

# Gender Loops



**Gender reform  
of the curriculum**

## **Impressum**

Gender Loops – Gender reform of the curriculum

### **Authors**

Paco Abril, Leif Askland, Michael Cremers, Norman Duncan, Loreta Golubevaite,  
Jens Krabel, Anzelika Lilaite, Ole Bredesen Nordfjell, Alfons Romero

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Dissens e.V.

Allee der Kosmonauten 67, 12681 Berlin

Tel: 030-54987530

Fax: 030-54987531

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# 1. Introduction and European challenges

Ole B. Nordfjell, Reform ressurscenter for menn, Oslo

**I think practical subjects such as arts and crafts, music, and drama, are extra important for what students and children learn about social gender. Here the practice is often very gendered. I recall that this is precisely why we taught the students, the majority of whom are women, to use a chainsaw. Not because being able to use a chainsaw in itself is important, but because we wished to give them the sense of mastering by using a new tool, and give them an experience that may result in thinking new thoughts about gender and what they bring with them. I think that much is determined in the subjects that do not address gender and gender equality, and where this is not mentioned in the plans.**

**Arts and crafts teacher, Norway**

This publication is primarily intended for professors and leaders of universities and vocational schools who are responsible for the training of early childhood teachers. The main topic is how to develop students' competence and gender sensitivity. *Gender reform of the curriculum* questions and gives pointers on what teachers and leaders can do. How can a critical analysis of gender be integrated into the institution? For instance: How can students learn to understand the ways in which a picture book often mediates traditional gender roles.

*Gender reform of the curriculum* is a product by the partners in the EU/Leonardo da Vinci project "Gender Loops". As part of this project the partners have conducted surveys in their countries on how teachers are trained in gender issues. Germany, Lithuania, Norway, Spain and Turkey are the partner countries involved in the project. Method approaches on the teaching and integration of gender within teacher education institutions have also been mapped.

Parallel to this *Gender reform of the curriculum* the partners also publish *The toolbox*, a report with methods for practical work on gender in early childhood centres. This publication offers insights into a variety of methods directed towards children as well as gender sensitive inputs to staff and management.

## Teachers /Educators as role models

Often, early childhood teachers/educators are the first adults children meet outside their family surrounding. They tend to gain a great importance in young children's lives and in their developing an own sight of the world, of values, and of appropriate behaviour. In all these topics, a gender dimension plays an important role. Thus, the way educational staff deals with issues of gender can take a great influence in a child's development. This can play on different layers: The own gender performance, the evaluation of and reactions to children's and adults' different gender performances, the allocation of resources, activities, and duties, the evaluation and sanctioning of transgressions, the display of different kinds of feelings, etc.

The importance of gender in early childhood teacher education Before we go to the main contribution of this publication how to raise students' understanding of gender issues, we need to address the question why it is necessary. Does gender matter and why should future teachers be educated in the subject of gender?

Early childhood teachers are persons that children look up to and parents look to. At the same time they are male and female gendered in different and specific ways. What kind of significance does this fact have? Teachers, regardless sex, try to do the best of their job, therefore it might be easy to believe that it does not matter what kind of sex they have. Saying so might even be interpreted as an insult to all the female early childhood teachers doing a great job in the sector.

But even if teachers do the best of their enterprise it is not evident that gender is without significance. In a gendered society, people cannot evade a gendered socialisation, so their way of acting will be as influenced by their gendered experiences as is their perception by others. Still, there are big differences in dealing with these facts – from simply accepting gender dualisms as naturally and biologically determined to a reflective handling of your own history, comportment and perception of others aiming to multiply opportunities for everyone. It is the latter which could provide a good basis for working on gender equality in early childhood education.

## **Gender in curriculum**

Assuming that future educators/early childhood teachers are not gender neutral professionals but have their own experiences with gender norms and have socialised in a gendered way, too, it is important to address gender related topics in the training curriculum in a reflective and critical way. By this means, and since gender is a subconsciously omnipresent category anyhow, it is possible to raise gender topics from a seemingly natural subtext level onto a reflective explicit level. So, gender issues should be included in all subjects of the training of future educators/early childhood teachers. This should concern both the trainees' view on themselves and their profession including the influence of their own gender performances on the children, and their practical preparation for future pedagogical work including their perception of children ('s behaviours).

## **Outline of the gender reform of the curriculum**

*The Gender reform of the curriculum* touches different areas where gender needs to be taken into account, and different areas which influence what students learn about gender intentionally or unintentionally. All these areas are informal and open curriculum in which the future students meet, take nourishment and inspirations from.

*Chapter 2: Overview of the legal, political, and administrative framework for the implementation of gender mainstreaming in the area of training and further qualification training for educators and in day-care centres* gives an overview over the situation in the five Gender Loops partner countries.

*Chapter 3: Personnel and organisational implementation* addresses the challenge to implement gender mainstreaming in vocational training institutions. The chapter takes an institutional point of entry. How are gender inequalities recognised in the organisation and who is responsible for taking intervening actions, are some of

the questions raised in this chapter. Another issue is an approach to make the study of early childhood education attractive to both women and men.

Professors in vocational schools and universities often find it challenging to make students interested and competent in the issues of gender, sexuality and inequality. In *Chapter 4: Methodological and didactical framework* challenges in this endeavour are identified. And different approaches are discussed.

The development of teachers in early childhood centres does not stop at graduation, and neither do their needs for mentoring and guidance. Early childhood centres are also an arena for recruitment of students to the study of early childhood education. In *Chapter 5: Cooperation with early childhood centres* possible cooperation and assistance of universities with early childhood centres are in focus. Experiences with tailored in-service courses for male assistants working in early childhood centres, are some of the forms of cooperation discussed here.

The job as a teacher of children in early childhood education covers almost all aspects of the human condition and therefore the training of teachers is very varied and differentiated. What's interesting is that gender often is a key factor in all the different subjects and learning fields, but often this is not recognised in the formal curriculum. In *Chapter 6: Methods and learning field* raises questions on how gender may be of relevance and be included in a whole range of different subjects and learning fields of the formal curriculum.

# 2. Overview of the Legal, Political and Administrative Framework for the Implementation of Gender Mainstreaming in the Area of Training and Further Qualification Training for Educators and in Day-Care Centres

Anzelika Lilaite and Loreta Golubevaite, Social Innovation Fund, Kaunas

This chapter compares legal, political and administrative framework for the implementation of gender mainstreaming strategies in the area of vocational training and further qualification training for educators and in day-care centres in Germany, Norway, Spain, Turkey and Lithuania.

The comparison between these five countries is performed in three major areas:

1. Legal principles, which oblige the state to actively promote the equality of women/girls and men/boys.
2. The situation in day-care centres with regards to country-specific educational programmes and their statements concerning gender issues, the childcare situation and the occupational structure in day-care centres.
3. Country-specific curricula for vocational training schools for educators with regards to the extent in which gender issues are considered in the educational targets and contents of educators.

## Legal principles

The promotion of equal opportunities for men and women is ensured by legal acts in all five countries. In Germany this principle is regulated by the Constitutional Law, the Code of Social Law (SGB) the Third Book as well as the cabinet decision (1999) of the Federal Government. Spain has integrated the principle of equality of opportunity between men and women into the Constitution (1978), as well as a system of Equal Opportu-

nities Plans throughout the country, while the Law of Equality between women and men came into effect only in 2007. In Norway, there's the Gender Equality Act. Meanwhile, Lithuania has two major laws on this issue – the Law on Equal Opportunities for Women and Men (1999), The Law on Equal Treatment (2005) – as well as the National Programmes on Equal Opportunities for Women and Men (year 2004-2005 and year 2005-2009). In Turkey, equality between women and men was barely mentioned in the Constitution of 1982; recently (2001 and 2004) changes were brought into the Constitution with regards to strengthening this principle. These positive changes are related to the fact that Turkey has signed the CEDAW (Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women) in 1985 and the Directorate General on The Status of Women (KSGM) was founded in 1990, in accordance with this United Nations' convention.

Gender mainstreaming in early childhood education is ensured in three states. Germany has the concept of gender mainstreaming included into the Children and Youth Plan; besides, the Eighth Book– Children and Youth Welfare Law (KJHG) of the Code of Social Law (SGB) highlights equal opportunities for girls and boys as a fundamental orientation of education.

Norway has a more practical approach: according to the above-mentioned Gender Equality Act and the Accounting Act, institutions of a certain size (including: (1) the municipalities and their responsibility for Early Childhood Education Institutions (ECEIs) in their area, (2) university colleges and universities educating preschool teachers, (3) county councils responsible for

vocational training in upper secondary education) must undertake to report on their gender-equality status and activities within their institution. Moreover, there was an Action Plan for Gender Equality in kindergartens 2004-2007, which funded action-research and development projects under the topic in Norway.

In Spain, according to the Education Bill, the Ley Organica de Educación (LOE), one of the guiding principles of the Spanish education system is to transmit and put into practice values which further develop equality of rights and opportunities and promote real equality between men and women. The law contemplates continuous teacher training on equality issues, although this has not been extended to encompass initial teacher education. However, Section C of the Equality Law (2007) stipulates that the gender perspective should be incorporated into Initial and Continuous Teacher training.

In Lithuania and Turkey there are no legal regulations directly aimed at gender mainstreaming in early childhood education yet.

## **Situation of early childhood education**

In the countries considered, the responsibility for laying down the policies, education standards and similar regulations for the ECEIs is brought by a respective Ministry, and the detailed curriculum, running of the public ECEIs and control over the private ones belongs to the local administrations.

In Spain, the Ministry of Education and Science and the Education Administrations of the Autonomous Communities have authority over education matters. By royal decree the State is given exclusive authority in setting down the common compulsory subjects for the Infant Education syllabus. The Education Authorities of the different autonomous communities are responsible for drawing up the curriculum within their territory, taking into account the common subjects set down by the State.

In Norway, the Ministry of Education and Research is responsible for laying down the policies of the ECEIs (The Kinder garden act, the action plans, The Framework Plan) and works together with the County Governors to ensure that the municipalities follow the policies. The local authority for each municipality is responsible for running the public ECEIs and regulating private ECEIs in accordance with the regulations. In Lithuania ECEIs fall under the authority of and are financed by local governments as well. They are responsible for following the National Education Strategy, prepared by the Ministry of Education and Science and approved by the government.

In Turkey, the Ministry of National Education is responsible for preschool education, and provides for about 90% of the schools, while the remaining 10% are under

the responsibility of Social Services the Child Protection Institution (SHCEK), and other public and private institutions and foundations.

The national term for both, early childhood education and ECEIs, in Norway, is “barnehager” which corresponds to the term “kindergarten” or “day-care institution“. In Spain, the ECEIs are officially named Infant Education Centres although they are commonly referred to as “nurseries” for the first cycle (0-3 years) and “kindergarten” the second cycle (3-6 years). In Lithuania, in documents and statistical publications such institutions are titled pre-school education institutions; they are divided into nurseries, nursery-kindergartens, kindergartens, kindergarten-schools and other schools. In Turkey, kindergartens and nursery classes are called “mother’s schools” and “mother’s classes” respectively.

**Accessibility of children day-care services** differs from country to country.

In Spain, 17.3% of the infants aged 0 – 2 attend day-care institutions; at the age of three this rate rises up to 95.8% (as of 2006 – 2007). In Germany the average availability of places in day-care centres was 89% for children aged 3 to 6 years and 8.5% for children under 3 in 2004. For Norway, the accessibility rate to such services for children aged 1 – 5 years was 76% in 2005. In Lithuania, the number of children aged 1-6 attending day-care institutions was 53% in 2005. For Turkey, this rate is about 23% for the age group of 4-6 years (as of 2006 – 2007).

All countries reported that accessibility to child day-care services highly differs while speaking of different age groups: the rate is usually significantly lower for children less than 3 years. Moreover, services available for this age group are often run on a private basis and not public. Some countries intend to improve this situation, e.g. Germany plans to increase the number of available day-care centres for children aged 0-3 in order to reach an accessibility rate of 35% in 2013.

**Personnel-child ratio** (often regulated by legal acts) shows how many children one ECEI staff member attends to at a time. In Norway this ratio is 4.4 children per employee and 10.6 children per teacher (data as of 2005). In Spain, there are in average 10.3 children per teacher (data as of 2004). For Turkey, this ratio is 25.8 (2006-2007). In Lithuania there are 9.6 children per teacher and 7.4 children per employee (2005). In Germany, the personnel-child ratio lies between 5 and 7.5 (2006).

Men constitute a minority among **employees of ECEIs** within all European countries. In Norway, men make 9% of ECEIs’ employees. In 2002, only scarcely 4% of all employees of ECEIs in Germany were men. One third of these men worked in the financial – technical area and only 50% of male employees (2.67%) worked in the pedagogic sector. In Spain, men make up approximately 10% to 15% of the teaching staff in the

infant education stage (0-6 years) (as of 2004-2005). Turkey has 5% male ECEI teachers (2006-2007), and in Lithuania this percentage is as low as 0.4% (2005).

*Constitution and required qualifications of ECEI staff* are quite different in the five countries and can be merely compared.

In Norway, 35% of ECEIs' employees are qualified preschool teachers. The preschool-teacher education is designed to qualify candidates for work as teachers of children 0-7 years old, and for work as directors and administrators in ECEIs. "The preschool teacher education" is a three-year academic study programme at the bachelor-degree level. 55% of the employees in the ECEIs work as educational assistants under supervision by a teacher. There are no formal qualifications for assistants. Many of the assistants have informal qualifications from their own childrearing practices, and many attend annual pedagogical seminars. The remaining 10% consist of different employee groups with different tasks in the ECEIs. Some of these employees have no pedagogy related tasks, like carpentry and so on. Some have other qualified tasks, and have other higher education than the preschool education. A few are vocationally trained child care and youth workers. Child care and youth workers work also under supervision by a teacher (Statistics Norway 2005).

There are two categories of infant education teachers in Spain: specialists with a higher diploma in infant education and teachers with a degree in infant education. Infant education teacher training courses are taught in university faculties and colleges. It takes three academic years to receive a degree. Teachers who have taken this degree course are qualified to work in both infant education cycles (0-6 years). The Técnico Superior en Educación Infantil (Higher diploma in Infant Education) is a professional training course. This course is open to students who have completed their compulsory secondary education. The course has a duration of 2,000 hours, spread over two academic years. This diploma qualifies teachers to work in first cycle infant education centres (0-3 years). However, all first cycle centres (0-3) in Spain are also required to have at least one educator with a Degree in Infant Education.

In Turkey, teachers in preschools are required to hold higher education degrees from preschool teacher training programs or child development programs. However, in practice trainers with contracts are employed commonly for short terms and they are mostly graduates of vocational schools.

In Germany, 82 – 87% of ECEI employees work as educators, 12-16% as child carers and 1-2% work as social pedagogues (data as of 2002). Thus, educators are the main group of employees in German ECEIs. They are almost exclusively trained at vocational training schools for educators (this takes three to four years). These figures show that relatively few university graduates work

in the educator profession. Among the managing personnel, the number of graduates lies at almost 16%. In addition, a high number of part-time employees and an increasing number of temporary employment contracts are characteristic for this profession in Germany. Meanwhile in Lithuania, 56.4% of ECEI employees hold a university degree and 38.9% a vocational training degree. Within these numbers, 68.8% and 87.9% respectively are qualified as pre-school educators. The majority (71.8%) of all countries' ECEI employees have pedagogic work experience of more than 15 years and only 5.7% work in ECEIs less than 4 years. 56.6% of pedagogues in Lithuanian ECEIs are middle aged: 35 to 49 years (data as of 2004).

**Researches** with respect to gender and early childhood education are run (at least in minor scope) in Spain, Germany and Norway. Meanwhile, the Turkish partner reported that no research has been carried out on young children specifically regarding gender. Several researches were conducted on gender issues in Lithuanian kindergartens: Here 2 of these shall be emphasized. The first research - "Children gender aspect in personnel attitude in ECEIs of Siauliai" – observed ECEIs' personnel help in dressing-up and undressing children. The second research "Information to parents from educators of Siauliai ECEIs" concentrated on information about children, which is forwarded to parents and analyzed given information regarding gender aspects (to mothers or to fathers). The Spanish partners reported that a few isolated studies have been carried out on infant education and gender and some groups and centres connected to universities address the broader issue of diversity and childhood (e.g. Grupo GRAD of Universidad de Vic, Grupo GEI of the Univ. De les Illes Balears and CIIMU- Instituto de Infancia I Mundo Urbano, a joint project involving three universities, the UB, UAB and UOC). In Germany, studies concerning the situation of infants in day-care centres are rather seldom in comparison to other fields of research. This applies in particular to research projects with an explicit gender focus, even if individual practical and research projects in Germany have been developing further qualification training concepts and methods for a gender-specific pedagogy in day-care centres since the middle of the 1990s. In Norway, research on young children and gender has been institutionalized only to a limited extent and little research has been carried out in this field. Nevertheless, the Norwegian situation might be assessed as the best among all five countries, as long as the Research Council of Norway, which funds most of the Norwegian societal studies, requires that every project applying for funds must reflect its impact on gender and gender equality. Despite the fact that there is no institution with an explicit mandate to research and develop knowledge on young children and gender, a Norwegian Centre for Child Research exists. One of its researchers, Randi Dyblie Nilsen, currently implements the project



“The evolving kinder garden. Inclusion, gender, and socialisation – in practice.”

## **Curriculum /education plans**

In Spain, the state is given exclusive authority in setting down the common subjects for the Infant Education syllabus By Royal Decree. The Education Authorities of the different autonomous communities are responsible for drawing up the syllabus within their territory, taking into account the common subjects set down by the state. Showing an attitude of respect towards the traits and qualities of other people and valuing these, without attitudes of discrimination towards gender or any other differentiating features is implicitly contained within the six curricular areas set by the Spanish Education Bill.

In Spain, on an official level the *Instituto de la Mujer* provides different pedagogical materials and resources to fight against sexism and introduce the gender perspective, which it distributes free of charge (“Non sexist education notes”, publications, handbooks, videos). There are non sexist children’s stories on the market as well as guides on using non sexist language as well as other pedagogical resources and materials for working on gender.

In Turkey, the aims and principles of preschool education as well as basic working rules in preschool institutions are specified by the Ministry of National Education. Yet, its preschool education regulations do not include gender issues.

Study programs in universities/colleges are prepared according to the national standard for preschool education in Lithuania. The objectives of colleges, preparing early childhood education teachers, have to match the physiological and psychological peculiarities mentioned in the standard. Gender issues are not integrated into regulating curricula/plans. There is a chance of slightly changing the program every year by considering the current situation and expert opinion. The general curricula approved by the former Ministry of Culture and Education provide guidelines for pre-school education. They are adapted according to the individual needs of pre-schools. The content of the pre-primary education curriculum is implemented throughout the entire time spent by the child in the pre-primary group. In 2007 a special initiative group at the board of science and education renewed the preschool educator tuition standard. Related colleges must follow this standard. The gender equality issue was extracted as the important clause. The standard is still a recommendation and sexual equality issue involvement and method of presentation is up to higher education institution leadership and lecturer competence. Universities prepare study programmes by themselves, referring pedagogues’ tuition regulations established in 1995; regulations are about to be reviewed in Lithuania.

In Germany, childcare and education standards for day-care centres are established by the respective Federal States. Recently, the Federal States have drafted new educational programmes for their day-care centres. An initial analysis performed by the German partners shows, that in the educational programmes gender issues are considered at least rudimentary in the discussion concerning contemporary educational standards for day-care centres. Most programmes indicate that gender stereotypes limit children’s realms of experience, and that educators should therefore pay attention that the same scopes of action are opened to boys and girls.

The educational programmes of the German federal states Bavaria and Rhineland-Palatine describe gender-sensitive and/or gender-conscious pedagogy as a cross-sectional task of educators. The educational programme of Schleswig-Holstein also emphasises that gender consciousness represents a cross-sectional task. However, these educational programmes consider gender issues either not at all or only rudimentarily. Most proposals for a gender-reflective pedagogy can be found in the educational programmes of the federal states of Bavaria, Saarland and Berlin. Programmes in Saarland and Berlin introduce more analytical questions that help educators to observe education and development processes of boys and girls more precisely, concerning gender issues.

The educational programmes of some federal states neither make reference to the legal requirements and targets regarding gender-related promotion of boys and girls, nor do they refer to targets and opportunities of a gender-reflective pedagogy.

In Norway the *Framework Plan for the Content and Tasks of Kindergartens (2006)* regulates the content and tasks of all national ECEIs. It is divided into three parts: in the first part “The Social Mandate of the Kindergartens” gender is highlighted a little bit, but in part two “The Content of the Kindergartens” and part three “Planning and Collaboration” gender issues are not mentioned. This plan does not follow up to the specifications in the Ministry’s Action plan for gender equality in kindergartens 2004-2007. The action plan states that all institutions on all levels in the sector shall annually report on the equality status and activities in accordance with the Gender Equality Act.

## **Vocational training schools and Universities**

There are two types of vocational high schools with child development programs in Turkey: The Vocational High School for Girls and Technical Vocational High School; the latter is coeducational by regulation, however in practice boys do not prefer to get a degree in child development. National curricula for all vocational high schools are determined by the Ministry of National Education. It does not include gender issues other than courses such

as “health of mother and child” which covers biological aspects of sexuality.

Higher Education Law, numbered 2547, regulates all matters regarding universities and vocational schools which are under the responsibilities of universities. This law only mentions equal opportunity within its aims and principles and does not mention gender issues or gender mainstreaming. National curricula exist for “preschool teacher training programs” and “child development programs” for all universities and vocational schools. They do not cover gender issues except for the notions of sexual development and information on sexual health. However, in practice, some academics who teach courses in these programs seem to be able to organize their courses to cover gender issues.

8 Lithuanian high schools prepare pre-school education pedagogues - 3 universities and 5 colleges. In *Vilnius pedagogical university*, *Klaipeda university* and *Siauliai university* usually it takes 4 years to finish bachelor studies to get an educatory, teacher qualification, social sciences (educatory) degree. After that a person can study for 2 more years and get a masters degree in educatory and teacher qualification, childhood pedagogy also specializations in *pre-school education*, *preparatory for school education*, *pre-school education institutions management*, *childhood social pedagogy*, *artistic education pedagogy*, *sports and health pedagogy*. Also, in Siauliai university there is a *Special vocational studies program* - preparatory for school education pedagogues (teacher/educator). In the colleges a person who attends a 3 years course (diurnal) of educatory disciplines, normally gets a teacher’s qualification. Gender mainstreaming or gender equality are not mentioned in the educational specialties or disciplines.

The Ministry of Education and Research is responsible for laying down the policies for upper secondary education in Norway. The upper secondary schools offer vocational training for educators. Directorate for Education and Training is the executive agency for the Ministry of Education and Research. The directorate is responsible for the development of primary and secondary education including the training of workers in early childhood education working in ECEIs. According to the Gender Equality Act and the Accounting Act the county councils must report on the gender-equality status and activities within their enterprise. This includes reporting on the vocational training in upper secondary education within the county. The Education Act (2000) governs the training and syllabus for upper secondary education. Gender equality is an integral part of the act. According to the Gender Equality Act (2005), the county councils are responsible for annually reporting on their gender equality status and their efforts to improve the situation in the upper secondary schools. There are no such regulations/ action plans at this level.

*The Ministry of Education and Research* is the responsible ministry for the 19 universities/university colleges

that educate ECEI teachers. *The Act relating to Universities and University Colleges (2005)* governs the institutions educating ECEI teachers. Under the Gender Equality Act the institutions are seen as public entities. “Section 6-2. Gender equality: Universities and university colleges shall make active, targeted and systematic efforts to ensure gender equality in all categories of employment at the institution.” According to the Gender Equality Act and the Accounting Act universities and university colleges must report on the gender-equality status and activities within their enterprise. In addition, the education of preschool teachers is governed by its own national regulations. The regulations (specified in the national Framework plan) specify an outline for the duration, the subjects and the degree (bachelor) that the institutions must offer.

The Ministry of Education and Science of Spain and the Education Administrations of the Autonomous Communities have authority over education matters. Royal Decree 1265/1997, of July 24th, sets down the syllabus for the *Técnico superior en Educación Infantil* (Higher Diploma in Infant Education) training courses. Gender Mainstreaming and Gender Equality are not mentioned. The IV Plan on Equality of opportunity between women and men (2003-2006) as well as the different equality plans drawn up by the Autonomous Communities set down a series of specific guidelines for transmitting egalitarian values and attitudes at all educational levels.

Each university which offers *The Teacher in Infant Education degree* must publish the syllabus specifying all the compulsory and optional subjects the course is comprised of. Until now, only the specific *Teacher in Infant Education Degree* has been approved. In the area of higher education, the pertinent public administrations are to promote teaching and research around the meaning and scope of equality between women and men. In particular, the public administrations are expected to incorporate teaching on equality between women and men into their syllabuses; set up specific postgraduate courses; undertake specific studies and research initiatives in this area.

Among the compulsory subjects for the whole state set down by the Royal decree for the *Teacher in Infant Education Degree*, only the subject “Sociology of Education” refers to gender. Amongst its contents it points out that ‘class, gender and ethnic group should be taken into account in education’. In Spain there are 60 faculties or university colleges which offer this Infant Education Degree. Only 19 from all these education institutions (32%) offer subjects whose names or titles are directly related to gender, coeducation, sexuality, diversity or education in values. 83% of these subjects are optional, whereas 17% of them are compulsory on the centres’ syllabus. Only 8 of these faculties and university centres offer subjects on their syllabus whose title explicitly mentions gender and coeducation. Five centres offer subjects on sex education and another five on education in values. Research is

needed in order to find out in what other subjects gender is introduced transversely.

Training aims and contents of vocational training schools for educators in Germany are co-determined on a federal level by the “General Agreements on Technical Colleges/ Social Studies dated 7 Nov. 2002” drawn up by the Conference of the German Ministers for Education and Culture. The general agreements neither contain a request to implement gender mainstreaming, nor an obligation to include gender issues in the training of educators. The inclusion of gender issues in the curricula of the Federal States is thus a first and important step towards a more gender-reflective training of educators. All curricula consider gender issues; however, gender references differ clearly in the curricula of the individual federal states. An analysis of the learning fields in the respective curricula shows that most curricula determine one or several of the following gender issues to be considered by the vocational training schools: “gender-specific socialization”, “gender-conscious education”, “reflection of one’s own gender role”, “social work with boys and girls” and “the educator profession as a social women’s profession”.

The federal states of Northrhine-Westfalia, Rhineland-Palatine and Saarland have integrated gender issues more profoundly into their respective curricula than other federal states, showing as a model how gender aspects can be included in the various learning fields as cross-sectional topics. In Northrhine-Westfalia, for instance, vocational training schools are recommended to teach students a gender-differentiated view of children’s literature and to verify popular theories about girls and boys with the children. In Rhineland-Palatine, vocational training schools are recommended to work, among other things, on role-conditioned linguistic behaviour, and to integrate strategies of gender mainstreaming into their pedagogic practice.

German universities of applied sciences and universities are, on the one hand, subject to the skeleton law on universities which, due to the education sovereignty of the Federal States, only regulates the material principles of university education. On the other hand, the respective regional university laws of the individual federal states establish the legal regulations for universities. Both the skeleton law on universities and the individual regional university laws dedicate an own chapter to the realization of equal opportunities for women and men. In addition, a person responsible for equal opportunities is planned for each university who, among other things, is committed to promoting women’s issues at universities. Currently, there are 16 universities of applied sciences and/or universities in Germany that have established departments for early childhood education.

An initial evaluation of study contents shows that seven bachelor study programmes describe the teaching of gender issues to be an important part of the training.

For example, at the Alice-Salomon University of Applied Sciences gender competencies are taught as part of the study area Diversity Studies, and these competencies are integrated into all modules and study areas. At the Freiburg Protestant University of Applied Sciences, it is planned to make gender competencies one of eight core competencies. And at the Neubrandenburg University of Applied Sciences, the promotion of gender competency and intercultural competency is one of thirteen study modules. An increasing academic orientation improves the opportunity to increasingly integrate gender issues into the educator training.

# 3. Personnel and Organizational Implementation of Gender Mainstreaming in Vocational Training Institutions

Anzelika Lilaite and Loreta Golubevaite, Social Innovation Fund, Kaunas

## Introduction

Gender Mainstreaming, a strategy to foster equality between women and men, aims to integrate a gender perspective in all decision processes of organizations, institutions and administrations and to utilize all decision processes to foster equality between women and men (cf. Stiegler 2000). There are different approaches concerning the aims of Gender Mainstreaming: In this project we embrace the goals of equally creating more equality on a material level and reducing gender identity induced restrictions on individual development.

In ECEIs (Early Childhood Education Institutions) and in the field of training and further qualification for educators a successful implementation of Gender Mainstreaming implies that all relevant social, political and educational participants take measures which lead to:

- Broadening gender identities of children, educators, parents, students and teachers.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> “Broadening of gender identities” means primarily the opening of scopes of action and scopes of personal development to girls and boys through the break down/the reduction of gender stereotypes. The broadening of gender identities also is a basic condition to reach equality between women and men according to the EU. The EU defines equality between women and men as follows „The concept meaning that all human beings are free to develop their personal abilities and make choices without the limitations set by strict gender roles; that the different behaviour, aspirations and needs of women and men are considered, valued and favoured equally.“ (100 words for equality. A glossary of terms of equality between women and men European Commission 1998).

Cf. [http://www.he-arc.ch/export/sites/default/hearc/fr/hearc/Portrait/EgaliteChances/ARC\\_Egalitedeschances\\_gallery\\_glossaire/4-02-words-en.pdf](http://www.he-arc.ch/export/sites/default/hearc/fr/hearc/Portrait/EgaliteChances/ARC_Egalitedeschances_gallery_glossaire/4-02-words-en.pdf)

- Improving the equal allocation of resources (executive positions, money, time, attention) among children, educators, parents, students and teachers
- Improving the gender competence (gender knowledge) and gender sensitivity among children, educators, parents, students and teachers
- Increasing the proportion of men participating in the training for educators and working as educators, respectively.

Actors responsible for the implementation of Gender Mainstreaming in ECEIs and in the field of training and further qualification for educators are in the first instance ministries of Education, training and further qualification institutions for educators, state/public institutions of ECEIs and the ECEIs themselves. Responsible in the second instance are further/other policy makers and diverse participants and institutions of the civil society like for example NGOs in the field of education.

## How to start a Gender Mainstreaming process

Gender Mainstreaming consists of multiple processes and education is the best way to expand it. For the whole process it is important to define aims, plan only a small project or only a few small projects and look for support, etc. The integration of gender-related subjects into all learning areas and subjects in educator vocational training is one of the main aims of the project Gender Loops. As part of a gender mainstreaming strategy, the vocational training schools should contribute towards increasing the

gender reflectivity of the students and improving their gender awareness, because now impulses for the integration of gender subjects tend to come from individual lecturers and a great number of the gender-related courses are so-called 'optional' subjects which can be chosen by the students of their own free will. Realistically, the cross-sectional establishment of gender topics in vocational training schools and universities is a process that will take a long time, but in order to spread understanding about Gender Mainstreaming in the ECEIs it is very important that educators of the ECEIs be prepared for the changes.

### **Important requirements and to do list to implement Gender Mainstreaming in your institution**

Implementation of Gender Mainstreaming is a process that includes different levels, like organizational, personnel, practical implementations or strategies how to increase the number of working males in the ECEIs. On the other hand all these processes are interdependent and they all should be perceived as equally important.

In quantitative gender loops surveys conducted in Germany and Spain the majority of schools and universities engaged in the training of educators/teachers in primary education proved to embrace the goals of gender mainstreaming in ECEIs mentioned above. Meanwhile they show to be lacking in know-how on the practical realization of these aims. The following recommendations are based on the qualitative and quantitative surveys carried out in the first working phase in the Gender Loops project.

#### **Organizational Implementation**

- The directors of the training institutions also have to be "on board" (Top-down)

There are two major possible sources for implementation of new understandings of gender. One is the top-down work on the framework plan and curriculum.

- Developing an "*Equality plan*"

In Spain the IV Equality Plan (2003-2006) lays particular emphasis on promoting Gender Mainstreaming; Article 22 states that Educational Administrations within the scope of their specific competencies are to implement the following measures in order to promote gender equality:

- a) To give special attention to the principle of equality between women and men in syllabuses and in all stages of education.
- b) To do away with and reject sexist and stereotyped behaviours and contents which entail discrimination between women and men, and especially as

regards text books and educational materials.

- c) To incorporate the study and application of the principle of equality in initial and continuous educator training courses and programmes.
- d) To promote a balanced presence of women and men in governing and control bodies of education institutions.
- e) To cooperate with the other Education Administrations and jointly develop projects and programmes aimed to promote awareness around and to further the principle of coeducation and that of real equality between women and men amongst the members of the educational community.

- Developing a "Gender Controlling System"

At first defining aims; applying analysis instruments; on the basis of the gender analysis: (Re)defining aims more specifically; planning the implementation; implementation; monitoring; evaluation and eventually adjustment of the aims.

- Transfer of the results of gender research into the training of educators

Carrying out gender research and innovation activities in BA programmes in early childhood teacher education. Alternatively, a detailed overview of the knowledge on gender and gender equality should be made for the various levels of BA programmes in early childhood teacher education in each subject

In Norway the interviews with teachers, students and the head of studies at the bachelor programs in early childhood education confirm a large need for renewal of knowledge about gender and gender equality. Knowledge about gender and gender equality is not a key area for the administration at any of the institutions where we undertook interviews. Relevant research and development activities are undertaken in several bachelor programs in early childhood education, but these activities are not given the significance they might have had. There is a need for larger academic environments connected to gender and gender equality at several bachelor programs in early childhood education, which must not be detached from contact with early childhood education institutions and teaching at bachelor programs in early childhood education. There appears to be a need to produce and highlight relevant research in the different subjects in the teaching. Alternatively, a detailed overview of the knowledge on gender and gender equality should be made for the various levels of bachelor programs in early childhood education in each subject. The gender and gender equality perspective must be included in the authoring of new textbooks and curricula.

- The training institution should contribute to change the reputation of the profession. (professionalisation of the profession)

Child Care education should not be conceived as a female profession – implying both a low prestige/ low wages and the attribution of care activities to women. In Denmark this work is considered to be a prestigious one, it is very well-paid and not easy to get for every candidate. There will be a big challenge for both - countries and societies in their attempt to improve the image of an educator's position and to eliminate the prevailing stereotype that this position is for women-only.

### **Personnel Implementation**

- Setting up an “Equal opportunity Commissioner”  
In the Spanish report they state that in 72% of the Spanish centres there is nobody specifically in charge of this area. 6.2% of the centres are in the process of introducing this position and in 21% there is someone or a committee.

- Or/and setting up “Gender teams”  
A gender team consists of two or more lecturers who are particularly interested in the implementation of gender-political and gender-educational objectives in the vocational training school. The gender team develops and initiates gender and gender mainstreaming strategies and checks how they are implemented in the vocational training school. This would be a possible method for advanced gender-political and gender-educational intervention in vocational training schools. The analyses of the German survey showed that a gender team can achieve gender-political and gender-educational goals to a certain extent, if the teaching staff is generally open-minded towards gender subjects.

- Further gender qualification for the teaching staff (recommendation of the G/LT/SP and N report).  
Gender qualification courses for lecturers also because of the new regulation of the Ministry of Science and Education to integrate gender equality in the study programmes (Lithuanian report)

Study programs for universities and colleges are prepared according to the national standard for preschool education. Every year there is a chance of slight changes in the program considering the current situation and expert opinion. The Ministry of Science and Education is responsible for renewing the training standard for teachers at ECEI, usually colleges must follow this standard. Gender equality issues should be included in the renewed program as one of the most important components. This standard remains in recommendatory status and

so the inclusion of issues on gender equality into the program and choosing the way of its presentation depends on competences of Heads and lecturers of higher education institutions. At first, study programs should be based on an heterogeneous principle, i.e. we should see a different diversity of gender, linguistic background, talent, race, religion, nationality.

There should not be any distinction among boys and girls in preschool education. This includes both, education and play, i.e. girls can play with cars and boys can play with dolls altogether. Femininity/masculinity formation in a child's mind highly depends on the environment. Family has an important input to a stereotypic education context, because some research in Lithuania showed that parents tend to follow the stereotypes and support them.

- The training institution should also offer Gender Refresher courses for teachers

As part of a gender mainstreaming strategy, the vocational training schools should contribute towards increasing the gender reflectivity of the students and improving their gender competencies. The Education department of the Kaunas County Municipality is collaborating with the Kaunas Pedagogical Qualification Centre, which organizes refresher courses for educators. KPQC trainings are focused on issues related to methodology, planning and organizing of work. Usually a topic is chosen according to the requests expressed by the teachers participating in the trainings, most of the times these are problems related to children's communication and their behavior. The Education department of the Kaunas County Municipality supervises the ECEIs' methodical group, which takes care of methodical activities at ECEIs in Kaunas city. This is a deliberative body, which analyses the ways of work improvement, what innovations should be introduced, what means should be foreseen and implemented for solving the problems. This group consists of ECEIs' directors and their deputies. The group organizes meetings once per month in accordance with the specific work plan projected for one year. The methodical group organizes seminars, exhibitions, conferences, debating clubs, prepares different publications and recommendations. This methodical group contains twelve separate specific small methodical groups consisting of teachers that teach different subjects. Such groups have been initiated only in Kaunas and they are successful, i.e. ECEIs themselves often take initiative to solve certain problems or analyze specific topics. There are groups dealing with moral education, safety of child, child's evolution, children having social problems, arts, music, physical culture and motion. Such

methodical groups are a good example how to disseminate effectively information about the means and methods used for successful implementation of gender equality at ECEIs.

- Financial and time resources for the implementation of Gender Mainstreaming
- Exchange and networking with other training institutions

### **Implementation of strategies to increase the proportion of men within the training**

In all countries contributing to Gender Loops vocational schools and universities qualifying educators/teachers in primary education state to be interested in raising the quota of male students.

- There should not only be strategies to increase the proportion of men, but also a strategic plan with controlling and monitoring measures.
- Applying male students could have quotas or special measures  
Usually males with good grades do not opt for an early child education speciality. As the number of applications to this major is regulated by stereotypical attitude, applying males could have quotas and special measures. According to the CEDAW, it is not a violation of human rights, but positive discrimination. Unfortunately, the society still has little knowledge about the appliance of such special measures.
- Let male teachers also teach educational and psychological subjects
- Employing more male teachers  
To achieve a possible change that more males would like to work in this field could be social advertisements, social actions, and salary rise. To avoid homogeneous staff during the student's practice period, it should be held in the places having men in their staff. Children's parents could be involved into collaboration in favor of children, perform educational tasks, and attract more men to their own children's needs.
- In Germany the network "Neue Wege für Jungs" (new paths for boys) coordinates, supports and triggers regional projects aiming at boys aged 10 to 16 which try to raise questions concerning life and career plans, the reflection of gender roles, and the broadening of social competences in a gender sensitive way.

- Organization of information events to which boys are specifically invited
- In their PR vocational schools and universities should highlight that work in primary education is a serious profession and offers interesting fields of activity also for men.
- Transfer of experiences from abroad  
ECEIs in France and Sweden have implemented the programs on gender neutrality. In the EFA Global Monitoring Report prepared by UNESCO it is mentioned that there are about 20% of men working at ECEIs in Denmark. Such results could be influenced by a positive attitude already formed within the society and the sponsorship by the state. In order to break the stereotypes it is necessary to implement active social advertising actions that would educate the society and would assist in changing the attitude.

### **Practical Implementation**

- Gender should be integrated as a cross-sectional topic in the Curriculum  
To enable students to work with gender and gender equality issues when they start working in early childhood education institutions, they should have learnt about this during the bachelor programs in early childhood education. A basic principle in Norwegian gender equality activities is "Gender Mainstreaming", which means that issues connected to social gender are not only a substantial element in the bachelor program in early childhood education but that this is integrated in the studies as a whole.  
There is a disparity between the curriculum which governs all the national bachelor programs in early childhood education and the national gender mainstreaming strategy. In the ten subjects covered in the curriculum, gender is mentioned in just two of them: Education science (pedagogy), the largest subject according to study credits, and social studies. One of the most important questions in the study was whether the teachers had the impression that gender and gender equality were only addressed in social sciences and education sciences. These are the only two subjects where the framework plan for the bachelor program in early childhood education mentions the gender perspective. The majority of the subjects explicitly raised issues associated with social gender and gender equality. The main impression is that social gender and gender equality in general are topics addressed in education science and social science.

- Compulsory gender seminars  
The establishment of obligatory gender seminars guarantees that the students are forced to deal with gender subjects in the course of their vocational training. The usual practice in vocational training schools only offering gender seminars as optional courses, means, on the one hand, that many students can go through their entire vocational training without learning any gender competences or without learning anything about gender at all. Obligatory gender seminars also signalize unmistakably to the outside world that vocational training schools take the subject of gender seriously.

- Integrating gender in the practicum, in the practical phases of the training  
In the practicum, gender topics are usually limited to students' observations of the boys' and girls' play and work routines. They don't usually gather data systematically on the educational centre and its gender structure, the introduction of gender mainstreaming, the gender roles of families, the stereotypes that the boys and girls reproduce, etc. With the university and vocational training centre students, the gender perspective needs to be introduced systematically in their practical training (practicum), both in daily practice and in their analysis of the centre.

- The training institution should make gender learning materials available  
The materials can be grouped into the following categories: Audiovisual material, children's books and stories, journals (for example the journal *Infancia*) and material prepared at the centres. There can be materials coming from different communities or association. Examples in Spain would be the Women's Institute of their Autonomous Community, ADAVAS, Entiendes, Coordinadora Gay y Lesbiana, etc. Also materials can be as consequence from specific projects (such as Project in Spain Harimaguada or Urtxintxa Hezitzaile Eskola in the Basque Country). In addition to all this information, vocational training centres that train early childhood education specialists also use their own materials. Another way in which the centres introduce gender concern can be by organizing talks and conferences on these topics or in optional subjects which last 4 or 5 sessions.

- Interaction of teaching and practice  
The (institutionalized) exchange of gender-educational knowledge and experiences between teaching and practice makes possible learning experiences and "synergy effects" in the (further) development of gender-reflective teaching and education. A trans-

fer of knowledge and experiences between teaching and practice or between practice and teaching is of particular importance, because altogether only very little knowledge has been gathered from practical experiences in the area of gender reflective elementary education. Teachers, lecturers and educators therefore have to "rely on" the few good (and bad) gender-educational experiences. Visits by students to facilities that work in a gender-reflective way or to special days focusing on early childhood institutions that are regularly organized by universities are good examples of interaction projects.

## Literature:

European Commission (Ed.): 100 words for equality. A glossary of terms of equality between women and men, 1998

Stiegler, Barbara (2000): *Wie Gender in den Mainstream kommt. Konzepte, Argumente, und Praxisbeispiele zur EU-Strategie des Gender Mainstreamings* (hrsg. Von der Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung), Bonn



# 4. Methodological and didactical framework

Jens Krabel, Dissens e.V., Berlin and Alfons Romero, Universidad de Girona, Girona

## Introduction

Starting in the late 1980s the appreciation of early childhood education policies reflecting the diverse cultural identities of children and their families in practice and curriculum has significantly increased. Today, this embracing of the pluralism that exists in children's lives is a central feature of different philosophies that broadly underpin early childhood education in Western countries (Dahlberg et al, 1999; Robinson and Jones Díaz, 2006). One of the objectives of our proposition is to include these philosophies of inclusion, diversity and democracy in ECEIs' everyday practice through a change of the curriculum of early childhood teachers/educators. In this chapter we propose a didactical and methodological framework for the initial training of early childhood teachers/educators.

### **e teaching-learning process centered on competences**

The adaptation of university studies within the European space includes the establishment of a new teaching paradigm centered around the student and the acquisition of competences. Even if the education of early childhood teachers/educators is not held in universities and thus not formally subject to the mentioned EU policy, such as in Germany, we think this concept's implications are still very conducive in the training of early childhood workers.

In this approach the concept of competences is the starting point for the teaching-learning process. The

notion of "competence" means the acquired ability to adequately fulfill a task, duty or role. A high level of competence is a prerequisite for a good accomplishment. The competence contains two distinctive elements: To be related to the specific task in a particular context and to integrate different types of knowledge, ability and attitudes. Competences are acquired through learning by doing and in contrast to traditional academic knowledge, abilities and attitudes they are not assessable independently (Roe, 2002).

### **Education implications of the focus on competences:**

The changes in the conceptualization of education imply changes in teaching-learning strategies and in the strategies of evaluation. Thus, the appropriation of the term "competences" is accompanied by the following changes:

- An emphasis on active forms of learning, accentuating the individual construction of knowledge.
- A change of the evaluative paradigm requiring the student to construct his/her own answer: work samples, problem solving, case analyses, role plays, internships, etc.
- An effort on the organizational level of coordination and planning due to the impossibility to develop and evaluate competences independently in each subject (Rodríguez Espinar, 2000).

## **Gender competences of early childhood teachers/educators:**

Assuming that the teaching paradigm embraces the concept of competences it is important to introduce specific gender competences as a cross-sectional content to all subjects of the initial training of early childhood teachers/educators.

We propose the following competences as cross-sectional issues in the training of early childhood teachers/educators: They should be enabled to

- identify gender related problems and challenges. Awareness about gender topics is crucial for an early childhood educator's work.
- plan, prepare, execute, assess and evaluate gender-related learning and development events with groups and individuals (didactical dimension of gender teaching).
- plan, develop, implement and evaluate gender-related development and change strategies in the organisation (related to the management of the early childhood education centres).
- design, develop, co-ordinate and evaluate gender related project work in collaboration with families and social actors (social and community dimension of early childhood education work).
- respect individuality and diversity. Children are to be valued in their own right and differences between them are to be valued as assets and celebrated.
- believe in the goal of equality of opportunity and non-discrimination. The belief that all human beings are entitled to enjoy the basic human right of equality of opportunity unhampered by prejudices associated with gender, sexual orientation, race, disability, age or religion is fundamental to early childhood education work.
- to encourage empowerment and self-advocacy. Early childhood workers should seek to remove gender-related disadvantages in organisations and society in general.
- reflect their practice and professional development. To be effective early childhood workers need to continuously evaluate their own practice and achievements in gender terms.
- to analyse a range of key concepts relating to gender discourses including: gender power relations; hegemonic masculinity and femininity; sex, gender and sexual orientation; intersectionality and diversity.
- to identify and analyse influences on the formation of individual gender identity (e.g. gendered socialization, self concept changes, family, body, sexuality, sexual orientation).

## **Definition/Aims of a gender-sensitive/-reflective didactic and gender-sensitive methods**

The teaching of gender topics needs special methods and didactic, in order to:

- make students curious about gender topics  
Experience has shown that the students are not necessarily hungry for knowledge when it comes to gender topics. A lack of interest in and resistance to gender topics are based, among other things, on popular stereotypes, on own traditional ideas of gender identity and on the low instance of the establishment of gender topics in the area of elementary education. It does not make sense to normatively justify the teaching of gender knowledge to the students. Students don't necessarily become more open-minded to gender topics, because lecturers draw their attention to a society that is unjust in terms of gender. Equal opportunities are "a thing of the past" for many students. (German report, page 9/10) This is also demonstrated by the following excerpt of the Spanish report: "Gender issues, how boring. A lot of people think that they are already egalitarian".
- link gender topics to the biographies and personal life of the students
  - o If students see the impact/importance of gender in their personal life they might be more open-minded to a gender-sensitive practice.
  - o If gender topics are linked to personal experiences students might remember gender topics they learned in the training institutions more easily.
- allow students to transfer their knowledge into an attitude which is omnipresent in their work with children instead of a simple toolbox of "school knowledge" which is only accessed for special purposes.

## **Central principles of a gender-sensitive/-reflective didactic and gender-sensitive methods**

- Student-centered teaching (e.g. to take the interests of students of all genders into consideration)
- Participation of the students as far as possible
- Dialogical communication
- Self-reflection
- Reflection of the learning process
- Acceptance and appreciation of the students' efforts/output (considering the low societal acceptance and appreciation of the profession "educator" we think that it is important to create an atmosphere of appreciation in the seminar where students can get recognition for their work/efforts)

## Methodological and didactical recommendations (results of the national surveys)

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The German, Norwegian and Spanish reports emphasize that gender topics should be integrated into the internship. “The gender perspective needs to be introduced systematically in their practical training both in daily practice and in their analysis of the centre” (Spanish report). A too theoretical debate on gender in universities is not conducive to reflect stereotypes and the hidden curriculum (Spanish report).

The internship means the students’ immersion into education centers for confined time periods aiming to integrate their theoretical-practical knowledge into a real context, to introduce them into the professional practice, to advance their practical knowledge of child care centers and finally to allow them to acquire their own criteria about the child educating dimension.

The great majority of internships include working scripts which orient the students during their stay in the early education centers (observation guidelines, scripts for participating observation, work guidelines for the students, etc.). We highlight the necessity to include gender related elements in said observation guidelines:

- To analyze the own organization (organization of the early education centers starting from a gender perspective).
- To analyze the educating practices in the child care centers.
- To analyze the boys’ and girls’ comportment in the courtyard.
- To analyze the relations to the families.

Furthermore, the German report highlights the productivity of an interaction of teaching and practice

*“ e (institutionalised) exchange of gender-educational knowledge and experience between teaching institutions and practice allows learning experiences and “synergy effects“ in the (further) development of gender-reflective teaching and education. A transfer of knowledge and experience between teaching and practice and vice-versa is of particular importance, because altogether only very little knowledge has been gathered from practical experiences in the area of gender reflective elementary education. Teachers, lecturers and educators therefore have to “rely“ on the few good (and bad) gender educational experiences.*

*Visits by students to facilities that work in a gender-reflective way or to special days focussing on early childhood institutions that are regularly organised by universities are good examples for interaction projects.”*

(German report, page 7)

## Student-centered teaching

- The creation of a student-centered learning space “Learning gender competences requires a “learning space” in which the educators-to-be can exchange their experiences and knowledge, gain experience and learn off their own backs, independently, without fear, openly, (self) critically and in a motivated manner.

When it comes to dealing with the topic of gender, whether in discussions on gender mainstreaming or equality of the sexes, this requires “space for action and for dealing with the topic” in which the students can exchange their – as a rule very different - popular theories and popular ideas about men and women as well as their personal gender biographies. Working in small groups offers good opportunities for this. A lesson model that is strongly oriented towards the model of frontal teaching of knowledge can be counter-productive by comparison. (German report, page 7/8)

- Reflection sessions/workshops

In reflection workshops, self-reflection could be achieved via group dynamics, social-affective methods, role playing, criticism and debate (Spanish report)

- Take the particular situation of male students into consideration

The Lithuanian and Norwegian reports state that many male students drop out of their training and that there isn’t a special support towards male students. So it seems to be important to “motivate and support male students” by considering their particular situation within the teaching. E.g.: Male students should do their internship in ECCs with male educators. (Lithuanian report)

Male students require special preparation before working in early childhood institutions, in order to learn to deal with the various gender-related attributions and requirements on a personal and professional level.

Experience in teaching and in practice has shown, for example, that people often think that men are incapable of working with small children and men are often confronted with the latent accusation that they want to abuse children. One of our interviewees describes the gender-related attribution that men are often subject to as follows:

“The men must be given support. It is conceived as simply ridiculous when individual men enter this

women's domain. It is so ingrained with traditional femininity that men either have to take on the role of the 'cockerel among the chickens', they have to play football or they have to work with the boys nobody else wants to work with (...). A 25-years old male educator doesn't have a chance. He slips into the role of the son, the prince. I know many men who have fled from this profession.“ (EF1)

The biographical work in homogeneous gender seminars or small groups<sup>2</sup> is one possibility for men to prepare themselves for these gender-related requirements and “to steel themselves“ for working in early childhood institutions. (German report, page 10)

Considering these difficulties for male students, teachers should be extra careful with the demand that one prove one's suitability when it comes to the male students as opposed to the female students. It appears that male students receive more attention of both positive and negative nature and that men have to prove their capability in each single case. (Norwegian report)

### **Using gender-sensitive materials/didactic resources**

- 38% of the training institutions have no didactic resources on gender, which is surprising given the amount of material available. 64% of the training institutions have no didactic resources on sexual diversity. (Spanish report) It should be a major task of gender mainstreaming to procure institutions with adequate materials to approach the subject of gender in the training of early childhood educators/teachers and in the practical work with children.
- Furthermore it is important to create new material for training institutions which show men working as educators. (Spanish report)

### **Other recommendations**

#### **German report:**

#### **Research-based study**

The method of research-based study has proved its worth in experience. Here, the students see themselves as researchers developing their own gender research questions and trying to answer these.

In a first phase, the students have the possibility to express themselves on certain gender topics, to present their

2 The following article offers a good insight into the special situation of men in early childhood institutions:  
Engelhardt, Walter Josef (2006): „Onkel Tante Helmut“ oder Welche Erzieher brauchen Kinder? In: TPS, Theorie und Praxis der Sozialpädagogik, Heft 8, Oktober 2006, 38-42

popular theories and to develop research questions.

In the second phase, the students have the opportunity to test their popular theories, for example, through observation or interviews and to find answers to their research questions. In the third phase, the students are given scientific texts that open up theoretical and empirical paths to the topics and questions the students have. The research process of the students is supported by critical and reflective group processes.

Suggestions for and examples from this kind of survey:

1. Students could pursue the question of what effect the presence of male educators has with respect to the educational work in early childhood institutions by developing a standard questionnaire for educators and sending these to early childhood institutions that also employ male educators.
2. Dealing with theoretical phase models and the question as to what awareness children have at the ages of 2 to 6 about gender role stereotypes and sexuality provides another promising option.
3. Some students videotaped children looking at picture books. They dealt with the following questions: How do children deal with picture books with untypical gender images; what social awareness do children have of gender and how do children construct gender. These students noticed during their project, inter alia, that they were able to find a great number of picture books in which strong, emancipated girls can be found but no picture books in which "untypical" boys play the main role.
4. The principle of research-based study can also be applied to the subjects of work with girls and work with boys. In this way, for example, students can research what facilities in the local area offer special activities/programs for girls or boys and how they justify this work in what they do. The students then visit these facilities and interview the educators on their gender-reflective approaches and experiences.

#### **Access through a definition of education**

One way to provide the students with an access to gender topics is a definition of education that focuses on the self-education of children. (Gender) education then refers to the process in which girls and boys create images of girls and boys, develop theories about the definition of gender based identity constructions and orient their activities towards these. If children do not have the opportunity to produce diverse and differentiated gender images for themselves, they tend to develop simplified stereotype gender-based self-images that influence their future actions, interests and choices. One of our interviewees also speaks about the 'educational project "gender"', meaning that to learn to deal with gender and their own place in gender relations is a major project children

face (not only) during their time in early education institutions and that educators should understand this process and its importance to the children. Gender-reflective education therefore must not necessarily be justified by the normative reference to a gender-equitable society (see further below), but by the fact that educators have the professional task of supporting children in the unhindered development of their personalities.<sup>3</sup>

### Increasing “biologisation”

Biologically determinist explanations dominated understandings of gender formation up until the mid-twentieth century and are still influential in educational sectors, including early childhood education, today. Biological determinism refers to the way that femininity and masculinity are perceived to be stable and fixed characteristics that stem from one’s biological sexed body (including its determination of psychological and behavioural dispositions that were associated with maleness and femaleness (Alsop et al., 2002)). The questionnaire shows that lecturers are increasingly confronted with the fact that students refer to popular texts or scientific surveys that mainly justify gender differences in the different biological predispositions of men and women. Students then use biological justifications to speak out against gender-reflective educational work, with the argument “you shouldn’t try to bend the children”.

This biologist justification needs to be countered by arguments and information that “promote” gender reflective education and which are able to represent the “social construction of the culture of two genders”<sup>4</sup> as convincingly as possible. The reference to the term self-education (see above), biographical work and the introduction of texts that argue with biologist justifications<sup>5</sup> are good opportunities to “react” to biologist arguments of students.

It is critical to keep in mind that biologically deter-

3 You can find a more exact description of the connections between education and gender in the following, among others:

Krabel, Jens (2007): Mädchen werden – Junge werden. Wie geht das eigentlich? Ein Plädoyer für das Recht auf Geschlechterbildung in Kindertageseinrichtungen, in: Prengel, A./Overwien, B. (2007, Ed.) *Recht auf Bildung. Zum Besuch des Sonderberichterstatters der Vereinten Nationen in Deutschland*

Rabe-Kleberg, Ursula (2006): Gender als Bildungsprojekt. Wie Mädchen und Jungen sich die zweigeschlechtliche Welt aneignen, in: *Betrifft Mädchen*, 19. Jahrgang 2006, Heft 3, 100-104

Rohrman, Tim (2006): Lernen Jungen ander(e)s als Mädchen? In: *early childhood institution heute*, Heft 1, 2006, 6-14

4 Cf. Hagemann–White 1984.

5 Cf. Bredow, von Rafaela (2007): Das gleiche Geschlecht. Neuroforscher suchen nach dem großen Unterschied - und können ihn nicht finden. In: *Der Spiegel*, 6/2007

Frey Regina (2002): Ganz natürlich? In: *taz Magazin vom 30.11.2002*, S. VII, 351 Z. (TAZ-Bericht),: [www.taz.de/dx/2002/11/30/a0247.1/text](http://www.taz.de/dx/2002/11/30/a0247.1/text), (23.04.2007)

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minist explanations of gender have been used to naturalize and normalize the inequitable social, political and economic relationships that have been socially constructed around males and females.

### the term “gender”

The questionnaire made clear that seminars or courses on gender topics titled with terms such as “gender” or “gender mainstreaming” are less popular among students. Lecturers and teachers in vocational training have noticed that “gender” or “gender mainstreaming” seminars are not chosen by students, while seminars on subjects like working with girls or working with boys incite a great deal of interest. Thus it is advisable to circumvent the term gender in seminar titles when intending to approach students not (yet) particularly interested in theoretical debates on gender but rather to highlight the link to practical work with children.

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# 5. Cooperation between Early Childhood Teacher/Educator Education and Early Childhood Institutions

Leif Askland, Oslo University College, Oslo

The education of early childhood educators/teachers and the early childhood education institutions are living a quite symbiotic relationship. The education is dependant on the practical field, as an arena of practising and as a supplier of challenges, premises and tasks that must be studied and taught by students. On the other hand the Early Childhood Education Institutions are dependant on the training institutions to challenge, develop and renew, and reconstruct traditions, methods and ways of understanding the phenomena of the lived lives in the kindergartens/early childhood education institutions.

On their own fields, the mandate and tasks of early childhood teacher education and early childhood institutions are more or less quite clear. The cooperation between these two fields, on the other hand, varies a lot between the countries and also within each country. There is no legislation on cooperation, but “common sense”, or the apparent solution to solve the challenges mentioned, should tell us that cooperation is the natural, and wanted, thing to do.

Working with the subject of gender equity and gender in general, the *ideal* position is that both parties have a sincere wish to explore and develop knowledge on the gender equity subject. However none of the two parties have the position to tell the other what to study, explore, or develop. The responsibility of which instance should initialize cooperation on the subject is not defined. This might be the cause that we see individual initiatives are the most common practise - and leads to an arbitrary practise and activity on the gender equity field. For instance, the act of kindergartens and the frameworks of

kindergartens and early childhood teacher education in Norway leave no doubt that gender equity is among the prior subjects in Early Childhood Education and in the content of Early Childhood Institutions. But how to develop knowledge and good practise on this subject is left to the institutions and individuals that have a special interest in the field.

## **Integration of the gender perspective in plans**

To avoid such individual practise, both Early Childhood Teacher Education and Early Childhood Institutions must implement gender equity as a perspective of goals and content in their local curricula. In some countries this will be obvious because of the existing national legislation, in other countries this will be an important piece of innovation. The goals and contents should also address the responsibility of cooperation and development of the subject together with other suitable partners. Our experiences in Gender Loops have told us that this point is quite vital.

The perspective of gender equity exists in all subjects and activities in teacher education and in everyday life and education in early childhood education institutions. The local curricula and local plans should therefore point out ways of being aware of gender in music, in art, in play etc. as a help and a tool for widening teachers' and staff's reflections on their own practise (cf. Gender Loops Toolbox).

## **Three approaches to cooperation by initiative from Early Childhood Education Training**

One important component of Early Childhood Education Training are internships in Early Childhood Education Institutions. There already exists a “compulsory” cooperation that can be used to promote the subject of gender equity. In this cooperation we have three important human resources: The students, the university teachers and the early childhood teachers/educators and their leaders. Gender Loops have tried out these approaches and have had an evaluation on each of them. The examples are meant to be an inspiration for other experiments and ideas, and are not examples of how it *must* be, but of how one *can* do things. We are fully aware that there are many other approaches how that can be done.

Three approaches:

(A more fully description of the experiences, the content and their outcome is to be found on Gender Loops’ webpage)

### 1) Student work as part of theoretical courses.

Early Childhood Education Schools/Universities have the opportunity to send students out to the practise field to observe, interview or carry out educational tasks – in addition to the regular internship. The German partner of Gender Loops describes comprehensive learning task for students – and for the early childhood education institutions involved.

Students from a university of applied studies and from a vocational training school for educators interviewed educators from 13 early childhood centres, asking them about the topics, “Gender Mainstreaming”, “Gender-sensitive pedagogy” and “team work between male and female educators”.

The results of the qualitative interviews carried out throughout Germany with teachers, professors and experts from the field of the vocational training and further vocational training for educators show that students can be sensitized to gender issues with the method of research-based study. The students see themselves here as researchers who develop their own gender research questions and try to answer these.

### 2) One-day courses for the early childhood teachers/educators and their leaders. This example recruited teachers that are mentors to the students of Oslo University College.

A course like this can of course be offered to any institution and also be organised as a conference.

As part of the Gender Loops project, the Faculty of Education of Oslo University College performed an examination of the

## Conclusions

It seems that both in Germany and Norway, the demand from the Early Childhood Institutions to cooperate or to get served courses etc. on the subject of gender equity is more or less absent. This means that the Early Childhood Teacher/Educator Training have to take responsibility to put gender equity on the agenda of cooperation between the two parties.

However, the experiences with all three initiatives described above are very positive. Positive in several senses:

- Courses and examinations raise wondering, questions and experiences that seem to come unexpectedly to the participants. Quite a few participants start out thinking that gender equity is quite neutral and technical and not related to them personally. An opinion which they report to have changed.
  
- The initiatives of Gender Loops have certainly made the participants move into the subject, holding the reflections far above the actual time of the course/interview. The initiatives contain perspectives that wake emotions and relational memories that many of them bring into discussions with colleagues, friends and family.
  
- The initiatives wake resistance. The discussions followed by resistance are a goldmine that demonstrates how values and attitudes influence the educational practise, and make up a solid portion of the hidden curriculum.

These experiences underline what we pointed out in the introduction: The responsibility to explore and gain knowledge on this field must be spoken out clearly, both to Teacher Training and for the Early Childhood Institutions.



# 6. Gender in fields of learning

This chapter provides some input into the content of the teaching and learning in Early Childhood teacher/educator education. This input is not intended as a complete review but rather as ideas for methods and perspectives relating to the different subjects and fields of the preschool teacher training. The work of a preschool teacher in a day-care centre covers virtually all aspects of what it is to be a human being. And this is precisely why the education is and must be differentiated and multi-faceted. What is interesting is that gender issues often can be a key factor in many of the subjects and approaches in preschool teacher training. But this is often not seen in the teaching and planning.

In this chapter we present examples of how the gender perspective can be relevant, necessary and useful to integrate in different subjects and fields of preschool teacher training. It is not primarily a theoretical exercise, but if you want to be a good early childhood teacher/educator in practice you have to have knowledge about how the gender perspective always is present and you need to be able to act this out with the children.

If the gender perspective is raised across disciplines, this also enables the students to see lines and relations. Thus, there is a special need for all subjects involved in the education, to cooperate with the two subjects that truly should examine gender and equal rights issues in great detail, education science and social studies. Alternatively you could also use other ways to make it possible for the students to see the lines. Moreover, knowledge from gender research must be applied and this, always updated, knowledge must be integrated into the other subjects.

The early childhood teacher/educator education must address a broad reality and general education. This profession also has a history that reflects the fact that working in a day-care centre has been linked to the female life world. One question that is apparent from this chapter's subtitles is, therefore, that the profession's character and practice in kindergartens is very much influenced by its attribution to the "female" sphere.

We hope to succeed in giving you inspiration for your own practical work with educators/early childhood teachers in education and for their work in early childhood institutions through these readings.

Gender is produced in everyday interactions. In specialist literature this process is described as “doing gender”. However, the social background in which this “doing gender” takes place as well as the associated ideas of femaleness and maleness clearly differ according to the historical period. Our current perception of men and women as two polar, complementary and clearly separate genders is a product of modern times. Social-historical and scientific-historical studies (see Duden 1991; Honegger 1991; Laqueur 1993; Hirschauer 1993) provide evidence that a change of paradigm from the “one gender model” to the “two gender model” took place in the 18<sup>th</sup> century. Already the philosophy of the ancient Greeks and Romans made statements regarding the gender disposition of people, which mainly

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### 6.1.1. Gender-typical socialisation through “doing gender”

*“A socialisation-theoretical gender approach is given in the broadest sense, if the view is directed towards the way in which children and adolescents deal with an environment structured according to gender, developing relatively stable dispositions, characteristics and models of behaviour. According to the socialisation approach, these are allocated in a gender-typical way and are also appropriate for reproducing a hierarchical gender relationship at the level of interaction”. (Hagemann-White 2002, p. 145)*

Human beings create their gender using different means and strategies, such as posture or speech, which are available to them as part of a certain social and cultural context (cf. Connell 2000, p. 22). With “doing gender” the view is directed to the doing, the active and the process of creating gender differences (Krais 2001, p. 318). This means that “doing gender” refers to the active creation of gender-appropriate and therefore socially “competent” or “reasonable” behaviour as part of social interactions. Consequently, humans “produce themselves” as a boy or girl, man or woman in accordance with the situation by pointing out their gender. This is mainly manifested in the uncountable ways of expressing the human body, but also using other production strategies (e.g. choice of clothes), which are then recognised as ‘girl/woman’ or ‘boy/man’ by others. In this sense, both, the different play behaviours of children commonly observed and a gender-typical orientation towards a choice of profession later in life are indications of this gender-typical competence. But also the empirically clear connection between physical violence and maleness can be understood as socially expected and “legitimate” behaviour of mainly “young men in adolescence” against this background, since “violence is (...) a form of exercising maleness (and is) not always frowned upon (...). Violence can even be a mode of approval and a mechanism of integration into a community” (Meuser 2005, p. 18). “Thus, experiences of violence in the life of boys are accepted as “normal” due to the division into two genders, whereas girls’ aggressions and forms of violence are considered to be a failing socialisation. Bruises and a bloody nose in the face of a woman, caused by a man, are reasons to call for protection and intervention, whereas at the same time injuries on a male body caused by a fight between boys/men are considered to be signs of a successful male socialisation” (see Stuve/Busche 2007; acc. to Hagemann-White 2005, p. 6).

Research on transsexuality plays a central role when conceptualising “doing gender” (Hirschauer 1993, Lindemann 1993). Transsexuals develop a gender identity which does not correspond to the biological anatomy

of their bodies.<sup>8</sup> “The analysis of the changing process of transsexuals particularly shows to what extent gender identity and gender attribution are bound to social interpretation far beyond biological features” (Meuser/Behnke 1999, p. 52). Hirschauer (1993) describes the complex process of changing gender in which a variety of people and institutions take part: the transsexual person, relatives, physicians, psychologists, cosmetic surgeons, speech therapists etc. He shows how complex the interactive construction of gender affiliation is, starting at birth.

What transsexuals must learn in laborious processes, while forgetting things they learned at the same time, is acquired by children unconsciously and almost casually as part of their socialisation process.<sup>9</sup>

Hirschauer speaks of this learning process as an appropriation of gender competency. “In particular, gender competencies include both the know-how of representation and the explicit knowledge of how to behave and the mastering of bodily functions and skills, as well as the ability to join in a conversation about the experience of being ‘a man’ or ‘a woman’ “ (Hirschauer 1993, p. 50). The know-how of representation includes the “appropriate” way of moving, the “appropriate” use of gestures, facial expressions and voice pitch when talking, the “appropriate” positioning in a room, knowing the “appropriate” clothes and the “appropriate” use of the body when playing or working. “Children learn the attribution method, the representation of features assumed for their gender, the constant avoidance of the “wrong” repertoire, but also the ability to understand the representations of the other gender, to support and to provoke it” (ibid, p. 51). In our culture of dichotomy, men/boys and women/girls have the responsibility to represent their gender competence, since all players have a kind of accountability for their body condition. A lack of “appropriate” representation is considered a failure or pretence. “A ‘man’ is a legitimate player of male images, more precisely: a player of male images who (in the eyes of the spectator) is legitimated through his competent representation and is obliged to continue. On the other hand, a competent and respectful treatment of cultural resources is required which may neither be worn out in ‘embarrassing’ incapacity nor be abused illegitimately: ‘camp’ behaviour is regarded to be a ‘mutilation’ of the repertoires” (Hirschauer 1993, p. 52). Neither boys/men nor girls/women are aware of the social, and basically changeable construction of the gender category, it is mostly perceived as biologically natural and a matter of course. Most boys/men and girls/women

<sup>8</sup> Transsexuals change their gender identity; they are not without a gender identity, even if subjectively, they feel as if they live outside the realm of gender identity (cf. Hoffmann 1997, p. 141).

<sup>9</sup> In this context, Bourdieu speaks of children acquiring their competencies without knowing “in a real sense” what they do, because what they do “shows more sense than what they know” (Bourdieu 1979, p. 179).

accept and reproduce the constructions of maleness and femaleness proposed by society. Therefore, it should be a major task in educators' training to reveal the social, everyday construction processes of becoming a man and/or woman, since this is the first step towards addressing traditional ideas of gender in a critical way.

### **6.1.2. Practical aids regarding the topics: gender socialisation, biographical work and self-reflection**

The central aim of practical aids I to III described in the following is to develop a consciousness of the social constructions of gender stereotypes and gender differences. Students will discover that the gender categories are based on attributions and evaluations and differ historically. They will also recognise that they themselves are not free of stereotypical female and male images and stereotypical behaviour as a result of biographical experiences during their own socialisation.

In addition, these practical aids serve to verify in which way students perceive gender in everyday life and to what extent they themselves and others have been able to disengage from stereotypes. Students will experience that their own gender-typical or untypical behaviour is variable and that it can be newly created - or not - in social interactions by ongoing negotiation processes.

In order to anchor the following practical aids into the theory, we recommend more input on the issue. Alternatively, this can be done at the end of the practical realisation.

#### **Practical aid I: Reflection of a gender-typical socialisation with the help of the film: My Life in Pink**

(Director: Alain Berliner; written by: Alain Berliner and Chris van der Stappen)

The film deals with the demands a social setting makes on a seven-year old boy. "My Life in Pink" shows the means and strategies which are required to be recognised as a "proper" boy. It also reveals what is deemed a matter of course and natural in what is commonly accepted as everyday knowledge and therefore concealed. The film tells of the powerful structure of the gender dichotomy culture and points out that this is closely connected with the issue of sexual orientation. "My Life in Pink" clearly underlines that gender is not created in a power-free space (doing gender), but in daily conflict fields, such as family, school, neighbourhood, career etc. (cf. *Theoretische Zugänge für eine geschlechterreflektierte frühkindliche Erziehung - Geschlechterkonstruktionen in einer Kultur der Zweigeschlechtlichkeit* p. 3f).

**F**

“Seven-year old Ludovic Fabre likes to play with dolls and wants to wear dresses. He dreams of a romantic wedding with the boy next door and friend, Jérôme, but the environment he lives in, a Paris suburb, is not very taken with the boy's behaviour. His parents take him to see a psychologist, but this is also of little help. His family is increasingly ignored in the neighbourhood. During a performance of Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs in the school theatre, a scandal breaks out when Ludovic locks up Snow White in the toilet to replace her with Jérôme as the prince in the kissing scene. The family is shattered by their exclusion from the neighbourhood; a petition from other parents to the headmaster forces Ludovic to change school. Ludovic's father loses his job which was always believed to be secure and one morning the family discovers graffiti on the garage door accusing the son.” (description of film in German: [http://de.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mein\\_Leben\\_in\\_Rosarot](http://de.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mein_Leben_in_Rosarot))

**E**

The evaluation of the film can be carried out in two steps. In the first step, students can talk about their first impressions guided by the following questions:

- What do you associate with this film?
- What topics does the film deal with?

The answers should be collected and then classified according to the different types of feedback. In a second step, you can deal with certain types of feedback in a more detailed way. Further thematic fields mentioned can be readdressed later on.

- Which reactions and feelings does the film provoke in you?
- Are there any scenes which were familiar to you? If yes, why?
- Did the film confuse you in a way? If yes, why?
- Which statements does the film make concerning the topic of "doing gender" in a "culture of dichotomy"?

#### **Practical aid II: Reflection of a gender-typical socialisation using the method “Köpfe tauschen [Changing heads]”**

(Christiane Kohrs introduces this method in "Abenteuer Fairness", a work book on gender training published by Christiane Burbach and Heike Schlottau in 2001.)

**Procedure:** in a first step, participants develop collages of female and male images by cutting out pictures from fashion catalogues and sticking them separately on one or two sheets of paper. We recommend making the collages in small groups (gender-“homogeneous” or coeducative). Participants are asked to pay special attention to posture,

facial expression and gestures of the cut-out images of men and women. The collage should have several examples of standing, sitting and lying women and men.

In a second step, participants collect their observations and write them down next to the examples.

Are there any repetitions in the representation of women and men regarding their posture, facial expression and gestures?

What are the similarities and differences between the representations of gender, if any?

There can be an intermediate evaluation in the plenum, taking into consideration the group process and the available and/or planned time.

In a third step, some representations of women and men are selected which can be considered as typical for the catalogue used in accordance with the precedent analysis. Students now look for women's heads for the male images and for men's heads for the female images (fitting in size) and combine them in another collage.

## E

Possible questions:

*Which reactions and feelings do these pictures provoke?*

*Which pictures have confused you and if yes, why?*

*Which pictures are familiar to you and if yes, why?*

*Are there any expressions, postures and clothes which are reserved to one gender?*

*Are there any expressions, postures and clothes which are acceptable for all? Which one provokes a unanimous opinion and where do opinions differ?*

## Practical aid III: Reflection of a gender-typical socialisation using biographical work

*Procedure:*

1. Students draw a curriculum vitae curve in which they enter and briefly describe important biographical events using the questions indicated below.

When looking back, focus on the following periods of time:

- Currently, as an adult person
- Adolescence from approx. 14 years onwards
- Pre-school time

The following questions can be used to enter their own biographies into a curriculum vitae curve.

*When did I first become aware of being addressed as male or female, as a child/adolescent/adult? When did I first behave in the corresponding way? What was the response to me acting according to my gender? Which verbal and non-verbal messages was I equipped with? Who has impressed me positively or negatively? Which events were of*

*particular importance?*

*In what way did my sexualisation take place? What was the response to me acting in a sexual way?*

2. Continue in groups of 3: the group deals with the respective curriculum vitae curves

There are the following tasks:

One person starts talking without interruption! (approx. 15 min).

The second person pays attention to the time, listens and may then ask questions and/or questions going into detail. These may not be evaluative! (5 min).

The third person takes the minutes. He/she can add their own thoughts and feelings to the things listened to, however not evaluative. The minutes are then handed over to the person who told the story.

After that, roles are changed until everyone has had the opportunity to talk about something from his/her life.

3. Further work in the plenum after group work is completed

By means of a small scenic representation, the unifying and separating elements of the life stories are presented to the plenum. The others can freely associate with what they see. In this respect, not only concordant associations and interpretations are of interest but also those unintended. After that, students can exchange opinions and make a joint evaluation.

Possible evaluation questions:

*How did you feel about this exercise?*

*What was surprising/new to you?*

*What connections do you see to your current actions, behaviour etc.?*

*What connections do you see to your choice of becoming/working as an educator?*

4. Finally, students can exchange opinions about additional ideas they have about their future:

*How do I want to live in the future? Alone, with a partner or in a group of people etc.? Do I want children? Which profession do I want to work in? If I have children, how do I imagine sharing tasks with my partner?*

[Translations of quotes in German language: Dettmers u. Weps, 2008]

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## 6.2. Gender Reflecting Pedagogy

Michael Cremers, Dissens e.V., Berlin

Gender reflecting pedagogy understands itself as a pedagogical specialisation focussing the topic of gender. In distinction to other diverse pedagogical aims and offers, it is centrally concerned with seizing the dictates linked to the societal requirement of being or becoming a man or a woman. Gender reflecting pedagogy intends to support children and youths in reflecting the societally offered conceptions of masculinity and femininity (cf. Drogand-Strud/Rauw 2005). The strengthening of self-esteem regarding gender especially in context with other social factors is a central aim of gender oriented pedagogy. Children and youths are in the centre of the pedagogical view as distinct persons with their respective characteristics and abilities and are appreciated equally. Their ways of acting should not be valued or deprecated due to their gender (cf. ib.). The pedagogue's person is of big significance for successful gender reflecting pedagogy. An analysis of the "system of cultural gender dichotomy" and of "Doing Gender" as well as a reflection of the gendered process by which you have become what you are is indispensable. After all, the pedagogue inevitably offers opportunities of identification and distinction to the children and youths, even if he might not be conscious of it. Furthermore, in order to realise gender reflecting pedagogy in a reflective and professional way, it is important to acquire theoretical knowledge about the different and diverse life situations of children and youths.

### Historical Development

Feminist movements played a central role in the genesis of gender reflecting pedagogy. Initial point of development of gender reflecting approaches in the German-speaking world was the critique by some actors of the second wave feminist movement in the mid-1970s, which made visible the alleged gender neutrality of pedagogical work by means of the slogan: "Youth work is boys work". The feminist analysis of society described a patriarchal "culture of gender dichotomy", implying a power divide in favour of men regarding influence and access to resources. In the pedagogical debate, the critique focussed on two levels: Everyday youth work's offers were identified to be primarily oriented by the interests of boys, and the discrimination of and violence against girls were said to be tacitly tolerated.

In youth work, feminists developed the "partial girls

work" (parteiliche Mädchenarbeit) in the mid-1980s and as early as in the first concepts demanded for complementary boys work. Since this time many things happened in gender politics and in the political backup of gender pedagogy: To be sure, gender reflecting pedagogy still is not set as a cross-sectional issue, but is increasingly established.

### Topics offered by gender reflecting pedagogy

The range of topics offered by gender reflecting pedagogy is very broad. They depend on the aims intended by the pedagogical work, on the institutional assignment, on the self-conception and on the repertoire of methods used by the respective pedagogical worker. The following topics, oriented by children's and youths' interests and by the aim of sensitisation on and reflection of gender questions, are in the centre of pedagogical offers:

- Social competences, self-perception, responsibility, cooperation
- School, education, career, unemployment
- Compatibility of family and career
- Love and partnership
- Friendship and problems in peer groups
- Conflict, fear, aggression, violence
- Discussion of societally predefined and own images of men and women
- Sexuality, sexual orientation, relation to the own body, sexual(ised) violence
- Games and fun beyond fitness and competitive sports
- Massages and relaxing exercises
- Media, music, intoxication, alcohol, drugs
- Etc.

Experiences from practice demonstrate, that especially the combination of subject oriented pedagogical work and gender homogeneous as well as reflective-coeducational offers<sup>10</sup> best live up to the different conditions of socialisation and needs of children and youths.<sup>11</sup> This fact leads to the pedagogical aspiration and necessity, to

<sup>10</sup> The notion „reflective-coeducational“ signifies a gender sensitive coeducational setting.

<sup>11</sup> This is mirrored in the youths' experience realm, who over a long time in their childhood and youth, organise their auto-organised spare time activities in gender homogeneous peer groups.

be able to reason why and when the different offers are made.

### **Gender reflective pedagogy in early childhood education**

In Germany, Lithuania, Norway, Spain and Turkey, the experiences and results of the EU-project Gender Loops show, that a gender conscious pedagogy has not been established yet or only in special fields of educational practice. Nevertheless, in Germany gender topics take an increasing influence on the work of early childhood education centres these last years. Tim Rohrmann perceives three causes for this increasing interest in gender issues in early childhood pedagogy: The public discussion on boys as “education losers”, the discussion on quality and education in early childhood education centres also taking into account gender related topics, and the increasing establishment of “Gender Mainstreaming” in child and youth services (cf. Rohrmann 2008, 59f.).

The Gender Loops Toolbox describes and gives examples on how gender reflective pedagogy can be realised on a practical level in early childhood education centres. The texts, observation and documentation tools, and project examples are dedicated both to professionals in the practical field and for the training of future educators. You can download it for free from our website [www.genderloops.eu](http://www.genderloops.eu).

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## 6.3 Family Diversity in Early Childhood Education

Alfons Romero, Universidad de Girona, Girona

### Introduction

“As most of us experience society through the lens of our early family experiences, we grow up believing ‘our’ family is the same as everyone else’s. Entering school as young children, we soon realise that our notions of what is normal may be different from those of our classmates. The ‘cereal packet image of the family’ representing mum, dad and the kids happily breakfasting together, abuts sometimes harshly against the realities of sole-parents families, step- and blended families, extended families, same-sex families, childless households, and even the single person household where the strongest ties are not with biological kin, but with intimate friends” (Saggers and Sims, 2005:66).

Today, there is wide recognition that the composition of families has changed greatly into a more diverse kind of family. This diversity is not only due to the family structure but also to change in the roles of its members.

Despite the diversity in the kinds of families, in who makes up a family and how people live as a family, the traditional notion of the family continues to prevail. It is seen as heterosexual, married, monogamous and (for it to be successful) made up of father, mother and children. As a result, the remaining forms of family are judged, often negatively, through the hegemonic lens of the nuclear family (Carrington, 2002).

“Consequently, the values and perspectives of different families tend to be othered, marginalized and silenced, rarely receiving the official institutional validation given to the nuclear family” (Robinson and Jones Díaz, 2006:83).

This chapter therefore goes on to present arguments in favour of the inclusion and normalisation of family diversity in early childhood education.

### From family to families...

When we try to answer the question “What is a family?” we need to begin by acknowledging that there is no universal form of family, despite the prevalence of the normalizing discourse of the nuclear family.

In western societies today, the fact that individuals are increasingly choosing diverse forms to build their families is undeniable. Over half of the Europeans (55%) live

in what we call a traditional family, in other words: a household made up of an adult couple with children. Although this type of family is still the most common in the EU other family forms are becoming increasingly visible (Eurostat, 2000). Other social changes related with the family are: the retreat of marriage, later marriage, cohabitation on the rise, increase of divorce rates, fertility decline, later childbearing, extramarital births on the rise.

Until a few years ago the concept of family was basically used to refer to aspects related to legal ties, blood ties, the number of people that made it up, the distribution and allocation of roles, etc.

The current concept of family should be replaced by that of *familíes*. In addition, we also need to consider the changes that have taken place in our societies in recent years, with a high increase in the number of separations, divorces, single parent families, same-sex parent families, with children from international adoptions, the passing of laws and legal reforms which have recognised marriage and adoption for homosexual couples, the increasing age of maternity and a drop in the birth rate (Rodrigo and Palacios, 1999).

As Terradellas points out: “In short, we believe that the current concept of the family, of families, should basically refer to the will and commitment of its members to live together, to involve themselves together in a life project which intends to be lasting in time, the ties of affection which unite the different members and the relations of reciprocity and dependence among the people that make up the family.” (Terradellas, R., 2007:43).

A similar definition that shies away from formalisms in the definition of families is that of the United Nations Special Rapporteur on Violence against Women, Radhika Coomaraswamy who states that “... the family should not be defined using a formal construction, the nuclear family of husband wife and children. The family is a place where people learn to look after others and to be looked after, to trust others and to be trusted by others, to nourish others and be nourished by them”<sup>12</sup>.

But these new more inclusive definitions of the family have not as yet been transferred to the curriculum of

<sup>12</sup> Cited Claudia Hinojosa and Alejandra Sardá in “Consecuencias económicas y sociales de la discriminación contra las lesbianas en América Latina” en <http://www.rebelion.org/mujer/031028ch.htm>

early childhood education centres. Robinson and Jones Díaz propose for example that early childhood education should deconstruct the hegemonic discourses on the family from a poststructuralist feminist perspective and include the diversity that exists in society: “Feminist poststructuralist perspectives of family provide a useful framework in which to begin to view family as socially constituted within discourse and as dynamic and shifting (...) A focus on families as performative social spaces in which similar and different performances of family life are embodied, provides not only an understanding of these social relationships as being fluid, contradictory and contextualized, but also a framework in which individual subjects have agency about how they do family. That is, it shifts understandings away from the perspective of individual subjects passively residing within pre-given structures, to a reading of individual subjects actively in the process of creating and recreating their family life performances. Viewing families not as signifiers for exclusion but as more flexible and fluid allows for the inclusion of the non-nuclear characteristics and processes in understandings of family life.” (Robinson and Jones Díaz, 2006:85-86).

### **About same-sex families:**

The normalizing discourse of the heterosexual nuclear family operates to exclude gay and lesbian families from being viewed as ‘real’, appropriate or successful families. Recent research points out that gay and lesbian families are often silenced and marginalized in the field of early childhood education (Corbett, 1993; Wickens, 1993; Casper et al., 1998; Cahill and Theilheimer, 1999; Robinson, 2002). These studies also stress the importance of including these families within children’s broad education of family diversity.

One of these stereotypes about the children of gays and lesbians has to do with the overall mental health of these minors, although as Wise (2003) points out:

“There is already some evidence that children in same-sex families have similar adjustment profiles to other children. Studies of lesbian and heterosexual mothers on measures including psychiatric status, self-concept, happiness, overall adjustment or parenting styles and ability reveal no differences between the two groups” (Wise, 2003:26-7).

In New South Wales, a study of 48 children from same-sex families reported that 44% of primary school aged children, and around one-third of secondary school children experienced homophobic teasing and language (Ray and Gregory, 2001:31). Rather than see these issues as an inevitable aspect of socially marginal family types, early childhood education centres should work on aspects that lead to the normalisation of family diversity.

### **e social construction of motherhood and fatherhood**

The school also reproduces the ideology around motherhood and fatherhood and in doing so consolidates hegemonic gender identities. There is no reason whatsoever why men cannot take a more active role in the care of their children. Despite this, the foundations of the ideology of motherhood are laid down in early childhood education, based on the altruistic caring role and that of fatherhood based on the role of economic provider divorced from the everyday raising of children. Motherhood and fatherhood have been primarily constituted within the gendered cultural binary male/female, in which meanings of motherhood have been defined in opposition to meanings of fatherhood, based on gender role differentiation. However, increasingly, some men are taking up different performances of masculinity and extend their roles in families to include caring for children on either a shared or full-times basis (Abril and Romero 2008)

It is as important to educate on the diversity of roles of different members of the family as it is to educate on family diversity. This entails fostering active mother roles in the workplace and active father roles in caring for children and the elderly as well as promoting a truly fair distribution of domestic work. The intention is that early childhood education contribute to breaking the link between gender roles and family roles.

### **Implications for practice in early childhood education**

- It is important that early childhood educational settings review their organizational practices, policies and materials in terms of how realistically they reflect family diversity.
- A positive projection of family diversity is needed, so that all the children's family forms receive equal treatment in early childhood education centres.
- In practice this means reviewing all the materials used by the school/early childhood education centre, both didactic material as well as forms, letters, enrolments and other paperwork related with families.
- As far as the didactic materials and resources are concerned, family diversity needs to be incorporated into examples, stories, games, etc.
- Furthermore, work can be done around more traditional types of material which perpetuate hegemonic nuclear family and gender discourses. They can be deconstructed with children to challenge normalizing perspectives of family and of gendered identities, to identify power relations inherent within the narratives, and to recreate new and different storylines that represent multiple performances of

family and of gender: “the processes of deconstruction and reconstruction are useful pedagogical tools for developing children’s critical thinking around normalizing discourses and social inequities, providing children with new and different options in the world” (Robinson and Jones Díaz, 2006:104).

- In the forms, letters and other documents sent out to families we recommend the use of inclusive terms such as ‘parent’ instead of ‘mother’ or ‘father’. Educators should also foresee the possibility of homosexual fathers and lesbian mothers.
- The cultural diversity of families is another aspect that needs to be considered in the centre's educational practices (food, excursions, extra-school activities, parties, etc.)

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## 6.4. Sexual diversity in Early Childhood Education

Alfons Romero, Universidad de Girona, Girona

### Introduction

*“Despite the prevalent belief to the contrary, gay and lesbian equity issues are relevant to all children and their families regardless of their sexual orientations”* (Robinson and Jones Díaz, 2006:166)

Although we cannot deny that homosexual, bisexual or transgender pupils, staff, fathers and mothers exist in our schools we are a long way from socially normalising sexual diversity in the classroom, especially in the sphere of early childhood education.

All education is targeted at heterosexual children and the children’s desires, sexual identities, experiences and attitudes are viewed as heterosexual. This approach is therefore discriminatory and exclusive.

Discussion on this issue takes on a special turn when it comes to early childhood education where the argument is put forward that it is a subject that should be dealt with (if at all) during later stages. It is often argued that this subject is not appropriate to be dealt with at an early age; that the family is the context in which these matters should be discussed with boys and girls, etc.

“In the research we have conducted with early childhood educators on this issue, sexuality – especially gay and lesbian issues - is largely viewed as an ‘adults only’ concept, with many early childhood educators consider children to be ‘too young’ to understand” (Robinson and Jones Díaz, 2006:151).

Only in the case of family diversity do they acknowledge the need for the issue to be covered to some extent: the importance of recognising children’s family experiences is one of the factors that have sparked off debate in the sphere of early childhood education.

This chapter intends to point out that sexual diversity is absent from early childhood education and goes on to put forward some formulas for its appropriate introduction in early education centres.

The chapter is structured into three sections. The first section points to the need for introducing education on sexual diversity in the early childhood education stage for its subsequent social normalisation. The second section studies the current state of affairs of education on sexual diversity and finds that it exists through the lens of heterosexism and homophobia. The third section puts for-

ward formulas for including sexual diversity at the early childhood education stage, both via the hidden curriculum and the formal curriculum.

### Social normalisation of sexual diversity in the classroom

Various studies have shown that suicide rates among young homosexuals are much higher than among young heterosexuals (Halpert, 2002; McDaniel, Purcell and D’Augelli, 2001)<sup>13</sup>. We cannot continue to ignore the existence of sexual diversity in our educational practice. There is no reason why young homosexuals have to live their difference as a problem, as a traumatic process because they are ignored by the school. The educational system therefore has the obligation to normalise this sexual diversity.

Inspired by the example of ethnic minorities and of women incorporating cultural and gender diversity into the classroom, homosexual and lesbians have begun to demand:

- That homosexual, lesbian and transgender identities be regarded as a normal part of the diversity of early childhood education centres.
- The eradication of homophobic harassment that some children are subjected to in early childhood education centres.
- A change in the curriculum introducing sexual diversity in all areas.

What they demand in short is the social normalisation of sexual diversity in the classroom.

### Heterosexism and homophobia in early childhood education

We know that sexual and gender identities are not biologically determined but that they are created and recreated through institutional practices. In this sense, early childhood education centres can be regarded as a place that produces gender and sexual identities and not just

<sup>13</sup> As Halpert, S. (2002) points out, these higher suicide rates are not due to sexual orientations, but to the homophobia and the prejudices that these adolescents are subjected to.

as an agency which passively reflects dominant power relationships. Recent research on masculinity has contributed to this debate highlighting the fact that boys are also subjected to gender and sexual identity pressures (Lomas, 2003; Lesko, 2000; Bourdieu, 2000).

The very widespread idea that until recently schools did not deal with the issue of sexuality is false: sexuality has always been present. The underlying discourse on sexuality that was and continues to be provided by schools is the “naturalization” of heterosexuality, where the remaining variations are presented as deviations (Epstein, D., 1994; Kehily, M.J., 2002; Lipkin, Mac and Ghail, M., 1996). This can be seen very clearly by the debates around the non-need to discuss sexuality at early childhood education levels. In the case of early childhood education there is one predominantly heterosexual model of sexuality which is basic for the hegemony of heterosexism, given that it is transmitted during what sociologists call early socialisation, which is the most deeply rooted in an individuals’ awareness and personality.

Heterosexism and homophobia go hand in hand during the early childhood education stage. By heterosexism we mean silence about heterosexuality and the presumption that everyone is heterosexual. We use the term homophobia to refer to explicit or non explicit attacks on homosexuals and lesbians. Heterosexism usually acts in silence. Homophobia is often considered to entail the opposite, i.e. it is viewed as an explicit attack. But as a part of heterosexism, homophobia is also silence and absence. Heterosexism is homophobic because it does not recognise or discriminates difference:

“Heterosexuality becomes the ‘public’ voice, definition and representation of ‘normal’ and ‘natural’ sexuality. This normalization of heterosexuality is further enforced through powerful gender discourses that operate to constitute socially sanctioned performances of masculinity and femininity as heterosexual and regulate gender conformity among children and youths. Early childhood education is very much part of this normalization process of the construction of the heterosexual public/homosexual private binary.” (Robinson and Jones, 2006:158).

This naturalisation of heterosexuality has another effect: it is absent from the curriculum.

### **Including sexual diversity in early childhood education**

Research on racial and sexual tolerance has shown that the earlier you start the more you progress and the deeper the degree of tolerance in people. Despite this, appropriate programming is required at the ages we are dealing with. The aim is to introduce issues related to affection and gender in a natural way. Research studies have also shown that the capacity to realise what is going on in the world and ask about the world is especially strong during the early years.

Consequently, in *Challenging lesbian and gay inequalities in education*, Akanke (1994) cites the example of a girl in early childhood education who gives her mother the Happy Mother’s Day card she made in class. Written on the card is “Happy mother’s day for my mother and Terry”. The mother is shocked and asks her daughter what the teacher said when she saw the name Terry. The girl whispers to her: I wrote the name on the bus on my way home, that’s why I wrote it with another marker”...The separation of spaces, language, attitude... shows us the change of register that any child is capable of making.

The gender loops project that is in the implementation phase in early childhood education centres, made use of stories that dealt with sexual diversity. The children were told a series of stories such as ‘King and King’ and ‘With tango we are three’ and were then asked to draw something from the stories. For a description of these methods and the children’s reactions you can consult the project website ([www.genderloops.eu](http://www.genderloops.eu))

### **Hidden curriculum**

The concept of the hidden curriculum is used by social scientists to highlight the fact that learning goes beyond the frontiers of the official curriculum and that it often has effects that go unnoticed. Children also learn to conform to or to resist the official school culture. As García i Puigvert (2003) point out, the hidden curriculum comprises all the aspects that, although they are not explicit and often not even discussed, are transmitted to students via structures that underlie the formal contents and the forms of social relationships which arise in school.

From this point of view, obviously the hidden curriculum can also be seen in terms of the regulation of sexual and gender categories. It is important to point out that despite the fact that early childhood education does work on mainstreaming of values, it generally does not consider including the eradication of homophobia among its objectives. This is so, both in the programming of education on values as well as in the transmission of values by the teaching staff themselves.

### **Proposals for confronting the Hidden Curriculum:**

We shall now outline some suggestions for fighting against the homophobia that is transmitted through the hidden curriculum:

- Every time a child makes a homophobic comment, the teacher should draw attention to the humiliating and intolerant nature of the comment.
- Do not always send homosexual or different pupils to the centre’s psychologist or the educational psychologist (so as not to make them feel they are sick or strange). Do not make them feel like victims, etc.
- Change our assumptions that all boys and girls are

heterosexual and act, think and speak taking into account the existence of sexual diversity in our centres.

- In keeping with this last point: use a language that is non discriminatory towards this diversity, talk about fathers and mothers in the plural, mention the fact that some children may have two fathers or mothers, use spouse instead of husband or wife, etc.
- Use language in stories and fiction that allows for the fact that people may be homosexual or lesbian: “James probably has a boyfriend or a girlfriend, don’t you think?”
- Request collaboration from associations which work on the issue of sexual diversity in education.
- Communication and negotiation with the families. It is important to explain the projects, because this may help all the families (and especially homosexual fathers and lesbian mothers) to become more involved with the centre.

### **Including sexual diversity in the formal curriculum**

Educators have a critical role in creating positive learning environments in which all individuals have similar opportunities to reach their potentials, and can feel supported, included and affirmed about who they are. Not only do educators have a “duty of care” to the children and adults with whom they teach, but there is also a broader role that involves a communal responsibility for fostering social justice within the communities in which we live and teach.

- Introduce the issue of sexual diversity in the centre's projects with explicit mention of the fight against homophobia. In this way explicit reference can be made to the issue of sexual diversity in the centre's philosophy and when covering the topics of tolerance, inequality and gender mainstreaming. As Robinson and Jones Diaz, point out, the introduction of these issues does not meet with resistance among parents: “In our experience and research in this area, early childhood institutions that openly and equally include gay and lesbian equity issues in their social justice and equity agendas do not meet with the parental and community resistance often perceived to follow such a decision.” (Robinson and Jones Diaz, 2006:164-165).
- Introducing sexual diversity by discussing family diversity is one of the areas around which most work has been done and more material exists that deals with this topic. However, we need to keep in mind that the relevance of doing social justice education with children around gay and lesbian equity issues goes much further than increasing children's awareness of family diversity.
- Educators need to help children to think critically

about normative gender and sexual diversity discourses. Work around identity and stereotypes can help to deconstruct heteronormativity. The main topics that can be used to do this are related to gender identity and family diversity.

- Work towards doing away with prejudices. Hence, for example, dealing with gay and lesbian equity issues with children is also frequently misconstrued as dealing with sex, rather than about the experiences of communities or about loving or caring relationships. Homophobia operates to define and essentialize non-heterosexuality purely in terms of physical sexual acts.
- It is important to provide children with the space and skills to deconstruct the stereotypes and myths prevailing about gays and lesbians that underlie much of the discrimination, harassment and violence they can encounter in their lives. Much of this discrimination begins in the early years of life, as children negotiate the normalizing discourses that operate around gender and sexuality and take up these perspectives as their own ‘truths’ about the world.
- Positivise diversity in the construction of children's identities: “It is generally upheld that good early childhood pedagogy reflects and empowers the diverse cultural backgrounds of the children and families with whom they work. This positive representation of the diversity of children's identities in the daily programming and planning of early childhood education is considered to be crucial for developing individual children's positive “self-esteem”, as well as fostering their appreciation for the diversity that exists more broadly in society” (Robinson and Jones Díaz, 2006:147).

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## 6.5. Gender and observation/documentation

Jens Krabel, Dissens e.V., Berlin

During the interviews we carried out throughout Germany with experts from the field of initial and further training of educators the experts stress that the current observation and documentation tools should integrate gender observation questions<sup>14</sup>.

Systematic gender-sensitive observations enable educators to perceive possible differences between the behaviour of girls and boys as well as possible gender-untypical interests and competencies. Furthermore, systematic gender sensitive observations could make educators more aware of their own gender stereotypes.

In the following, we would like to present reflection and observation tools which students can use during their internship and then (further) reflect upon in their seminar group.

You could also use only the gender observation questions which we present in our reflection and observation tools and integrate them into your existing observation methods.

### **Tools for the observation and reflection of gender related behaviour**

Each one of the five tools for observation and reflection is divided in three parts. You can download these five tools from our website [www.genderloops.eu](http://www.genderloops.eu).

**In the first part** of each of the five tools for observation and reflection, students are asked to write down their personal assumptions regarding a specific gender research question.

For example, the first part of the tool for observation and reflection “Do girls and boys prefer different games and activities?” reads as follows:

- Before the observations I assume that girls and boys prefer different games and activities.  
I assume this, because:

- Before the observations I assume that girls and boys do not prefer different games and activities.  
I assume this, because:

**In the second part** students are given the opportunity to use one of the proposed observation questionnaires to verify their personal assumptions. With the help of the observation questionnaires, students can document certain behaviour of and interactions between children and educators.

If you or the students decide to observe and document the activities of educators, you should first coordinate this observation task with the educators and obtain their consent. Specialist literature also recommends informing the children about the observation. It is mainly the older children who are often interested in the observation results and can sometimes contribute valuable supplements to your observations.

**In the third part** students can write down their observation results, make first assumptions about the background of the situations observed and develop ideas for gender conscious practical projects.

In the seminar you can discuss the observations, assumptions and ideas for gender-conscious projects all together.

**Tools for the observation and reflection of gender related behaviour can be downloaded free of charges from our website.**

<sup>14</sup> Cf. the German report: “First results of the analysis of the quantitative and qualitative survey on the carrying out of gender-related courses and strategies to promote equal rights for girls, women, boys and men in the training of educators; [www.genderloops.eu](http://www.genderloops.eu)



## **Introduction to the concept of Gender Mainstreaming**

According to the European Commission, Gender Mainstreaming means “that in all phases of the political process – planning implementation, monitoring and evaluation – account is taken of the gender

## **I. Training Institution**

### **I.I.**

Do the institution's self-portrayals, public images and public relations convey that the institution promotes the implementation of Gender Mainstreaming strategies within their organisation?

Do the institution's self-portrayals, public images and public relations explain what the strategy of Gender Mainstreaming means on a practical level for the institution? If so, does it rather consolidate binary/dichotomous gender images or does it contribute to their diversification?

Do the institution's self-portrayals, public images and public relations emphasize gender neutral and anti-discriminatory expressions, such as mentioning students of both genders in languages which differentiate between genders?

Does the institution take into account possible double burdens of students (compatibility of training, family and children)? Are there structurally anchored aids and special facilities for single mothers, fathers and parents with children?

Is there a contact point within the institution for discriminated women and men? If so, is it obvious, that this point is equally concerned with women and men?

Are gender competences and gender knowledge important criteria when deciding whom to employ? Are they mentioned in the employment ads' requirements specifications?

Does the institution pursue strategies in order to increase the amount of men among the students? Is it obvious in the institution's self-portrayals, public images and public relations that the increase of the amount of men is the institution's stated aim?

. .

Is the institution's management open-minded regarding Gender Mainstreaming and does it promote its implementation? Or is it rather reluctant and inactive?

Do the professors/teachers have gender competencies which they can integrate in their teaching?

Do the professors/teachers represent a "gender-fair" relation of women and men within the institution?

Is the faculty's composition representative of the national/regional population? E.g.: Are migrants and homosex-

uals represented among the teachers/professors?

Do the teachers/professors critically reflect on their gender relevant function of role model for their students?

How do you evaluate the professors'/teachers' "gender performances"? Are they oriented rather by traditional or by alternative atypical gender images?

.

Is gender implemented as a cross-sectional issue in the training? Are gender topics integrated into all seminar modules/disciplines as cross-sectional issues?

Are scientific results and theories by women and men appreciated equally in teaching?

Does the institution ensure sufficient transfer of the newest results from gender research into the training?

Is the specific situation of men in the "women's profession educator" considered in the training? If so: How do the teachers/professors proceed? Does this happen sufficiently?

## **II. Seminar group „Gender conscious pedagogy“**

Are male and female students likewise satisfied with the teaching and training?

Do male and female students receive the teachers'/professors' equal attention relative to their percentage representation?

Are female and male students equally appreciated for written and oral contributions?

How is the relation between teachers/professors and male students? Do gender related irritations occur in this relation?

How is the relation between teachers/professors and female students? Do gender related irritations occur in this relation?

Do students appreciate their own work and contributions to the lessons? Are their differences between women and men?

Is the relation between women and men in the seminar group "easy-going" or conflict-laden? If the latter: In which sense?

Are there differences in the interpersonal communication between male and female students? If so, are these differences problematic?

Which formal or informal “jobs”/“occupations”/activities do students carry out within the seminar group and/or the institution? Are there gender related differences? (E.g. who helps the teacher to switch on the video recorder?)

Do students with a migration background have the same opportunities to contribute to the lessons as students with a primarily national family background? Are there differences between women and men?

Are there situations of open or hidden discrimination against students or teachers?

Is there a culture of criticism in the seminar group? Is the co-students’ work attended critically? If so, in which way does this take place? Are there gender related differences?

Are there lines of conflict within the seminar group concerning the perception and evaluation of gender relations and of gender conscious pedagogy? If so: How could they be described?

Are students excluded or discriminated if they promote minority opinions regarding gender issues?

How does the formal and informal transfer of information function within the seminar group? Is it possible, that there are mechanisms producing gaps of knowledge or other forms of exclusion? Are there differences in the gender groups?

## 6.7. Experiences of sexual violence in childhood and youth

Martina Hävernack von Wildwasser e.V., Berlin und Thomas Schlingmann von Tauwetter e.V., Berlin

In our experience, the topic “sexual violence under gender aspects” is not accorded the importance in the training of pedagogically specialised staff it should receive, regarding the frequency with which people in caring professions are confronted with the subject. Thus, we would like to introduce components for a learning unit approaching the problem. We hope to offer you a few resources for dealing with the topic by this means.

### Aim of the unit

This unit is aiming at a reflective dealing with sexual violence against children and youngsters with special attention to gender roles and attributions in this context.

This unit is not meant to impart basic knowledge on sexual violence against children and youngsters; rather this kind of basic knowledge is prerequisite to this unit. If you haven't acquired this knowledge yet, it is advisable to learn more about the topic before starting this unit.

### Framework Conditions / Methods

#### *F*      *C*

A learning unit on sexual violence puts special demands on docents. Thus we would like to ask you not to hesitate to address colleagues already experienced in handling this topic in training, if need be.

You can assume, that among your students there might be some women and men, who have experienced sexual violence in their childhood or youth. It is quite possible that they will experience this unit as straining. Thus, it is important that participation in this unit be voluntary. Furthermore, it is very helpful, if you as docent are informed about local counselling centres and other facilities of support which you present at the beginning of the unit. Also, a prior contact to professional institutions makes it possible to get to know in advance if expositions, films etc. might be available which you could use for the unit. Likewise it is advisable – if you wish to – to ask in time, if maybe a staff member of the institution would like to present their work in the seminary.

It has proved to make sense to work on this topic in small groups and to subdivide the seminar temporarily.

If students intend to visit local counselling centres

and to get more information there, it makes sense that they prepare their focus on the topic intensively in smaller working groups in order to be able to ask questions more pointedly. The different acquired insights can then be carried together in the whole group.

In the seminar methods allowing self-reflection should play an important role, such as

- Role plays (e.g. fictive first counselling sessions in a counselling centre with varying contribution of gender among the roles)
- Working on “example cases“

Empirically, input in the form of frontal teaching is not completely avoidable. Still, it would be good to keep this part small dealing with this rather difficult topic for both students and docents. In this context the use of films and expositions can be helpful as well.

### Concerning the attached material:

The chapter „numbers“ is primarily destined at your preparation but can also be used as a short overview in the seminar. These numbers refer to Germany. For other countries it would be advisable to acquire the appropriate data.

The “hypotheses” are supposed to demonstrate the diversity of interactions between gender and sexual violence. They can also be used as input, subject to further elaborations, in the seminar.

The example cases can be employed in two respects:

- As an introduction to the topic in order to sketch the range of users of a counselling centre.
- As material, by means of which the own gendered attributions can be reflected (The participants are asked to attribute the example cases with genders and to reason their choices. Only after a collective discussion of the results the fact will be revealed that really people with these kinds of stories consult counselling centres both for women and for men.)

## Material

- ✕ :
- The police criminal statistics elaborate that in 2006 12.765 cases of sexual abuse of children have been reported to the German police.<sup>19</sup> We can assume a considerable amount of non-reported offences. Dark figure studies assess that “10-15% of the women and 5-10% of the men aged from 14 to 16 years” have experienced sexual violence at least once.<sup>20</sup>
  - Only in the past years the extent in which sexual violence is exercised by perpetrators is conveyed. Although there are no representative studies for the total population of Germany, by now the amount of perpetrators is estimated to be 85-90% of all men and 10-15% of all women.<sup>21</sup>
  - In a recapitulation of different German studies, Bange identifies the following results concerning the degree of acquaintance between the children and the perpetrators: Regarding the boys, there is a slightly higher amount of perpetrators from the closer social surroundings (excluding family) than regarding girls (50-60% of the boys and 50% of the girls). Regarding girls a higher amount of perpetrators is located in their own family than regarding boys (25-33% of the girls / 10-20% of the boys). The amount of perpetrators formerly unknown to the child is equal for boys and girls (< 20%).<sup>22</sup>

These hypotheses were developed in discussions between the Frauenselbsthilfe und Beratung (women's self-help and counselling) of Wildwasser Berlin and Tauwetter, contact-point for men which were subjected to sexual violence as boys. They also mirror practical experiences. Complementary research results were integrated as far as they were known to us.

1. Experiences from counselling show that outsiders' perceptions of sexual violence and its effects highly depend on a gendered perspective. The stronger witnesses have internalised classical constructions of how a woman/man is supposed to be, the more difficulties they prove in perceiving boys as victims,

women as perpetrators, girls becoming aggressive in consequence of sexual violence, and boys internalising their experience.

2. The fact that boys are more often subject to sexual violence in their close social surroundings than girls and that girls more often experience intra-familial transgressions than boys, is connected to the fact that still boys leave the closer domestic range mostly earlier than girls.
3. There are several models intending to explain the causes for sexual violence. Some of the more elaborate ones are the model by David Finkelhor from the USA and the one by Maren Kolshorn and Ulrike Brockhaus aiming at further developing the former. Both models point out the diverse connections of the construction of masculinity and patriarchal power relations and the exercise of sexual violence.<sup>23</sup> David Finkelhor specifies the “demand on men to be dominant and powerful in sexual relations” or the “male tendency to sexualise emotional needs” as two factors linked to a “motivation of abuse”.
4. From their birth on small children experience that people are divided in two genders and that both genders are subject to differing demands. With progressing age they try to classify themselves as one of these genders and internalise the gender specific attributions. Also in the external perception, they develop from infants - all attributed to the gender “female” - to girls and boys. This “becoming girl / boy” is one of the central tasks of development for children; youths are supposed to get adult, i.e. “man” or “woman” and young adults have to prove their being adult, i.e. “female” or “male”.
  - a. Boys, male youths and men apprehend the experience of having become a victim as a contradiction to their societally attributed role as man.
    - One attempt to solve this contradiction can be to completely deny to ever have been a victim.
    - Another strategy is to compensate the stigma of being a victim in other areas. This can equally be allegedly masculine behaviour as well as workoholism or an extreme fixation on performance. Still, compensation does not function without a minimum of denial, since at least the extent of experienced violence has to be downplayed.
    - If denial and compensation are eliminated as coping strategies, often only the adoption of

19 Bundeskriminalamt 2007: Polizeiliche Kriminalitätsstatistik 2006. Available on [www.bka.de/pks/pks2006](http://www.bka.de/pks/pks2006), 07.01.2008

20 Bange, Dirk 2002: Ausmaß. In Bange, Dirk & Körner, Wilhelm (Hrsg.): *Handwörterbuch sexueller Missbrauch*. Göttingen: Hogrefe. S. 20-25.

21 Kavemann, Barbara & Braun, Gisela 2002: Frauen als Täterinnen. In Bange, Dirk & Körner, Wilhelm (Hrsg.): *Handwörterbuch sexueller Missbrauch*. Göttingen: Hogrefe. S. 121-131

22 Bange, Dirk 2002: Umstände. In Bange, Dirk & Körner, Wilhelm (Hrsg.): *Handwörterbuch sexueller Missbrauch*. Göttingen: Hogrefe. S. 679 - 682

23 Zum Einsteig: Kolshorn, Maren & Brockhaus, Ulrike: Das Drei-Perspektiven-Modell: Ein feministisches Ursachenmodell. In Bange, Dirk & Körner, Wilhelm (Hrsg.): *Handwörterbuch sexueller Missbrauch*. Göttingen: Hogrefe. S. 55 - 61 sowie Kolshorn, Maren & Brockhaus, Ulrike: Modell der vier Voraussetzungen: David Finkelhors Ursachenmodell. In Bange, Dirk & Körner, Wilhelm (Hrsg.): *Handwörterbuch sexueller Missbrauch*. Göttingen: Hogrefe. S. 362 - 366

the role of victim remains an identity-establishing strategy.<sup>24</sup>

- b. For girls and women, the experience of being subdued by the exercised violence corresponds to what is still viewed as a woman's role. For, although the options of life choices for women seem to have multiplied, the role of woman seems to be diversely configurable, the underlying societal power relations have not changed. Independently from the chosen way of living, "being woman" still implies an adaptation to the existing power relations. The experiences in counselling show: For young women, dealing with the experienced violence today, it has become more difficult to distinguish the underlying power relations due to the seemingly hardly circumscribed role models.
5. Resulting from the facts stated above, the effects of sexual violence experienced by men are rather perceived contrary to their role, the ones experienced by women rather conform with their role. Still it applies for women and men that mostly a personalisation of the experience takes place, leading to a feeling of "being fundamentally wrong".
6. For a successful coping with sexual violence both a cognitive as an emotional dealing with the experienced violence is necessary. Cognitive competences are conceived as typically male, emotional competences as typically female. As an immediate coping strategy many victims of sexual violence attempt to satisfy rigid, classical gender stereotypes. Only over time they disengage from these and try to also employ abilities connoted with the other gender in order to cope with their trauma.<sup>25</sup>
7. Interactions with attributions to the "women's role" or the "men's role" are not only to be found in the effects of violence on the concerned. The reflection of the own gender constructions regarding this aspect is necessary for all persons working in the aid system.

The expectations regarding counselling and aid differ according to the counsellor's gender. A male counsellor is rather expected to support on a factual, cognitive level, a female counsellor rather on an emotionally caring level. In order to be able to work really helpfully, it is thus necessary to continually observe the respective dynamic regarding gender aspects. In this way, a conscious "break" with

gender typical expectations by the counsellor can be very helpful (e.g. when a male counsellor especially chooses the emotional approach and addresses the consultant on this level).

### Example cases

1. Late 30s, successful in an executive position, without solid relationship, self confident appearance, occasional drug consumption, comes to counselling due to a physical collapse.
2. Early 30s, married, first child is on the way, rather shy and reserved, was depressive before marrying, recently started to have memories of sexual violence in childhood and comes to the counselling centre out of fear to do something to the own child now.
3. Late 20s, sexually oriented to the same sex, works in the creative field in which the person has already realised many different projects, has always had memories of sexual violence, has always interpreted the experiences as "harmless", comes to the counselling centre because suddenly pictures of these experiences emerge during sex and physical pain occurs.
4. Mid-20s, active in the radical left scene, attempts to live politically correct, perceives excessive structures of abuse and concrete transgressions in the surroundings, comes into the counselling centre because it is no longer possible to bear the diverse disputes around this topic.
5. Early 40s, middle-class lifestyle, married, 3 children, comes to the counselling centre because the marriage is in crisis and suddenly all the previous life plans are put into question.
6. Early 20s, works in a kindergarten, comes to the counselling centre because the own experience of violence re-emerged over the revealed abuse of a child.

### More Material

#### B

- Ministerium für Gesundheit, Soziales, Frauen und Familie des Landes Nordrhein-Westfalen (Hrsg.) 2003: Ratgeber gegen sexuellen Missbrauch. Vorbeugen – erkennen – handeln.
- Bundesministerium für Familie, Senioren, Frauen und Jugend (Hrsg.) 2006: Mutig fragen - besonnen handeln. Informationen für Mütter und Väter zum sexuellen Missbrauch an Mädchen und Jungen.

#### F

- Bange, Dirk (2007): Sexueller Missbrauch an Jungen. Die Mauer des Schweigens. Göttingen, Hogrefe
- Gahleitner, Silke Brigitta (2005): Sexuelle Gewalt

<sup>24</sup> Introducing: Schlingmann, Thomas 2007: Charles Bronson, James Dean, I-Aah und der Survivor – Vorstellung der Anlaufstelle Tauwetter. In: *Wildwasser. Arbeitsgemeinschaft gegen sexuellen Missbrauch an Mädchen e.V. (Hrsg.): Sexuelle Gewalt – aktuelle Beiträge aus Theorie und Praxis. Berlin: Selbstverlag* siehe auch <http://www.tauwetter.de/infobera/artikel.htm>

<sup>25</sup> Vgl.: Gahleitner, Silke Brigitta (2005): Sexuelle Gewalt und Geschlecht. Hilfen zur Traumabewältigung bei Frauen und Männern. Gießen: Psychosozial-Verlag.

und Geschlecht. Hilfen zur Traumabewältigung bei Frauen und Männern. Gießen: Psychosozial-Verlag.

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- Wildwasser, Arbeitsgemeinschaft gegen sexuellen Missbrauch an Mädchen, Hrsg. (2007): Sexuelle Gewalt, aktuelle Beiträge aus Theorie und Praxis. Berlin, Selbstverlag

### **e Authors**

Martina Hävernack, works at the women's self-help and counselling Wildwasser Berlin since 1989. Contact: [selbsthilfe@wildwasser-berlin.de](mailto:selbsthilfe@wildwasser-berlin.de)

Thomas Schlingmann, cofounder and since 1995 staff member of Tauwetter, contact point for men, which have been sexually abused as boys. Contact: [mail@tauwetter.de](mailto:mail@tauwetter.de)

Information on both projects' work is to be found on the respective websites [www.wildwasser-berlin.de](http://www.wildwasser-berlin.de), [www.tauwetter.de](http://www.tauwetter.de) equally as their collective brochure „Betroffenheit und Professionalität“ (concernment and professionalism) at the same sites.

## 6.8. Gender awareness with the help of the method of Invisible Theatre

Jens Krael, Dissens e.V., Berlin

*“I would say that the „Invisible Theatre“ project was a valuable experience for us. It was an interesting change compared to the other methods we have learned in our studies so far. In addition, it was a completely different experience for dealing precisely with certain issues and questions and for dealing with them within society and not only theoretically at the University of Applied Science (...). I am glad that I became acquainted with this new field of Invisible Theatre and that I also learned a lot about myself in this way.”*

Eva-Maria Wicke

*“I think Invisible Theatre is a good alternative to become intensively involved with an issue, as the preparation of a scene already makes it necessary to look at the issue at hand from all sides. Only if you have done this, can you be sure that the message is transmitted to the audience in the way you intended. On the one hand, we were able to consciously convey things to other people during the play which, due to the intensity and the emotionality of the play, will not be forgotten quickly. On the other hand, we gained new insights from the reactions of the audience. It can be seen, above all, from the fact that our two actors contributed new thoughts to each performance. It produced interaction, and not only the audience's attention was drawn to certain things but also ours.”*

Kathrin Prokott

The method of Invisible Theatre was used (very successfully) at the Alice-Salomon University of Applied Sciences and at the 1. Staatliche Fachschule für Sozialpädagogik in Berlin in order to make future educators more aware of gender-related issues. In both educational institutions, students took up the method enthusiastically and they developed theatre scenes and performed them in department stores, subway stations and other public areas. Developing these theatre scenes, the reactions of the audience and the discussions before, during and after the performances led to interesting, controversial and self-reflective debates on gender among the students.

### e “Invisible Theatre” method

The method of Invisible Theatre was developed during the 1950s and 1960s by the Brazilian theatre author and director Augusto Boal as a form of political educational work. In Invisible Theatre, actors perform social-critical

plays in public spaces without the passers-by recognising the performance as such. The passers-by perceive the invisible theatre play as an unusual everyday situation which is possibly confusing and triggers reactions. The reactions of the passers-by are something that Invisible Theatre aims at. If the passers-by react to the play, e.g. by directly addressing the actors or by making comments on the scene to other passers-by, they themselves become co-actors. The reactions of these passers-by are then taken up by so-called active spectators who belong to the Invisible Theatre group and who are standing around nearby. The active spectators then try to enter into a conversation with the passers-by about the play and to activate reflective processes, if this is possible. The role of the active spectators is, however, not limited to picking up on the audience's reactions. Active spectators can speak to the passers-by directly about the scene and/or provoke further reactions by making certain comments, or they can merely observe the situation. The passers-by are not informed that this was a performance at the end of the play. Thus, the theatre remains invisible until the end.

### e Invisible Theatre in the lessons

- Raising more awareness of hierarchic gender and discriminatory situations
- Making gender-related norms, limitations and exclusions felt more tangibly
- Making behaviour which crosses gender borders more tangible
- Creation of space for debates and discussion forums on gender issues outside the seminar and on "hierarchic/hierarchised" relationships between teachers and students, thus integrating new perspectives
- Active participation in the seminar and giving students the opportunity to gain physical-sensitive (border) experiences
- Providing theatre experience

Explain the method of Invisible Theatre to the students, possibly with the help of the exemplary theatre scenes listed below.

Afterwards, you divide the students into small groups and you either develop an own scene which you want to



act out yourself or you decide to act out one of the scenes described below.

Then, the students assign themselves the (theatre) roles, i.e. they agree on who acts, who is an active spectator or observer. Furthermore, the students select the public places where they want to perform the theatre situations. In addition, students reflect in the small groups upon their personal motivation for acting in the theatre, which issues they want to have dealt with in public and whether they have any fears regarding performing theatre. Then, the students rehearse the rough outline of the invisible theatre scene. The scenes must not be learned word by word, there can be a lot of space for spontaneity and creativity. Maybe the play takes another course than planned as passers-by intervene in the play in an unexpected way. Afterwards, the plays are presented in the seminar group.

In the seminar group, the scenes are reflected upon and proposals for changes may be made.

When reflecting upon the theatre scenes, there should be space for the students to talk about their possible fears and uncertainties regarding the public performance. The seminar group can also go over possible scenarios of the play and think about how the theatre group may react if passers-by act in a discriminating or threatening way. Of course, an invisible play can always be broken off at any time.

If the students feel safe in their roles, the theatre scenes can be performed once or several times in departments stores, in the street, in public transport or in other public spaces.

After the performance, students meet in the seminar room again and report on the experience gained. First, the actors should be given the opportunity to tell the others how they felt during the play and how they feel now. Maybe the actors were confronted with offending comments and need the support of the seminar group. Then the active spectators and observers have the opportunity to report on their feelings, observations and the reactions of the passers-by.

Key questions for the evaluation of the theatre performance could be:

- How did you feel during the performance?
- How did you feel after the performance?
- How do you interpret the reactions of the passers-by?
- How do you evaluate the performance? As a basis for your evaluation, you should consider, among other things, your answers to the questions regarding personal motivation, issues you want to have dealt with in public and your fears.

In the further course of the evaluations of the theatre performance, the experience gained can be placed within the context of more reflective gender issues, such as equal opportunities, gender stereotypes, discrimination, and can then be discussed.

### **Example in practice: Buying shoes differently – A man is interested in ladies' shoes<sup>26</sup>**

The following scene was played and/or actively observed by seven students, in a total of three times in different shoe stores:

A man wearing nylon stockings goes to a shoe store to buy black ladies' shoes. There are already four active spectators in the shoe store. The man asks a shop assistant to help him choose the shoes. After a short while, by accident, the man's sister comes into the shoe store. She says hello, but then recognises the nylon stockings and the shoes he is trying on. The sister is taken aback, she cannot believe that her brother has references like this and insults him loudly in the store. During the argument, the sister also addresses the shop assistant and asks her what she thinks about men wearing ladies' shoes. After the exchange of words, the sister furiously leaves the store. The man runs after her and shouts loudly that he only wants to buy some ladies' shoes. Some of the active spectators speak to other customers and shop assistants about what has happened.

Students reported the totally different reactions of shop assistants and customers. While in one shoe store the scene had to be ended quickly, because the shop assistant said she didn't have any ladies' shoes in size 42, in another shop the shop assistants were friendly and helpful towards the man. In the third shoe store, however, they showed clear antipathy:

*"After Vinzenz left the store, the shop assistants' behaviour and comments showed antipathy and disapproval. Thus, the shop assistant said in a derogative tone 'It's amazing the riff-raff who sometimes come to this store'. In addition, she picked up the shoe Vinzenz had tried on between her thumb and index finger and said: 'I don't think I'll put them back on the shelves today, I'd better bring them to the stock room'."*  
Ulrike Gleitsmann

The students described the customers' reactions as amused, derogative, dismissive, curious or tolerant.

### **Extracts from students' seminar papers**

*"I think the seminar unit Invisible theatre makes a lot of sense. I think theatre is a good form to approach an issue*

<sup>26</sup> I would like to thank the students of the seminar "Gender-conscious pedagogy", Denise Follendorf, Anna Gierszewska, Ulrike Gleitsmann, Irina Höschle, Marlies Meier, Christine Rachel and Vinzenz Rothenburg at the Alice-Salomon University of Applied Sciences for the development of the scenes, their enthusiasm and the written evaluation of the invisible theatre scenes "buying shoes differently".

(...), especially for the “gender-conscious pedagogy” seminar. In *Invisible Theatre*, not only the actors’ opinions but also the opinions of other people who become involved in the scene or in the dispute, are heard (...). Our play showed me that there are still many different opinions and views about homosexuality. However, I did not expect that there are people who show their intolerance so openly. My experience showed me that even small things, such as buying shoes, can become a problem for homosexual people in our society.”  
Ulrike Gleitsmann

“After the play I felt relieved, but I also realised how rude some reactions were. (...) I think that we clearly succeeded in motivating people to think about homosexuality. I don’t know if anything has changed in the spectators’ minds, but at least they were motivated to think about it and maybe to tell their family and friends about it. Personally, that makes me feel satisfied, because I knew beforehand that we would not be able to change any opinions. (...) By selecting the topic we did, I gained a small but interesting insight into the way some spectators think and I was both surprised and shocked. I think not only I but also many of my co-students gained valuable experience in this seminar unit. From the reports of the other groups, I know that they also had a lot of fun and gained professional food for thought. In my opinion, it is important as an educator to consider social problems also on a private level, because they can be found at all social layers. (...) *The Invisible Theatre* and the seminar itself have also opened my eyes.” Marlies Meier

“It was especially interesting because people who were primarily uninvolved became involved in the issue and brought in new opinions on the issue, which can be helpful in your own considerations. (...) I also still remember everything we learned very well today, which is not the case with other topics. We were able to carry out our own research on the issue which, in this case, is more useful for forming an own opinion than theory from a book. (...) I am now more conscious about what a large problem the acceptance of people “being different” is in our society and that there is still a great need for educational work to improve this. Therefore, I think it is of special importance to work with children on prejudices as early as possible and to focus on the equality of all people.”  
Christine Rachel

### A selection of further scenes for *invisible theatre*

**A**                    ?                    ?  
Thoben, a 22-year old religious man, who highly appreciates family and Tina, a 26-year old woman who recently realised that she was pregnant are on the city train together. Tina wants to abort the child because, after breaking off her apprenticeship, she is still dependent on her parents, but she soon wants to leave her parents’ home and become independent. In addition, she does not want to change her lifestyle, for instance, going out frequently.

Thoben, in contrast, is looking forward to having a child and is against an abortion.

Issues that students want to make public:

Is a woman allowed to abort a child for “selfish” reasons?

May a woman decide on an abortion without the male partner?

Does the man have less rights to have a say in the matter, only because the child does not grow in his body?

!

A man and a woman obviously in the advanced stages of pregnancy are travelling on a tram together. The woman is carrying several heavy bags. Shortly after they get on the tram, the man sits down on one of the free seats while the woman stands beside him and looks down humbly. After a while, an active spectator offers her seat to the pregnant woman. She refuses the offer shaking her head. Then, the active spectator addresses the man and asks him why he allows his pregnant wife to carry such heavy bags while not offering her his own seat. He only replies that it is his wife’s own fault that she has to carry so many things because it was her who wanted to do all the shopping.

,

Tanja and Elke, two forty-five year old, conservatively brought up women are on their way to work together by subway. The two women are friends. Tanja tells her friend that her son told her yesterday evening that he was gay. She is very upset about this and does not know how to deal with the situation. In no way does she want to tell the family and her husband about the coming out, and now she is asking advice from her friend. Elke recommends that she send her son to a therapist, and says that there are also some pills for cases like this. Tanja is very confused by her friend’s recommendations and is not sure whether the therapeutic solution is right. As she thinks the conversation in the subway is embarrassing, she asks her friend to talk more quietly.

?

Two people are arguing in the children’s department about whether they want to give blue garments to the little son of a friend or whether the colour selection of blue for boys and pink for girls is gender stereotyping.

## 6.9. Gender and picture books

Jens Krabel, Dissens e.V., Berlin

There are several reasons why picture books are suitable as a tool for integrating gender topics into education.

As such, working with picture books is included in the various framework plans of the Colleges for Social Pedagogy and the BA courses at German Universities of Applied Science.

In North-Rhine Westphalia, the lecturers at Social Pedagogy Colleges are instructed by the guidelines and curricula, for example, to „analyse picture books with respect to their content, and their literary, aesthetic and pedagogical-psychological aspects and to develop assessment criteria for children’s and youth literature”. Lower Saxony specifies that lecturers go through and reflect on the link between media socialisation and personal development with the students by looking at their own situations.

„By looking at their own experiences, they (the students – comment by J.K.) become aware of the different effects the respective ways things are expressed or the media have and analyse the significance of these for upbringing as well as educational and socialisation processes.“

The behaviour of the persons, figures and animals in the picture books convey the way they deal with their feelings, and how they act in the stories represents certain types of relationships and gender images. In this way, picture books show and describe gender relations which act as a point of orientation for girls, women, boys and men. As such, picture books are the ideal basis for carrying out an analysis of gender which is tied up with interesting picture book stories and students’ own biographical picture book experiences and is therefore mostly enjoyable for the students.

Picture books are an important medium for children in learning important skills and they support children in dealing with (gender-related) socialisation tasks (see Kernert 2000). For this reason, students should learn during their studies how to work pedagogically with picture books so that they are then able to demonstrate to the children a variety of possible modes of behaviour and possible lifestyles (see also: Checklist to take stock of gender images in Children’s Books).

### **Lesson modules to integrate gender topics into the subject area of “picture books”**

**A**

- to make students more aware of how gender images are conveyed in picture books
- development of analytical criteria for gender-aware picture books
- to get to know gender-aware picture books
- initiation of self-awareness processes by looking back reflectively at one’s own perceptions of picture books
- development of own ways of reading out picture book stories
- getting to know different ways in which children perceive picture books

### **Module 1: Working with the checklist to take stock of gender images in picture books**

As part of the Gender Loops project, a checklist to take stock of the way gender is presented in picture books was developed. This checklist offers students who are training to become educators the opportunity to take a critical look at the stock of picture books in their college, university or in early childhood education centres (the checklist can be accessed and downloaded on our website [www.genderloops.eu](http://www.genderloops.eu)).

The checklist can be used in the lesson in various ways. The students can read the introductory text as an introduction to the subject and then assess their knowledge of picture books alone or in small groups using the checklist. You can also ask the students to use the checklist to analyse and then comment on the picture books of the educational institutes, some selected bookshops or in the early childhood education centres where the students are acting as observers or doing their practical placements.

With the checklist the students can e.g. take a look at the picture books in the early childhood centres they are doing their internship in and analyze if there are picture books that ironically play with traditional fairytale figures or that give fairytale characters “untypical roles”?

These might be, for example:

- Princesses who do not want to get married or who at least do not want to marry the prince who has been chosen for them
- Princes who do not want to marry sensitive princesses, but courageous, adventurous and independent princesses
- Princes who fall in love with other princes
- Kings who do not want to reign, but prefer to spend their time with the children, with the family
- Loveable step mothers

Furthermore, you can take a look at the picture books recommended in the second half of the checklist with the students and discuss whether these picture books also correspond with the gender-aware criteria of the students.

## **Module 2: Biographical reflection of the students' own experiences with picture book socialisation**

The students (and lecturers) form small groups or sit around in a circle and discuss their own favourite picture books. The following questions can be discussed and reflected upon during this:

What picture books can I still remember from my childhood? What scenes or pictures from these books do I remember especially? Why did I like this book?

Who read the book out to me? In what situations and on what occasions did this happen?

What figures, animals and persons did I identify with most? What figures, animals and persons did I sympathise with, what ones was I happy for?

To what extent are the ways the students experience children's books different or similar?

## **Module 3: Criteria for reading out books in a way that is pedagogically beneficial**

The students discuss the following questions in small groups and record the results in note form.

**Variant A:** The students already have (practical) experience in early childhood learning centres and read out of picture books to children there:

Are there (favourite) picture books which I like reading out to the children? How do children react when I read books out? Do they listen with interest? Do the children become easily distracted? What comments do the children make about the books? Do they become afraid while listening?

When I read out a children's book, do I remain "true" to the text and the story or do I alter the story, for example, by exchanging some words for my own words or by

changing entire text passages? If yes, for what reasons do I do this? What criteria must be fulfilled so that a pedagogically beneficial atmosphere exists for reading out and so that the children are receptive? Why do I like reading particular books out to the children? Do I attach this to particular pedagogical expectations?

How do the children react to my reading out? How do the children understand the book in my opinion?

**Variant B:** The students do not have any working experience in early childhood education centres.

During their first practical placement, the students can ask the educator responsible for them some of the questions listed above and record the answers in their report on the placement.

After the work group phase, the students present their results. Following that, with the help of somebody acting as a moderator, the entire group tries to develop criteria which create a pedagogically beneficial atmosphere where stories can be read out and the children are receptive.

## **Module 4: e point of view of the author of children's books**

In this module, the students should be given the opportunity to get to know authors of children's books and their pedagogical and literary objectives. Here, the students split up into small groups and each group undertakes to present one author. Here, Internet research, publishing house communications, newspaper articles or public profiles by the authors can be used as information material to learn more about the picture book authors and their works. One idea would also be to invite authors of picture books directly to a seminar to be interviewed by the students.

## **Module 5: Getting to know how children perceive picture books**

Based on a project which Susanne Keuneke<sup>27</sup> describes in her book "Geschlechtserwerb und Medienrezeption" (Gender acquisition and perception of media), the students can check how children perceive picture books.

Before starting their practical placements, the students are given the task of reading out a gender-aware book to one or more children. Here, it is up to the students to make their own comments while reading out, to involve the children by asking them questions or to just read out loud without making any comments at all. One idea is

<sup>27</sup> Keuneke, Susanne (2000): *Geschlechtserwerb und Medienrezeption* (Gender acquisition and perception of media). On the role picture books play in the process of early childhood gender socialisation, Opladen.

to read the book often over a period of a few days. The students should let a few days go by and then ask the children to retell the picture book story and/or describe a picture that represents a scene from the book from memory. While doing this, the students should pay particular attention to how the children describe or portray people, figures or animals and, above all, their activities and behaviour. What is interesting here is the question as to whether the children alter the story. Taking the example of the girl who retold the story “Die Tütenprinzessin” (The plastic bag princess) in her own version, Susanne Keuneke shows that children “remember” picture books differently to make the story coincide with their own previous gender images. In the original story, the princess, who has nothing left to wear but a plastic bag, frees a prince from the clutches of a dragon. Instead of showing gratitude, the prince criticises what the princess looks like and she retaliates by hitting him over the head with a knight’s shield, and then she leaves him and does not think of marrying him any more. However, when retelling the story, the girl ‘remembered’ that the princess took the prince’s criticism seriously and then changed her style of dressing to become more pretty and then went on to marry the prince. The “new” gender constructions of princess and prince were restructured in the girl’s mind to fit in with her view of the world, whereby the emancipatory expectations expressed in the picture book obviously fell on deaf ears.

The whole process of reading out, the reactions of the children and the retelling of the story should be documented by the students and presented in the lesson. Following this presentation by the students, the students can deal with the question about how the stubborn reality and gender constructions of the children can (should) be influenced in gender-conscious pedagogical approaches.

## **Module 6: Development of a gender-aware picture book**

In this last module, the students have the opportunity to “develop” their own gender-aware picture book themselves in small project groups according to their own criteria. To do this, in the initial phase, the students have to come up with their own criteria for a gender-aware picture book. In the second phase, the students work out a picture book story. Of course, they do not have to create a finished picture book with professional pictures. However, a story should be developed which could interest and “captivate” children. The form in which the story should be presented is to be decided by the small groups themselves. One idea, for example, is that a student tells the story to another student while the other students illustrate the story using picture cards or act out the story right away as a small play, or they actually make a small “book” with pictures they have drawn and hand out copies of it.

## 6.10. Arts and crafts

Ole B. Nordfjell, Reform ressursenter for menn, Oslo

Unstructured play material, such as clay, paper and crayons, wooden blocks, sand, bucket and spade are not gendered, or are they? Why is it then, that in their play, children start making gender-typical shapes almost as soon as the material is out of the shop? How should early childhood centre employees deal with this? Should dragons and princesses be kept away from arts and crafts activities? Are arts and crafts activities in the early childhood centres, such as drawing, pottery, paper and woodwork, blocks and building activities and making jewellery, gender-neutral activities in the way they appear? Do male and female teachers have different experiences in arts and crafts and is this important? These are questions that may be relevant when teaching arts and crafts in early childhood centres.

### **What does the arts and crafts subject curriculum say?**

The arts and crafts subject in early childhood centres in Norway covers a wide area. The teacher must organize things so that the children can learn basic arts and crafts activities such as those mentioned above. The teacher must also help the children understand more comprehensive and complex arts and crafts activities, such as the production of woollen clothing or building a wooden house, starting with the trees in the forest to the completed house. Some of the keywords in the subject are experiences, aesthetic values and usefulness for children.

The Norwegian arts and crafts subject curriculum<sup>28</sup> states that in their educational activities with the children the students must:

- Start with the children's expressions and exploration of their indoor and outdoor surroundings
- Perform creative processes with children of different ages and with differing aptitudes and backgrounds
- Use different arts and design expressions
- Teach insight into different creative activities
- Analyse and assess various arts and design expressions

No learning objectives connected to gender and equality are mentioned in this key section or in any other section of the subject curriculum.

### **Does the teaching in this subject address gender and equality?**

We have interviewed an arts and crafts teacher. When she studied for her arts and crafts teacher certificate, the arts and crafts subject curriculum did not mention and had no learning objectives for gender and equality. This corresponds to the general impression that it is primarily in social studies and education science that the gender perspective is addressed. The arts and crafts teacher, not currently engaged in teaching, nevertheless finds that the gender perspective is important in her subject.

*When I think of my subject, which is arts and crafts, it is clearly a gendered one, where boys are more into woodworking and girls more into drawing. I feel we need to examine the subjects and discuss how their contents are gendered and being gendered. Gender stereotypes are no less present today than before.*

*Arts and crafts teacher, female*

She points out that the arts and crafts subject has a gendered history that is still very much alive today. Therefore it is not difficult to understand that the teaching given at the teacher colleges either explicitly or implicitly has inherent gender roles. The arts and crafts subject was one of the last subjects in school that stopped having gender-divided subject curricula. The reading and writing teaching given to girls and boys was the same, but in the arts and crafts subject, boys were taught woodworking and girls were taught needlework.

The idea that girls and boys should learn different things in their education because they would be pursuing different job careers or have different duties in the household has now been abandoned. Indeed, the education authorities now identify the strong trend towards traditional gender choices after completing lower secondary school as a social problem.

Even if the formal gender division has been stopped and the ideology has been changed, it is highly unlikely that both genders learn the same things in arts and crafts classes in primary and lower secondary school and in arts and crafts activities in early childhood centres. The arts and crafts teacher we interviewed believes one of the rea-

<sup>28</sup> The Ministry of Education and Research. Norway. 2003: *Rammeplan for førskolelærerutdanning* (Framework plan for pre-school teacher training).

sons for this is related to the fact that arts and crafts are physical, and that teachers and children carry experiences inside them. If there is to be real change, there must be a change in activities relating to the body.

*I believe that the practical performing subjects such as arts and crafts, music and drama are extra important for what students and children learn about social gender. Practices in this field are often highly gendered. I recall that this was precisely the reason we taught our students, the majority of them being women, to use a chain saw. Not because using a chain saw in itself is important, but rather because using a new tool would give them a sense of mastering, and also give them a new experience for thinking new thoughts about gender and the beliefs they take with them.*

*I think that much is shaped in the subjects that don't address gender and equality, and where these issues are not mentioned in the framework plan for preschool teacher training.*

Arts and crafts teacher, woman

The arts and crafts subject is different from many other areas of competence because it is so closely linked to the body. Men and women are furnished with varying “forming experiences” which they use in their educational activities in early childhood centres without being aware of it.

### **Gendered designers in the private and public spheres**

But the challenges do not only apply to female and male teacher students. Our question is whether or not who decides to design buildings, clothing, pottery etc. is a matter of random chance unrelated to gender. Could it just as easily be a man as a woman who cuts your hair, repairs your car, builds your house, styles your home for sale, decorates your living room, and helps family members to buy clothes?

Needless to say, these are the areas where gender roles are the most traditional ones we have. The people working as or training to become hairdressers, florists and jewellery designers are almost always women. The people working as or training to become builders, engineers, car mechanics and technical building designers are almost always men.

A similar gender division in the design area applies in the sphere children meet in households. Women often have the primary responsibility and influence on clothes, dressing and hairdos. The responsibility for the aesthetic design of indoor colours and furniture placement lies with women, while home improvement and maintenance of the building itself will most frequently be carried out by men, not least outdoors. Due to their stronger finan-

cial position, men often have a greater responsibility for acquiring major, expensive objects, such as cars or white and brown goods. In households, this gender division line is drawn between mothers and fathers, while in early childhood centres it runs between female teachers and assistants and male janitors and technical employees.

The designs and designers of the world are gendered whether we are speaking of cars or hair. Clothing, toys, furniture and objects made for children appear even more highly gendered than designs for the rest of the population. As objects made for children and children's peer culture are gendered, children will process these expressions in their own arts and crafts activities whether we are speaking about playing at being a builder, drawing, body art, bead activities or woodworking. The shapes being processed may range from Bob the Builder and princesses to two-dimensional pictures in the visual virtual world of gaming.

### **Drawing pictures – an example of gender patterns in art activities**

An example of this is a study of children's design of their own pictures in two early childhood centres in Sweden. Eva Änggård (2006) analysed pictures as a creative activity that was meaningful for the children. Her analysis also attaches importance to drawing pictures as a play activity where several children often participate.

There were differences between the types of pictures and motifs girls and boys chose to draw. None of the boys opted to make a collage, but some of the girls in one of the early childhood centres did. Her findings of gender patterns correspond quite well with other research. The children primarily draw people of their own gender. Girls draw princesses. Boys draw heroes. Girls draw hearts. Boys draw dinosaurs and wild animals. Girls draw dogs and cats. Both genders draw houses and chairs. She also points to children and episodes where they break gender conventions.

In her analysis of the pictures, she finds that the drawing of pictures generally was in the dialogue style, with composition of popular cultural pictures, figures and stories, and then with the gender patterns from these sources. One example is that boys make paper monster masks inspired by popular fiction. The children conquer their own picture culture with creative interpretative reproductions, Änggård claims. She understands the gender patterns in the pictures the children create in part as a result of gender-typical toys/popular culture. When choosing form, colour and the larger narrative the products are part of, the toy manufacturers and salespeople specify that the product is for either girls or boys. The gender patterns in the pictures the children create are partly a re-

sult of the children actively seeking to create pictures that confirm gender. To put it bluntly, the colours and design in the toyshop shelves for girls and boys correspond to the children's active creation of identity.

On a more general level, Änggård understands the children's strong preferences for popular culture visual ideas as resistance against the picture culture of parents and early childhood centre employees. Often the popular culture pictures are not approved by the adults. Another reason for the preferences of popular culture pictures is that the design and colours are easy for the children to reproduce and perfect. In their endeavour to make something that is nice, the genders have different preferences. Many girls like motifs such as hearts, pretty girls, colours such as violet and turquoise and stories that deal with relations. Boys often prefer wild and dangerous animals and stories of heroes with much action, and they prefer such colours as blue, green and yellow.

The task of the teacher is, according to Änggård, neither to uncritically accept all popular picture culture and toys in the early childhood centre, nor to ban them in favour of "highbrow culture". In her view, an important task is to help the children and to be in dialogue with them on processing popular culture expressions. When children are interested in popular culture pictures it is important to use these as the point of departure for educational drawing activities. In interaction and interplay with other children and adults, children must be given the opportunity to create and communicate. When examined in more detail, not all popular culture images and forms, such as Barbie, are as gender stereotypical, rather they also have deviations and contrasts that children process, and these can be used in the education activities.

These were some of the gender aspects Änggård found relevant in her arts and crafts subject and drawing activities. Other arts and crafts teachers in other activities will probably include gender aspects in other ways.

### **How important is the teacher's gender for the arts and crafts subject?**

On a more overarching level we must ask how significant it is for the subject that most teachers in arts and crafts are women. Female and male teachers will find it difficult to distance themselves from the gendered day-to-day life we described above in this sub-chapter. Experiences with interior decoration, pottery, flower decorations, decoupage, drawing, house painting, car maintenance and placement of speakers are hardly evenly distributed between the genders, regardless of whether we are speaking about before or after the completion of college studies.

The teacher we interviewed believed, as mentioned

above, that it may serve to restrict arts and crafts activities in early childhood centres if female teachers have less experience with bigger tools and large machines. Norwegian researcher Hilde Liden (1994) asks in her research what it might mean that men and women bring different arts and crafts experiences to the early childhood centre. Liden's work deals with a closely related field, the after-school programme, and she found an overwhelming majority of female staff at the institution she observed. The after-school programme staff normally initiate activities where participation is the children's free choice. When the staff initiated activities they were generally handicraft tasks that particularly engaged a group of the girls, and they then made a little community together with the staff. It was obvious that the way the girls liked to play fit better with the employees' idea of how to play than the way the boys played. The adults were less familiar with boys' play, which was often more physical. The staff knew less about what this kind of play was about and would overlook it. The boys also received much negative feedback for their play, and preferred to play out of sight of the staff.

Liden's observations also show that the core group of girls found it difficult to join the boys' various free play groups. Thus the girl-woman community restricted the opportunities of girls and boys to join in various plays and games with other children. Liden describes a "closed gender community" as one of the consequences of the limited scope of playing activities the staff could offer the children. In a situation such as the one she describes, it might be desirable that the staff have a broader range of arts and crafts skills and other activities that might have included the whole group of children. It would hardly be a solution, but rather might end up confirming the gender differences, showing men coming in to initiate masculine craftsman's activities to reach the boys.

### **Conclusion for the subject curriculum**

An important element in a number of subject curricula is that the students must carry out their own creative work in the subject, thereby developing competence and reflection. Local curricula should include as a learning objective that the students must reflect upon their own bodily experiences with arts and crafts subjects and the importance of cultural context, sexuality and gender for these experiences. The students should be able to reflect upon this relation in creative encounters with others. (Cf. the informant's report: "We taught them to use a chainsaw.")

The subject curricula should explicitly address the ability of the students to facilitate for and understand creative processes regardless of gender. Children's creative activities may have the effect of being integrating and disinte-



grating in the group of children. The students should be able to contribute to children's creative repertoire across and independently of conventional gender divisions in the sphere that is created. It is difficult to envision such competence if the teacher has no such personal and varied arts and crafts experiences, including from what many would call the "male sphere".

It is a point to emphasize the benefits to be gained from including the gender perspective in the arts and crafts subject. This may generate an understanding of the material aspects of gender that is qualitatively different from the insight that subjects such as social studies might provide.

## Literature

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## 6.11. Gender is an emotional issue

Norman Duncan, *El arte de ser persona*, Barcelona

The development of gender identity from infancy through childhood, adolescence and adulthood is laden with complexities, manipulation and guilts. It is mixed with sex and sexuality, with racial, cultural and social concepts which also have implicit values and emotional controlling mechanisms attached to them. As gender trainers our subjective life and experience is implicated in how we meet our learners.

The Needs Analysis from the “Dialogue between the genders” Grundtvig project interviewed experienced gender trainers and found a high level of stress and burn-out in trying to implement gender awareness and change in their adult learners. Similarly, in the Gender Loops project we could observe some three year old children’s anxiety and resistance to an exercise which questions their gender roles. Everyone is gendered (children, students, adults, trainers, ...) which implies, and indeed it is our personal experience as professional gender trainers, that we probably all have some conflicts, tensions, anger, discontent, anxieties, uncertainties around gender issues. Inter alia, these conflicts and anxieties are related to our:

- biographical experiences with our own parents, life partners and children
- current relationships with close friends, parents, colleagues, life partners and children
- close groups of the same sex (e.g. jokes about our own or the other sex...)
- professional working situation (genderised power dynamics, mobbing).

These situations structure our daily lives and provoke stress in the trainers which in turn influences the quality of their training. Trainers find themselves in a range of situations such as:

- blaming their learners and trying to punish themselves
- experiencing types of stress and burn-out
- embarrassment and avoidance of the issues.

It is important for us as trainers and teachers to identify and name these issues so as to begin to define what support and training might help us to address these emotional components of our training. In this way we can then approach our gender questions with less fear and resistance, in the end making our training more effective.

As trainers and teachers who address gender issues it

is not sufficient just to address the academic, theoretical and sociological components of gender. This is an emotional issue and our learners will feel the incongruence or hypocrisy where we have not addressed our own anxieties in this area. When we are incongruent emotionally then our learners will reject our message. We need continual reflective training which explores the emotions in our own personal gender. From this place we can really meet and accompany our learners in this complex process.

### **Stressful moments in addressing gender issues in training**

Here we identify some of the gender aspects that provoke stress in trainers and teachers.

- Learners’ blocks and resistance - The moment we question the gender roles in our learners we will encounter resistance, anxiety and often anger. This is not only where we question the usually mentioned traditional gender roles. There are a range of other, alternative gender roles adopted as adaptive mechanisms by children as they grow up in order to survive: e.g. the passive castrated man, the aggressive woman, etc which might initially appear to be liberated from genderisation but are usually equally neurotic responses to life.
- Denial - Both, male and female participants, often say, that they have no problems with gender (in-)equality. Current laws promote gender equality and they are happy with this. This often places the trainer in a very uncomfortable role of trying to convince rather than to train or accompany, and trainees often react with irritation and rejection of the training.
- “Unacceptable” beliefs or behaviour from participants’ - trainers can encounter difficult situations resulting from intolerance (regarding division of power, sexual orientation, etc...), misogyny and even justification of gender violence (from different genders). It is difficult to keep a “professional” distance when for example participants are being “attacked” with sexist arguments or jokes.
- Conflict between different cultural loyalties in learners - Impossibility to address the conflict at a meta level because the participants are too dependent on their cultural group so they can’t step out of this to

question it. This is particularly important in working with weak or vulnerable social groups where their 'belonging' to the group has a much higher priority than the gender agenda of the trainer.

- The trainer's personal emotional engagement – as trainers we all have our own weak or difficult gender issues. When these are touched upon in a group we are trying to train then it will provoke a higher level of emotional response. For example: we get angry with our learners, we try and save them, we are overwhelmed by their pain, we try and blame them, or similar.
- The trainer's current emotional situation – Few of us have deeply explored our own gender, sexuality and difficulties in relating socially and sexually. So what is happening in our current relationships with close friends, parents, colleagues, life partners and children, will affect our emotional state with our learners. If we are lonely, stressed or anxious about other personal issues then this will get mixed with our experience in the training field. Difficulties can also emerge from one's own unconscious conflicts with sexual or gender identity.

### **Recommendations for training and support to deal with these difficult emotional situations**

There are a wide range of strategies for trainers to learn to handle conflictive situations corresponding to the diversity of gender trainers. Some important strategies are mentioned here.

- Personal and emotional involvement – trainers use themselves and their personal "transparency" to create a safe context. If used with critical analyse, the personal experience can, for them, be a good training strategy which generates empathy within the group and makes participants feel closer and safer. In situations of conflict, trainers can also choose to share their own emotions with the group and invite the participants to do so.
- To look for/to use the resistance, the critical situation or the difficulty - In this case, trainers make the conflictive situation an integral part of the training process and training methodology. Conflictive situations and inner conflicts are constructively acknowledged as a starting point of the transformative process.
- Reflective training and supervision on personal experience regarding these emotional and conflictive situations on attitude or performance. It is important for trainers to have a space of discussion where they can freely talk about their fears, frustrations, resentments and emotions experienced during their training activities.

## 6.12. Gender and Profession

Anzelika Lilaite and Loreta Golubevaite, Social Innovation Fund, Kaunas

Breaking stereotypes is rather problematic, especially if taking into account that the process of conception development within the society is a long-term one that lasts many years. Given the growing numbers of women entering the professions and considerable public debate concerned with equal opportunity and barriers to women's advancement, attempts to theorise the relation between gender and profession within the discipline of sociology remain relatively rare. The adjunct work of men, it is argued, facilitates the *fleeting encounter* of professional practice, thereby resting on, and celebrating, a specific historical and cultural construction of masculinity and a masculinity vision of professional work. In an era where professions are under unprecedented public scrutiny, sociological attention to their renewal needs to recognise that a key feature of profession, as presently defined, is that it professes gender<sup>29</sup>.

The public sector of care and education work is by and large completed by women; the private sector of technology and production work by men. This division of labour leads to many labour market inequalities e.g. in terms of pay and contracts, and is the starting point of my dissertation project. Throughout our lives, we comment on our gender: in the ways we look, talk and walk; in our choices; in how we appropriate space among people. Our being a gendered person is also always tinted by other social subject positions (Søndergaard), such as age, ethnicity or profession<sup>30</sup>.

In recent years, females comprise a larger portion of various profession fields than in the past especially in the education system. The education or academic trend is similar to the trend in the business sector, where a previously male-dominated workforce is being replaced by one of more equity. Professional practice is important in the lives of many people. Maybe men should be more conscious themselves and look for jobs in educational institutions; for example early childhood institutions? Usually the contact between children and men in the kinder-

garten is minimal, because children see them mostly as technical workers. The main point should be a workers' level of education, pedagogic professionalism and competence, personal characteristics and wishes to work, not their gender. So men are able to work with children. But in the society there is settled an opinion that women, due to their delicacy, thoroughness and empathy to the child's needs are preferable for work with small children. Younger ones need father and mother in their family; therefore it is also very useful to have a gender balance in pre-school education institutions. It would be a new and interesting experience for the children to have a man as a teacher. Besides, for those kids who have no father in their family this experience would be essential. The main thing is to know the specifics of work with small children and to have proper methodology. Then the work would not be static but creative.

Usually a man is considered as the breadwinner in the family. The society might judge a man negatively, who gets a small salary for the job, which requires more nervous strain and not physical work. For example, in a Lithuanian research all the interviewed persons agreed that the prestige of educators of kindergartens mostly suffers because of the small salary and the stereotype that men cannot take care of children. Society often forms and keeps the clichés that such jobs are not suitable for men. It is a good idea to start changing the formation of this attitude in early childhood. The family and mass media should contribute to this process.

According to the researches (2007) within the *Gender loops* project, men who are studying young children's education have selected this speciality by chance and their primary goal was to study at an institution of higher education. It is important that after graduation the state resources not be wasted and the graduates start to work in accordance with their speciality. In this case, there are two aspects of high importance: self-motivation of an employee and job vacancies, i.e. demand for employees. So it is very important to motivate and search for males who would study this speciality and by the same time support male students, who are already studying young children's education, organize conferences and workshops for them. Society considers preschool education to be a specialisation for women so it is crucial to emphasise the importance of changing such attitudes. At the same time it is necessary to change an image of women as the only

29 Davies, C. (1996), *The Sociology of Professions and the Profession of Gender*, Sociology, Vol. 30, No. 4, pp. 661-678, On the internet: <BSA Publications Ltd. <http://soc.sagepub.com/cgi/content/abstract/30/4/661>>.

30 Roininen E. (2003), *Doing gender/doing profession: An analysis of the constructions of identities of ICT engineers and primary school teachers within discursive representations of their professions*, On the internet: <<http://www.genderportal.unisg.ch/org/opsy/gs.nsf/wwwPubInhalteGer/Ella?opendocument>>.

ones who can be responsible for children, still prevailing in the society. There still exists a societal opinion that some careers are designed only for a man and or only for a woman. All this influences the norm that men cannot work as teachers or educators.

Women-only pedagogy risks to be limited by one-sided perception and delivery of ideas. There shouldn't be a gender bias to these careers. For example, in Denmark educational work is considered to be a prestigious one, it is very well-paid and not easy to get for every candidate, while in Lithuania it is not a prestigious job. It would be innovative to involve children's parents into the educational work, i.e. into collaboration in favour of their children, to perform educational tasks, and thus attract more men to their own children's needs.

There is a big challenge for both - country and society in their attempt to improve the image of educator's position and to eliminate the prevailing stereotype that this position is for women-only.

## 6.13. Norwegian language

Ole B. Nordfjell, Reform ressursenter for menn, Oslo

Do children's books feature as many girls as boys that children can identify with? How should a preschool teacher address children? Why are so many more boys than girls poor readers in late primary and lower secondary school? Why do more boys than girls develop reading and writing difficulties? All these questions involve Norwegian language, literature and gender, areas which preschool teachers need competence in.

### What does the Norwegian subject curriculum say?

The Norwegian subject curriculum<sup>31</sup> attaches importance to language as a carrier of culture and as the basis for children's thinking, experiences and communication. The subject curriculum lays down that in their educational work with children in early childhood centres the students must be able to do the following:

- Promote creative language stimulation
- Include children with language difficulties
- Include children with bilingual backgrounds
- Prepare the teaching in reading and writing in school
- Promote the teaching of culture through storytelling and reading aloud
- Use ICT critically and creatively

No where in the subject curriculum are equal rights or gendered issues mentioned, neither directly nor indirectly. This is in spite of the fact that knowledge and research state that gender is relevant in all the areas mentioned here. Let us review this quickly.

*Creative language stimulation* is connected to playing with language and helping children to play with and manipulate words, letters, signs and sounds. A substantial amount of research proves that in situations of such a nature guided by an adult, as when a story in a children's book is discussed, teachers and preschool teachers have a significant propensity to allow boys to speak more than girls. This gender imbalance finds a parallel in the rep-

resentation of men and women in public debates in the media and at seminars. Women are much less represented among those making statements than men.

When it comes to *including children with language difficulties and bilingual backgrounds* and *preparing the teaching in reading and writing in school*, the challenges are not evenly distributed between the genders. A substantially higher proportion of boys than girls develop reading and writing difficulties, and boys on average score significantly poorer in tests of reading and writing skills in primary and lower secondary school.

*Promoting cultural teaching through storytelling and reading aloud* is not a gender neutral activity. Values and structures are taught through language and literature, and this is one of the most important sources for understanding who children and adults are as girls and boys and women and men. "Pippi Longstocking", "Nancy Drew: Girl Detective", "Emil from Lönneberga", "Batman and Robin" are examples of stories carrying different gender-determined values.

*Using ICT critically and creatively.* The technology we use for communication, whether this is word processing, sending SMS's or playing games, is not gender neutral. For example, one gender division which recurs in several areas is that more boys and men than girls and women are early users of new technology and are interested in the content of the technology. When girls and women often enter the field at a later stage, they are more interested in the possibilities of the technology.

### Does the teaching in Norwegian address gender and gender equity?

The fact that gender and equal rights primarily are addressed in the subjects of education science and social science and ignored in other subjects is, as has been stated above, the main impression from the qualitative study. This study does not provide specific answers as to the extent to which the Norwegian subject deals with gendered issues, as we have pointed out in the review above. Under the next four headings we will present knowledge and research which may have relevance in the Norwegian subject: (1) Language's links to society, (2)

<sup>31</sup> The Ministry of Education and Research. 2003: *Rammeplan for førskolelærerutdanning* (Framework plan for preschool teacher training, p. 37 and 38.

Inclusive use of language, (3) Gender differences in the development of language competence and (4) Innovative literature for children.

## Language links to society

Language is closely linked to society and reflects the community where it is used. Everything is reflected in language, from conditions in working life, child rearing and class conditions to family structure. The name of the first language a child learns is, for example, taken from the family as an institution. It is called “mother tongue” and not “father tongue”, which might have been an alternative. Another example is how one of the most commonly used words for nation is also taken from the family. Many will use “fatherland”, not “motherland”. This is often particularly clear in relation to gender conditions in society. The mother is not the only person children interact with in their early language development, and men and fathers are by far not the only persons to represent the nation, but this is nevertheless often what we say.

An example of how our language lags behind social developments is how terms such as “parents”, “father”, “mother”, “child”, “sister” and “brother” are used as simple unambiguous concepts – suggesting heterosexual parents who live with their children. On closer examination, these terms often refer to very different positions and practices which we have few terms for. We find, for example, that we lack terms for family concepts after a cohabitant relationship has broken up, when biological and social parenthood do not overlap, when children have parents of the same gender, when children only have one parent. The latter situation may be covered by the term “single parent”.

Power relations in society also have their parallels in language. Paired terms that might appear of equal worth such as child/adult, coloured/white, woman/man on closer analysis are systematically ranked. Children are indirectly often described as unfinished and incomplete, adults being the standard. Dependence on others, care needs and lifelong learning life are scarcely visible in language. Terms used about people with other skin colours and ethnicity (black, yellow, brown etc.) have linguistically been linked to negative characteristics and aspects. The colour white has generally not had been the subject of such attention, characteristics and critical journalism. The norm in language is the man, to the extent that many continue to find it necessary to put “female” in front of the names of jobs and tasks that both genders can do, without the same being done for men. Examples are “female doctor” or “female soccer player”. Research on critical discourse analysis is particularly interested in examining such relations between language and social power.

The household sphere, an arena closely linked to early childhood centres and which to a large degree has been the preserve of women, is an interesting area to examine more closely. Ruth Vatvedt Fjeld (2001), professor of literature, points out that “female terms” for such areas as household, female ailments and beauty care have been excluded from a common arena for linguistic recognition and development. Terms from this field are significantly excluded from dictionaries and norms for our language. Where is the Norwegian Language Council when it comes to finding good Norwegian language terms for “makeup”, “rouge” or “foundation”?

The relation between gender, sexuality and language is also relevant when it comes to naming sexual organs. Kajsa Svaleryd (2002), equal rights consultant, doubts whether parents and staff in early childhood centres speak just as openly and unaffectedly about the sexual organs of girls as of those of boys. She gives as an example a not uncommon Swedish announcement of a birth in a newspaper, something which is impossible to translate into English but for our purposes here could be rendered as: “Yippee, we got one with a wee-wee.” Making a similar birth announcement for a baby girl would be virtually unthinkable: “Yippee, from the front, it’s one with a ...” (page 26). Sexual organs are not as equally visible for girls as for boys, where, needless to say, they extend from the body. However, it might be difficult to find terms that work in an everyday setting without tipping over into the realm of foul language. The male sexual organ has a great number of names with nuances such as penis, prick, pecker and balls, and many of these can be found in dictionaries. Svaleryd proposes a discussion to settle on one term for the external female sexual organ, and herself favours the medical term “vulva”.

## Literature

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forhandlinger om farskap i genets tidsalder.” (Related to father? Ideas and negotiations about fatherhood in the age of genes.) In *Tidsskrift for kjønnsforskning* no. 1-2/2006.

## **Inclusive use of language**

Language has a personal side. It gives a sense of who we are, our identity and place in the community. For example, many will dislike being called “kindergarten nanny”, “kindergarten uncle” or “kindergarten teacher”. Language does not only reflect society. What is made into language and the way this is brought about constructs realities. A case in point is the social experience a child has when s/he learns her/his own name or a letter in the name. Seen from the child’s perspective this helps create or construct the child in a wider sense.

In relation to ethnic minorities, we have had a comprehensive language debate on the names we give to ethnic minorities and groups of people. “Negro” and “second-generation immigrant” have especially been discussed as terms. An important argument in the debate has been that the person to be addressed must be heard, and that this is not only a question of the majority population’s language traditions and wishes. Language traditions are not sacred and languages change. The Ministry of Labour and Social Inclusion has prepared guidelines setting out what to call ethnic minorities and ethnic majorities. Some time ago the Norwegian Language Council and the Competence Centre for Equality prepared a similar publication on writing to reflect equality.

It is important to have an inclusive use of language in the early childhood centre’s language situations, as well as in general social life. Some issues that may be relevant: How do preschool teachers address children of the two genders? If the preschool teacher addresses children with “You boys down there” or “Hi girls!”, then the gender is emphasized and becomes the basis of identification. An entire group can be stigmatized if such an address is meant to point out the bad behaviour of just one member of the group. Another example is how the early childhood centre staff address parents of different genders and with different family status. For example, are the fathers who do not live with the child on a day-to-day basis to receive written information from the early childhood centre? Do fathers and mothers receive an equal amount of information when bringing and picking up the child? How are men and women employed in the early childhood centre referred to? Are “male preschool teacher” and “male assistant” used while the gender prefix is dropped when the preschool teacher or assistant is a woman? Which linguistic ideal should be used when naming indoor and outdoor elements of the early childhood centre? Should

we use names from the household sphere, such as living-room, corridor, kitchen, aunt, uncle to underscore the importance and status in a traditionally female sphere? Or should we use names from traditional craft institutions (carpenter’s workshop, tannery, textile workshop etc.) such as raw materials storage, toolshed, tool shelves, workbench, worktable, and so on? Another idea might be to use names from school, education institutions, offices or farms.

Language is ours in common, in that it is a structure used by all, but it is also individual in the sense that each speaker uses language to express herself/himself. Thus, individually we have a responsibility and the opportunity to contribute to ensuring that the language and words we use reflect what we want to say and the reality we wish to create.

## **Literature:**

Ministry of Labour and Social Inclusion. 2007. Et inkluderende språk (An inclusive language). (The guide can be found on [www.regjeringen.no](http://www.regjeringen.no))

Competence Centre for Equality and the Norwegian Language Council. 1997. Kjønn, språk og likestilling (Gender, language and equality). (The guide to writing reflecting equality can be found on [www.sprakradet.no](http://www.sprakradet.no))

## **Gender differences in the development of language competence**

The ability of children to express themselves orally and eventually to learn to make themselves understood in writing is a source of pleasure and belongingness. This ability is also a basic requirement for growth and development in other areas. Knowledge on gender imbalance (as well as imbalance based on ethnicity and class) is therefore an important field. This brings attention to the fact that the reading and writing abilities of boys on average lag far behind those of girls, and also to the fact that boys are overrepresented among pupils with reading and writing difficulties. Another important finding is that girls generally get to speak less in general conversations in early childhood centres and primary schools. This is a parallel to the fact that women are allowed less speaking time in social life, seminars and news media.

Matters that affect gender differences in the development of language competence include the use of language and reading patterns by parents, early childhood centre staff and other adults. For example, adult women on average read twice as many books as men (Statistics Norway 2006). Different types of literature often address gender specific target groups or the literature may be gendered in other ways. Gendered associations in connection with



user manuals for technical devices are essentially different from the gendered associations in connection with romantic and celebrity magazines.

There is some research on gender differences in language usage that focuses on girls and boys in early childhood centre ages and gender differences in the use of language between girls and boys of early childhood ages. (Sociolinguistic research with child and gender perspectives.) Helene Valvatne and Margareth Sandvik (2007) have reviewed this research, but as most of these studies are more than 15 years old, it is difficult to attach much importance to the findings. Teachers of the Norwegian subject and preschool teachers may use the findings to question their own use of language and what the language situation is today for girls and boys, as we do here. Are they, for example, more prone to giving simple messages and commands to boys, while girls are more often given an explanation? Do men speak in a louder voice when they talk to a child? Do men joke and swear more? Research shows that women speak more in accordance with the standards than men do, “more educated”, and their conversation structure is more oriented toward consensus than men’s. One question is then what this type of “more educated language” means to children.

The use of language changes with society. There are now, for example, children in minority families who grow up with a father who masters the Norwegian language while their mother does not do as well. What is the importance of this for their language patterns?

## Literature:

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## Innovative child literature

Language and literature present values and structures and are one of the most important sources for understanding who children and adults are as girls and boys and women and men. Fiction in films and literature is an important source for criticism of gender conventions and the displaying of alternatives and diversity. Nordic literature for children features a number of classics that continue to be popular, such as Astrid Lindgren’s heroine Pippi Longstocking, who with her wit and physical prowess turns the power relations between adults and

children, girls and boys, topsy-turvy. Lindgren’s books about Emil from Lönneberga are critical to the way this very active boy is understood by his surroundings. Gunilla Bergström has written entertaining and inquisitive stories about Albert Åberg, who lives with his single father. Tove Jansson has created the character “My” in her books about the Mumi-troll, an interesting, special and wilful character that defies gender stereotypes. Anne Cath. Vestly has written books featuring her characters Aurora and Sokrates, living in a family where mother and father have switched roles.

When working with this sub-chapter we have found little literary research that examines gender perspectives in recent Nordic literature for children. However, there is no doubt that good literature for children of both genders of an early childhood age continues to be written in the Nordic countries. John Stephen (2002), a literary researcher points as an example to the diversity of the descriptions of men and boys by Norwegian authors of children’s books. Sexual diversity is probably not as well dealt with.

However, it continues to be a problem that a significantly lower number of main characters are girls and women that girls can identify with. Approximately 60 per cent of books for children published in Norway in 2004 had a male main character, 25 per cent had a female main character and 12 per cent had both a male and female main character. These figures come from Randi Stene and Marte Ericsson in the feminist periodical *Fett*. It is also a fact that a large part of picture books for the youngest children have been translated and have a very commercial and gender conservative content, as in father protects, goes to work and finds adventures, mother minds the children.

Literature scholar Nina Méd (2008) has examined heroines in books for youths, finding very few to take up the mantle of Pippi and Nancy Drew. This is the case even when including acts of relational heroism from day-to-day affairs, family, friends and falling in love. The same trend probably applies to books for the youngest children. This is how she describes the negative aspect of this absence: “Even if we historically cannot point to many literary heroines, there is no doubt that many young girls in 2007 who read books *need* books with girl characters to look up to, girls who are not limited to private acts or narrow spheres for girls. They need to read about active girls in the public sphere to become such girls themselves.” (page 46)

Some authors and illustrators of books for children have taken up the challenge motivated by such things as the absence of themes in children’s books connected to gender and sexuality. Interesting examples include Gro Dalhe

and Svein Nyhus, who in their book *Snill* (Nice) (2004) give invisible children and girls a voice. *Sinna Mann* (Angry Man) by the same authors is a story of children witnessing violence. "Jon" (Jon) by Tormod Haugen is a story about a boy who is bullied by the other boys in his class because he is different and his best friends are girls. *Malins mamma gifter seg med Lisa* (Malin's mum is marrying Lisa) by Annette Lundborg is one of the very few picture books published in Norway where the parents are not presented as heterosexual.

Is it true that children depend on the main characters in books being similar to them if they are to identify with them and become drawn into the narrative? Must the gender, skin colour and family type of the main characters match if there is to be identification? Identification and alienation based on such thinking is something that should be discussed. But it may be difficult to disregard the fact that children need fiction they can use and that is not too narrow. A good help in this context is literary criticism (for example Tråvik 2007) which manages to decode and increase the reflection upon gendered (and other) patterns in literature given to children in early childhood centres and elsewhere. Icelandic *Hjalli* early childhood centres have procedures to review and approve new books for children and also to weed out literature that does not satisfy a gender-egalitarian standard. Whatever the case, it may be a point that literature that shows alternatives and diversity should not only be dragged out on special and problematic occasions, but rather be included in day-to-day life and diversity.

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## Conclusion on the subject curriculum

In this sub-chapter we have shown in different ways the relevance of gender perspectives in the Norwegian subject. Bearing the existing knowledge and research in mind, it is paradoxical that the subject curriculum does not mention gender or equality in connection with knowledge the students must have. The closest the subject curriculum gets to this is to state that the students must be able to reflect upon their way of communicating with children and adults.

As a minimum the subject curricula in the university colleges should extend this reflection to explicitly being able to reflect upon gender and equality in their own use of language. The students should be able to decode gendered structures in the day-to-day language conventions, stories and literature that children encounter. Through this knowledge and the ability to practise self-reflection, the students should be able to create an inclusive and wide space for empathy and linguistic development. Relevant literature and didactics corresponding to such a requirement should be included in the teaching. One way is to find a practical method for working with language in early childhood centres (see below).

