that we cannot change significantly the discipline and its power structures through work in one classroom.

Applying our analogy, we return to the stories of Margaret and Kathy. Margaret was situated at a considerable distance from the mural at the beginning of the course. Here it is important to note that, early in the course, the instructor strongly legitimized and welcomed the expression of students' views and feelings so that when "Street Kids" was shown, its norm validated the worth of Margaret's story. As a sensitive, sympathetic, and personal account of her former life on the streets, the film also provided uncritical acceptance. She began to feel more connected in the socio-emotional space of the class. Therefore, when her fellow student attempted to add to the mural with his theory about people like her, Margaret was able to intervene with her embodied knowledge and to challenge successfully his knowledge claims.

Whatever Kathy's position in her class prior to the visitor's lecture, the negative appraisal of her parenting of her disabled child silenced the possibility of her telling her story in class. Support from three other mothers of disabled children in the class enabled her to approach the professor, who, with persistence, encouraged her to formulate her own version of the mural.

We have been discussing empowerment and disempowerment in the classroom. We have presented empowerment as mobility in the socio-emotional space of the classroom. Such mobility encourages students' flexibility in relation to the mural. When classroom knowledge is presented as universal and neutral, women's experiences of non-fit freeze women in unchosen positions.

At first glance, we seem to espouse a practice embodying contradiction. How do we encourage women to value their knowledge while simultaneously asking them to comprehend the limitations of their perspectives? Lorraine Code (1991) is right to insist that we must "abandon the presupposition that people have uniquely privileged access to the truth about their own experiences" (p. 169). Yet she is equally right to commend Belenky, Clinchy, Goldberger, and Mattuck (1986) for their "unconditional acceptance of the weltanschauung of each woman they interview," saying "only when women can assimilate the possibility of such an acceptance can they begin to recover from the damage consequent on patriarchal oppression" (p. 252). In our view, uncritical acceptance of women's stories is an intervention that helps elicit experience for further critical analysis. By uncritical acceptance, we do not mean accepting a story as universal or without context. We mean accepting each student's right to her version. We mean accepting concrete realities as they are relayed by students. If a student describes an event, we do not question the reality of the event, but we can certainly raise questions about the socially constructed meanings of the event. In general, we try to

create a climate in which it is clear that inquiry "needs narrative to supply the particulars on which analysis has to be based" (Code, 1991, p. 168), and that the vulnerability of our narratives contain the potential for our own empowerment.

TEACHING FOR EMPOWERMENT

The stories of Margaret and Kathy illustrate the problem of exclusion of women's knowledge from the public realm of the classroom. We now propose an educational experience designed to value students' narratives as a resource for comparison with a relative and conditional mural, and as a space that promotes interaction among students and with themes represented in the mural. We want to illustrate classroom practice that uses the experiences of women such as Kathy and Margaret as starting points for learning and knowing rather than regards them as interruptions of "normal" classroom practice which must recede into the private sphere in shame.

Our strategy is to begin with stories of students' experiences and then to move to an inductive process that invites comparison and contrast with theoretical perspectives and with other students' stories. We locate a narrative inductive learning process in the tradition of participatory and experiential learning. As well, we believe that women's learning evolves within relationships. In contrast to typical university classes, where relationships are accidental outcomes, we propose a deliberate structure actively to promote relationships.

Four main agendas facilitate a narrative inductive strategy: (1) establishing connections between students and ourselves; (2) facilitating the development of relationships among students; (3) enabling students to identify and articulate their experience and knowledge; and (4) enabling students to engage meaningfully with the course content (the evolving mural). Although we work on these agendas concurrently and continuously, we understand the first two as necessary for developing relationships that support students' comfort in speaking about their experiences. The last two ground the use of inductive process. Since we have observed that female learners most often begin without the possibility of choice in the socio-emotional space of the class, we describe teaching practices especially vital to women and associated with these four agendas.

Establishing Connections between Students and Ourselves

On the first day of class, few students are able to walk into a classroom and feel it is their "turf." They have been admitted by the university, but this admission seems provisional. They feel they must also prove themselves. This makes the professor's affirmation of them extremely important. Affirmation is conveyed not only in formal evaluation of assignments, but in seemingly inconsequential verbal and nonverbal interactions. Students' need

for affirmation means that early in the course we pay more attention to them than to course content. We greet and address students as much as possible as a physical demonstration of the greater invitation to engage with learning and knowing. Learning and remembering students' names lets them know that they belong, that the class is their turf as well. We pay particular attention to cuing those especially vulnerable to exclusion, such as women.

Significant affirmations can be communicated in small ways, sometimes even through a smile or a short, pleasant conversation about parking, the weather, and the like. These seemingly trivial exchanges are actually profoundly important acknowledgments that we share social space in which we are simply human beings on equal footing. Within the classroom space, where we are not equals, as teachers we assume this meta-level concern for affirmation, often unconscious, is implicit in students' interactions with us especially at the beginning of the course. For instance, in moments before or after the class, students' questions are often formulated solely to begin an exchange through which they can attain our recognition.

If the class is large, appointments with small groups of students may be incorporated as a further opportunity for affirmation through indication that we care to know them and their work in the course. In such meetings, we may have to "make room" for women in the conversation, since male students tend to speak more readily.

An important feature of the student-teacher relationship is evaluation. We try to minimize anxiety about evaluation by addressing it directly and acknowledging it as a potential block to learning and to relationships. To reduce students' anxiety, we give a small assignment in the first few weeks of the course. This "takes the edge off" free-floating worries and creates a point of contact between teacher and each student. Adequate qualitative feedback on all assignments is crucial to indicate that we value both the students and their work. A disturbing proportion of women have early schooling experiences that lead them to underestimate and undervalue their academic capabilities. Thorough feedback reflects *our* valuing of their work. This mirroring can provoke a reframing of their sense of themselves as inadequate. Whether evaluations are favourable or unfavourable, we communicate these with encouragement and confidence in their ability.

Over time, we try to change the hierarchical nature of the student-teacher relationship, which defines the teacher as *the* source of knowledge and the student as unknowing. Implied in empowerment of students is a gradual shift in our teaching role from expert to partner (Belenky et al., 1986; Freire, 1981). In our analogy, the student is empowered when she can unveil the myth of the universal mural, validate the significance of her narratives, and choose her position in the socio-emotional space of the classroom. This requires reconceptualizing the role of the teacher as expert. We can invite students to do so in several ways. For example, we seek out their expertise, having made sure that we know enough about them to ask. In so doing, we demystify ourselves by revealing our own uncertainties and questions.

Belenky et al. (1986) encourage us to "think out loud": "So long as teachers hide the imperfect processes of their thinking, allowing their students to glimpse only the polished products, students will remain convinced that only Einstein—or a professor—could think up a theory" (p. 215).

A consequence of revealing our uncertainties and the "gaps" in the discipline is that some students become angry with us. We must learn not to respond to such difficult moments in teaching by using our power to silence these students.

In traditional teaching, "good teaching" occurs when the teacher represents the knowledge of the discipline. As feminist teachers, we feel pressured to hide our often ambivalent relationship to the mural in an effort to "do it right," and thereby finally feel that we belong in the academy. It is painful for us to develop a practice of teaching which recognizes that when we present ourselves as infallible, we increase students' propensity to see knowledge itself as universal.

Facilitating the Development of Relationships among Students

Relationships among students are another significant source of affirmation. Women's sense of marginality often leads them to identify other students as more "in the know" and to situate themselves at a distance from the mural. They fear rejection, ridicule, or simply embarrassment in the face of their perceived or real differences. In light of this, we find it helpful to break the class into small groups on different occasions and to vary their membership so as to gradually build the fabric of relationships among class members. This agenda is best understood as evolving over time. Early in the process, if there are proportionately few women in a class, it is often helpful to form same-sex groups to facilitate their inclusion. For example, such groups in an initial class might discuss their expectations and concerns about the course.

When women have begun to speak, we try to provide opportunities for further forward movement through the socio-emotional space of the class by gradually increasing their interaction with those perceived to be "in the know." We do this by restructuring the small groups' composition as the course develops. For instance, these more heterogeneous groups could be project teams or discussion groups. We give tasks designed to promote interdependence, such as mutual interviewing. We want to help students value each other's experiences as resources for learning, which, in turn, tends to foster greater respect for their own narratives.

Facilitating development of mutually supportive peer relationships is more complex when some students are threatened, confused, or shaken by having the absolute authority of the discipline called into question and when conflicts emerge between students with different perspectives. We must legitimize the value of conflict and actively support students engaging with differences.

We encourage students to help each other with their learning and class projects, often creating groups charged with that task and scheduling class-times for them to meet. We discuss what helps and hinders learning, and we identify specific things students can do for each other. It is worth noting here that a grading system that involves placing students' grades on a normal curve severely limits the promotion of collaboration among students.

It is important to recognize women through acknowledging that they come to class with different histories and experiences. Gender differences are considerable with respect to ways of learning, knowing (Belenky et al., 1986), and relating (Gilligan, 1982; Jordan, 1987). As teachers, we acknowledge and legitimize these differences. For example, men usually offer their thinking in class as fully formulated assertions; women tend to offer tentative thoughts and use class conversation to clarify them. As teachers, we legitimize both approaches, not just the dominant male academic one. Legitimizing differences among students is a crucial part of teaching. We take every opportunity to commend students' respectful behaviour in the face of difference and we confront examples of carelessness, indifference, and lack of regard. We use our authority to foster the development of a safer place to represent difference. The stories of Kathy and Margaret illustrate that when students' experiences are challenged by current conceptions of knowledge, the first moments can be difficult. However, if these moments have affirming outcomes, norms and expectations in the class will gradually revise in the direction of validating students' experiences as resources for knowledge. This revision of norms is accomplished *over time*.

Enabling Students To Identify and Articulate Their Experience and Knowledge

We believe that students' own experience, their own concrete examples, their own narratives, are vital means of including students, especially those at the periphery, very often women. Students' narratives can be brought into the classroom through an explicit invitation by the professor or they can emerge spontaneously as contrasts to what is being presented in class, as in the cases of Margaret and Kathy. We note here that in our classrooms, self-disclosure is always a matter of personal choice—it is never an end in itself. It is important to acknowledge that the disclosure of personal experience always involves a measure of risk. Safety in the classroom derives from students' treatment of each other as well as the teacher's treatment of students. We encourage students to practice discernment in making disclosures. Respect for disclosures, sometimes organized in the form of a confidentiality rule, is discussed openly in class. We have found that trust in people is merited. However, whatever the risk, there is no alternative to engaging with students' experiences if students are to be empowered through the inclusion of their knowledge in the inquiry.

Careful structuring of class activities and assignments enables students to identify and describe relevant experiences. Autobiographical projects, journal writing, or story-telling are examples of activities that encourage narratives. We purposefully select material (for example, films and readings) to trigger reflection and generate insights. We structure small-group discussions through which students can assist each other to articulate and make sense of their experience by formulating conceptual frameworks that enable them effectively to communicate their own perspective.

The immediate difficulty of accomplishing this with women is that much of our experience takes place in the personal and private arenas. Personal and private experience does not count as an object fit for study. We break this down by presenting our own experience as examples and, where possible, presenting material in which authors do the same.

The inductive process of drawing insights and making sense out of one's own experience takes *time*. We assure students this is not unusual as they struggle with a wild profusion of questions and a confusing array of details. Our job is to provide what Winnicott (1965) calls "a holding environment." By this we mean that we hold and express a belief in the value of the process and outcome of students' efforts. Students need help in maintaining their own belief that they have something to say, since at this stage in the process students are especially overwhelmed and uncertain of themselves (Taylor, 1987). Most importantly, we legitimize their confusion and uncertainty as necessary elements in this inductive learning process. Support and affirmation of the resulting insights and perspectives, the products of this effort, are essential. We are explicit about our own appreciation and interest, modelling this in class to encourage the same behaviour among students.

We are sensitive to the fact that for some women, to name experience can be disconcerting, frightening, and even overwhelming as they begin to take hold of and grapple with the realization of what they have lived. We realize that for some students, this means confronting painful elements of their realities, which may temporarily feel alienating and disempowering. The process of empowerment is not without its moments of frustration, sadness, and anger. We know that for many of us, reaching into the past to recover our experience, expose it to scrutiny, and struggle to claim it as our own can be depressing. But depression is not the same as disempowerment. It is erroneous to suggest empowerment is uniformly and exclusively positive, that it does not have its moments of pain and adversity. We argue that anger and depression can provide some women the impetus to critically engage with their past with newfound honesty and clarity. Similarly, we maintain that enabling our students to name their experience brings to the forefront distortions, misconceptions, and myths about realities with which they have lived with a sense of chronic uneasiness. Feeling that something is amiss and being unable to identify the source of such a feeling leads to lethargy and immobility that leave many of us incapacitated and incapable of reaching out toward collective action.

Enabling Students to Engage Meaningfully with the Course Content

When students have started articulating their experiences, we can begin to sketch into the mural our teacherly contributions, the knowledge of the discipline. We do not believe that it is sufficient merely to collect the stories of learners. Rather, our goal is that students' experiences and the concerns of the discipline become interacting resources for critical reflection. Our job as teachers at this point is to facilitate students' sense of competence in the discipline. We do this by imparting a clear understanding of the framework of the discipline, and by signalling the concepts that will fuel the dialogue between experience and theory. Lectures or didactic presentations are often useful at this point as a way of helping students achieve mastery in the discipline. A sense of mastery or competence is particularly important for women because it grounds a feeling of daring to challenge dominant knowledge.

Yet throughout our presentation of the discipline, we do not allow it to be seen as "the truth" to which students must aspire. Presenting the knowledge of the discipline while constantly undermining its universality is tricky to say the least. It is especially nerve-wracking for women teachers who struggle with our own terrors about success in the academy. However, when we present mainstream knowledge we can talk about the historical context of the formulators of that knowledge. For example, in social science we might ask students to consider how the fact of being a Jewish man working in established United States social science might have affected Erikson's developmental theories. We might try to take into account the broader historical patterns in our discipline. We might talk about paradigms of thought rather than assume a model of cumulative progress consequent on the advancement of science. We describe both our fit and non-fit with the mural as mainstream knowledge.

The way we present course content can encourage or discourage student contributions. If we direct students' attention exclusively to the solid centre of densely constructed sections in a tightly organized manner, we will decrease the possibility of students' mobility in socio-emotional space, thus reducing the possibility of choosing to revise the mural. But if we also draw students' attention to the less definitive edges of the completed portions, to our unanswered questions, we will increase their mobility in the class and the likelihood that they will find connections between their own narratives and the themes represented in the mural.

As students use their experience to gain "footholds" in the discipline, we expect they will begin to sketch their own versions. While considering the mural, they may elaborate on what is already there, or change, even transform the representation of the discipline. Equally, they may use their choice of location in the social space to refuse to inscribe their knowledge on that particular mural. We are not surprised to see critical reflection transform their conceptions of their experience or of the knowledge of the discipline itself.

The relationship of women and knowledge is fraught with tension between the need to refuse the harm done to us by traditional epistemology and the need to correct culture through our own representations. On one hand, engaging with the mural is dangerous to our sense of selves as knowers. On the other hand, we must rewrite knowledge. Without wishing to fall too heavily on either side of the tension, we see a parallel between the ideal relationship of the student to theory and feminist models of individual development (Surrey, 1985). Surrey rejects autonomy and separateness as the goal of development, and instead frames women's development as the growing capacity to articulate the self in relation to others. Similarly, we encourage students to articulate their narratives in relation to the mural. We do not regard fusion between narrative and mural as a healthy outcome. Neither do we see severing one's relationship to the mural as politically or personally agentic. Rather, a complex relatedness to theory is accomplished through differentiation and identification. Our point is that differentiation cannot occur without recognizing the student's existence as a knowing person through the student's own narrative.

Concurrent with helping students to achieve competence in the discipline, teachers must facilitate the process of comparison and contrast so that students' developing accounts are challenged, refined, and communicated. This is the point at which new ideas are important. We try to offer concrete examples of theoretical issues under study. Sometimes in social science we do this with case studies, short stories, or novels.

Frequently, students begin to identify gaps between how they understand their experience and how it is represented in the literature under study. This is an exciting and important time for people who have felt excluded from the knowledge-making enterprise. It is also dangerous. It is a time when students are vulnerable to dismissing the importance of the gap (as Kathy tried to do) instead of recognizing that their own experience is a source of knowledge relevant to the inquiry of the whole class.

At the end of the course, it is important to provide students with the experience of communicating their developing perspectives. Students need to consolidate their learning, and this often happens through communicating it. The final paper is frequently a vehicle for consolidation. It is also important for students to tell stories about their experience of learning. Telling these stories helps to make their experiences real.

CONCLUSION

Our emphasis on concrete teaching practices tends to produce a formula implying the problem will magically disappear if we institute different rules. We do not mean to make such a suggestion. Students come with resistances (as we do). These resistances are developed in their histories and are a part of their identities. All of us bring to every conversation our previous conversations, and these past conversations, both inside and outside formal educa-

tion, limit the scope of possibility in our classes. As well, classrooms exist in different contexts, and those contexts profoundly affect the possibility of empowerment.

We suggest that conscious planning for the inclusion of relationship, personal narrative, and induction creates a better ground for the possibility of equitably including women. Although we can be responsible for this ground as a place to root growth, we cannot be solely responsible for the occurrence of growth itself. Further, we respect students' choices about how they wish to participate in our classes.

The issue of change in teaching practices is often avoided in discussions about the need for reform in education. We are clear that change is required, but we are also clear that a mysterious change in "teaching personality" is not what is called for. Rather we suggest that an analysis of teaching practices described in the previous section leads to the identification of manageable tasks that can be performed to achieve those practices. This requires an understanding that women's place in the world is the place from which learning proceeds. For example, it is not difficult to attend to students affirmatively in the first class, but it requires an understanding that affirmation facilitates the entry of women in the learning process. Similarly, group process skills are not difficult to acquire but their acquisition depends on the belief that students can contribute to each other's learning.

Teachers often equate a need for change in teaching practice with "doing therapy" in the class, inexorably leading to 300 private appointments for weeping students. We argue that foreclosure on personal narrative in the classroom *produces,* if anything, the need for "private disclosures to nice teachers." We believe that shifting the boundaries of what counts as learning frees teachers of the burden of students who have no place to make sense of their lives. Kathy is a good example of the weeping student who needs to come for a private appointment. Our object is to facilitate the telling of her story in class as a resource for critical inquiry. This is not the object of encounter groups or sensitivity training: it is an expressly political goal aimed at including women in the interpretive communities that decide what counts and how to represent what counts in the larger social order.

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