MAINSTREAMING (IN)EQUITY: PRE-SERVICE TEACHER DEFENSIVENESS TOWARD FEMINISM

by

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Abstract

While feminist theorists work to provide better ways of understanding the complexities of women's lives, feminist pedagogues tackle the growing difficulties of teaching feminism. Through analyzing various forms of defensiveness, we may determine how progressive pedagogies could better address the complexities of the classroom. By studying what happens when a feminist teaches a coeducational pre-service teacher core course that treats gender as an add-on, I illuminate various forms of defensiveness (e.g., masculine, feminine, social class, heterosexual). In doing so, I not only re-present pre-service teachers' engagement and disengagement in feminist analyses of education, but also contribute to feminist pedagogy debates.

By examining consecutive interviews and classroom observations, I consider ways in which a feminist perspective informs the teaching of “gender equity” in a mainstream course and how pre-service teachers react to feminist analyses. In addition, I analyze how teaching gender equity as an add-on critiques “malestream: education, particularly when taught by a feminist. These analyses illuminate some of the institutional tensions involved in addressing anti-oppression issues and some of the difficulties facing feminist and pro-feminist instructors in university classrooms, particularly in a teacher education core course. After analyzing attempts made by a particular university to publicly mediate feminist struggles within a core teacher education course, I consider some institutional and pedagogical implications to improve classroom atmosphere.
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Chapter 1 Introduction

In education, feminist anti-oppression educators struggle to find pedagogical methods and curricula that enable their students to understand the pervasiveness of, and their presence in, systemic inequalities (Bannerji et al. 1991; Martindale 1992; Thompson and Disch 1992; Bannerji 1995; hooks 1995). Underlying feminist anti-oppression educators’ struggles are the tensions of attempting to address oppression within an institution which, itself, exemplifies systemic inequalities (Currie 1992; Chilly Collective 1995). Subsequently, universities continue to be sites of struggle for female faculty, particularly feminist faculty, at both the institutional level and the classroom level (Bannerji et al. 1991; Currie 1992; Richer and Weir 1995).

As my research illustrates, these two levels of struggle (institutional and classroom) overlap whenever a feminist teaches a core course which addresses “gender issues.” I conducted a study with pre-service teachers at the University of British Columbia (UBC) in the fall of 1994. I focused my research on a compulsory course for both elementary and secondary pre-service teachers: Educational Studies 314: The Analysis of Education (EDST 314). EDST 314 used separate components to deal with a number of social inequity issues (e.g., First Nations, gender equity, multiculturalism, anti-racism, etc.) over a ten-week period. My study considers a number of institutional and feminist pedagogical questions that must be addressed when one attempts to teach gender equity in a mainstream course.
1.1 Overview of Research

When I began this research, I was interested in what kinds of discourse(s) would emerge from pre-service teachers involved in a mainstream course that deals with gender issues. To do this I interviewed ten pre-service teachers before, during, and after the gender component of EDST 314. The ten participants (five female and five male) in this study came from two different classrooms, both taught by doctoral students, Barbara and Everet, respectively.

Since completing this research, I have decided to focus on what happens when a feminist teaches about gender issues in a core teacher education course. This being the case, I draw primarily upon Barbara’s class, the members of which I observed and some of whom I interviewed. I consider the ways in which a feminist perspective informs the teaching of “gender equity” in this mainstream course and how pre-service teachers react to feminist analyses. In addition, I analyze how teaching gender equity as an add-on critiques “malestream” education, particularly when taught by a feminist. These analyses will illuminate some of the institutional tensions involved in addressing anti-oppression issues in a core course (e.g., Is gender equity a linguistic concession to feminism? In what ways are women’s lives and/or experiences as teachers and students expressed through a teacher education course?). Thus, I analyze the attempts made by a particular university to publicly mediate feminist struggles within a core teacher education course. I also analyze the unique strengths that a feminist instructor may bring to institutional attempts to teach about gender equity.

In this chapter, I contextualize the Teacher Education Program at UBC by outlining application requirements and selection processes, and I discuss the institutional intentions
behind EDST 314 by analyzing its historical context and its course package reader between 1990 and 1994. I then outline some feminist educators’ discussions of the epistemological tensions which occur when they attempt to address girls’/women’s experiences in core course curricula, feminist pedagogy, common forms of defensiveness in feminist classrooms, and feminism in teacher education.

1.2 UBC’s Teacher Education Program

The Teacher Education Program at UBC graduates more than 700 students each year, including approximately 50 percent of all newly certified teachers in British Columbia.¹ Selection of candidates is, on paper, based on minimal professional and academic requirements. These include a statement demonstrating work experience(s) with the appropriate age group, a personal statement describing how that experience will inform their roles as teachers, and two confidential letters of reference (Ungerleider 1994). All applicants who fulfill these minimal professional requirements are considered by the admissions committee, which represents both the professional and academic interests of the Faculty of Education (Ungerleider 1994). Though professional experience is required, it is assessed on a yes/no scale, and applications are not further processed if the professional members of the admissions committee find inadequacies in an applicant’s experience, references, or letters of intent. Once professional experience is approved, the main criterion for acceptance is grade point average. While an applicant’s grade point average must meet the minimum level of 65 percent, actual admissions vary each year.² And, although there are a number of prerequisite courses for the Teacher Education Program, courses that deal with anti-oppression issues need not to be among them. Thus,
EDST 314 may represent some pre-service teachers’ first encounter with issues of “difference.”

While the Teacher Education Office keeps statistics on the average age and gender of those admitted to Teacher Education (appendix 1), it does not keep statistics on racial identity and gender of applicants per subject area. With specific reference to racial diversity in the Department of Education and gender “difference” within subject areas, the admissions officer said that current levels of “diversity” were considered adequate.3

1.2.1 Historical Context of EDST 314

The origins of EDST 314 may be found in Education 200: Introduction to Secondary Education (EDUC 200), a course taught from the late 1960s until 1982.4 According to the university calendar, the definition of this course went through three transformations:

1968-1970 EDUC 200: Introduction to Secondary Education
The nature and purposes of secondary education and appropriate methods, techniques and organization. EDUC 200 and EDUC 298 (seminar and practice teaching course) are combined for final evaluation, but a passable standard in each is required.

1971-1979 EDUC 200: Introduction to Secondary Education
Perspectives on secondary education: selected readings in the philosophy, history, and sociology of education designed to provide an understanding of the nature, purposes, techniques and organization of secondary education.

1980-1982 EDUC 200: Introduction to Education
Selected readings in philosophy, history and sociology of education designed to provide an understanding of the nature, purposes, techniques and organization of education.

As is indicated by its first two titles, EDUC 200 was only offered to secondary preservice teachers from 1968 to 1982; it served as an introduction to theories in education
and was supposed to assist students with their later 400-level elective. Though there was no close elementary-level equivalent, both elementary and secondary pre-service teachers were required to take a full-year, 400-level course in either history, sociology or philosophy of education (Bruneau 1995). Other unique features of EDUC 200 include the fact that it was a full-year course taught to a maximum of twenty secondary pre-service teachers per class and that it was taught only by tenured professors. The focus of EDUC 200, however, varied greatly across course sections, depending on the preferences of individual professors.

Because of restructuring in the mid-1970s, there was nothing to unify course sections and, thus, no clear connection between EDUC 200 and higher level courses nor to the rest of the Teacher Education Program. As a result of the increasingly low secondary pre-service teacher evaluations of EDUC 200, the Teacher Education Program needed to create some uniformity across course sections if it was to continue to designate EDUC 200 as a compulsory course (Bruneau 1995). Accompanying the fractionalization of, and discontent toward, EDUC 200 was a growing sense among faculty that there was a need for a course that would address public concerns (e.g., feminism, multiculturalism, etc.) in an educational setting (Bruneau 1995). Thus, in 1982, when EDUC 200 became the responsibility of the new Department of Social and Educational Studies, it was renamed Educational Studies 200: Introduction to Education (EDST 200) and discussions commenced for the establishment of a new course (EDST 314).

Although EDST 314 existed in structural form in 1982, it was not until 1987 that it carried a course number in the university calendar. EDST 314 emerged in 1987 to assist all pre-service teachers in their understanding of key issues in education, and it differed
from its EDUC 200 predecessor in a number of respects. EDST 314 was designed (1) to be a one-semester course taken in the first semester; (2) to have no size limits; (3) to be taught by tenured instructors, doctoral students, and/or sessional instructors; (4) to be required for both secondary and elementary programs; and (5) to be not necessarily considered a preparation course for upper-level courses (Bruneau 1995). EDST 314’s curriculum was designed to analyze education through addressing social inequities.\(^6\)

In the fall of 1994, more doctoral students taught the course than did tenured professors, and class sizes would include up to fifty pre-service teachers per section. As well, though a report to the College of Teachers by the associate dean of teacher education describes EDST 314 as representing the department’s interest in social diversity (Ungerleider 1994), the university calendar describes it as covering “concepts, abilities and procedures for assessing educational claims, policies and practices.”\(^7\) This discrepancy between the dean’s report and the university calendar illuminates the difficulty of assessing Teacher Education Program and the emphasis placed on anti-oppression topics in each section of EDST 314 particularly as there was no course package reader (i.e. no common set of readings), until the coordination of Neil Sutherland (1990 - 1992).

1.2.2 EDST 314 Course Reader 1990-1994

In 1989, the first year Sutherland taught a EDST 314 section, he created a package reader consisting of issues that he considered to be of importance to educators. According to this reader, feminist analyses were to be included in several sections of EDST 314. Indeed, this reader served as a blueprint for the 1990 course-wide package
reader, which was jointly agreed upon by EDST 314 instructors and Sutherland (the coordinator of EDST 314 from 1990 to 1992).

Under Sutherland’s coordination, the course reader was intended to provide a group of common articles. EDST 314 instructors had the choice of deciding whether they wanted to thoroughly cover five topics or briefly touch on ten topics over the ten weeks of classes (Sutherland 1995). As well, instructors were encouraged to select other articles, particularly ones that related to their own areas of expertise, in order to “supplement the core” and to devise their own course outlines and grading schemes. This was made clear to pre-service teachers in the opening pages of the reader.

The 1992 EDST 314 course reader differed from the 1990 reader in that it contained ten specific sections with a possible seventeen articles among them. According to this reader, marginalized groups were not only to be represented, they were to be covered in the first half of the course. What is also interesting about this reader is that, although it was focused around specific components, examples of women’s/girls’ lives were addressed not only within the gender equity component but also within components on First Nations issues, multiculturalism, and teachers’ working conditions.

From 1993 to 1994, EDST 314 was coordinated by Deirdre Kelly, a feminist in Social and Educational Studies. Several slight changes were made to the course reader in these two years, and I will focus on those which occurred in 1994. All professors teaching EDST 314 were expected to cover each topic and its respective readings. In the 1994 reader, the paragraphs outlining the expertise each instructor brought to the course were removed, and it was made clear that each course section was to cover all the topics
mentioned in the course reader. Furthermore, the 1994 course package reader contained only thirteen articles, and women's/girls' experiences were addressed only within the gender equity component.¹⁰

Now that there was no flexibility with regard to what to teach in EDST 314, its instructors could only decide when, or in what order, to discuss each topic. New instructors, particularly sessional doctoral candidates, also received their guidelines from the then coordinator of the course, Deirdre Kelly. With all of these changes, there was much variation between the teaching and marking methods employed in various sections. This variation was an issue in the fall of 1994, when I was conducting my research. In the final meeting for EDST 314 (December 1994), some instructors argued that there needed to be more cohesiveness across all course sections with regard to assignments and marks—an echo of earlier criticisms that pre-service teachers had made of EDUC 200.

1.3 Tensions with Regard to Re-positioning Women's Subjectivity

While all feminist theories deserve extensive attention, time pressures are indicative of core courses. Deciding which feminist theory to include in core courses is difficult. I will briefly outline feminist theoretical debates raised towards the dominant feminist traditions and then the dominant liberal feminist trend in education. I will then highlight feminist educators experiences of teaching feminism in university classrooms and then the forms of defensiveness they have encountered.

Alison Jaggar (1983) weighs the assumptions and claims of feminist theories to consider which is more preferable. She argues that while liberal feminism acknowledges that women are oppressed, it is steeped in positivist notions of scientific theory which
rely on assumptions of objectivity and universal values. Subsequently, liberal feminists argue for equal opportunity and rights, but not special privileges.

Marxist feminism, on the other hand, argues that there is no neutral standpoint because “all knowledge is historically determined by the prevailing mode of production,” reflecting a particular class’s interests and values (Jaggar 1983, 359). Traditional Marxist feminists argue that the abolition of capitalism would coincide with the abolition of women’s oppression. Jaggar (1983, 360-364) argues that traditional Marxist feminism is limited because it only allows for two kinds of women (liberal or revolutionary) and does not allow women to have their own epistemological standpoint.

Radical feminism is interested in exposing patriarchal ways of knowing and exploring women’s ways of knowing. Radical feminism, however, receives much criticism from liberal feminism for its interest in mystical and spiritual experiences and criticism from Marxist feminist for its reliance on women as a homogenous category, as it pits working class women against working class men (Jaggar 1983).

Socialist feminism, much like Marxist feminism, argues that any historical period reflects the interests and values of the dominant class (Jaggar 1983,369). Socialist feminism, however, argues that because women occupy particular social or class positions they have “a special epistemological standpoint which makes possible a view of the world that is more reliable and less distorted than that available either to capitalist or to working class men” (Jaggar 1983, 370).

After critiquing liberal, Marxist, radical, and socialist feminisms, Jaggar (1983) suggests that woman’s standpoint theory be considered through the lens of the latter. According to her, woman’s standpoint theory best represents how women’s lives
interconnect with other lived forms of oppression. In other words, feminists need to view oppression from the standpoint of women and other marginalized groups and to then develop a “systematic representation of reality” (Jaggar 1983, 371).

In education, formal attempts to place anti-oppression issues in core courses has been a long time coming. Unfortunately, the inclusion of women’s/girl’s experiences (among others) in the curriculum has not been accompanied by a reconsideration of the epistemological standpoint of the curriculum itself. In other words, recognition of girls’/women’s experiences has not led to recognition of the masculinist assumptions endemic in education (Luke 1992, 29; McWilliam 1995). Consequently, “difference” often translates as an “add on” rather than as a challenge to the underlying assumptions of any given course (see Mohanty 1994). That is, as gender equity, as well as other challenges to course content, is not a conventional topic for mainstream courses, it is often brought to mainstream courses as a set of power relations added on to the status quo.

Discussing forms of oppressions as “add-ons” is problematic for several reasons. The assumption that gender, race, and class exist as separate entities, creating multiple oppressions, is a liberal positivist notion (Bannerji 1995). According to this analysis of sexism and racism—“all women are oppressed by sexism; some women are further oppressed by racism” an analysis which essentializes women’s experiences and which does not allow for differences within various categories (Spelman 1988, 125). The problem is that the decontextualization of social relations (i.e., the fragmentation of race, class, and gender) creates “segmented social moments” that construct discrete levels of oppression (Bannerji 1995, 49). The need to think in segmented moments is, Himani
Bannerji (1995) argues, a characteristic of North American academia and politics—a characteristic which functions to conceal both racism and imperialism (52). Elizabeth Spelman (1988) also believes that this sort of abstraction is a feature of the guilt reflexes of white feminists (116). As EDST 314 discusses several forms of oppression, “guilt reflexes” may be felt throughout the course. The degree to which forms of oppression are interwoven in EDST 314 classrooms weighs heavily upon the course reader and the interest of both the instructors and the pre-service teachers.

1.3.1 Teaching Feminism in the University Classroom

Feminist pedagogy has largely been founded on two “discursive strands,” one emanating from women’s studies and the other from various feminisms (Gore 1991). Within these strands, however, there has been little focus on either the racialization of gender or the genderization of race (hooks 1995; Bannerji 1995). Recently, concerns have been raised concerning how these two factors coalesce in a core course. Within the community of feminist educators there is a growing desire to move beyond a liberal analysis of education. Critical voices among feminist educators argue that liberal feminist initiatives not only fail to adequately address the inequalities girls/women experience, but they also protect hegemonic interests by not confronting “malestream” assumptions (Luke 1992). Though gender and curriculum studies have increased in recent years, most of them have focused on liberal feminist concerns with “curriculum content” (e.g., teacher bias, gender stereotypes, etc.) (Briskin 1990; Sadker et al. 1991; Middleton 1992), while more subtle forms of institutional inequalities have remained unexamined (Gaskell 1988; Keating 1990). Consequently, young women remain under-
represented in male-dominated subject areas--areas which are linked to higher paying employment opportunities (Gaskell 1988; Bellamy & Guppy 1991).

Recent discussions among feminist pedagogues concern how to free girls'/women's subjectivity from a male gaze (Kenway & Modra 1992; Luke 1992). Diana Fuss (1989) cautions feminists, particularly post-structuralists, about the "unwelcome effects of essentials in the classroom" (115). Essentializing forms of identity in the classroom creates signifiers of experience which provide some students with a "platform" from which to speak while relegating others to the sidelines (Fuss 1989). Essentializing forms of "experience," such as gender, functions to normalize women's lives rather than to address their complexities.

As an alternative to liberal feminist pedagogy, Sue Middleton (1992) argues for a radical feminist pedagogy that would enable students to develop pedagogies that would illuminate "the structural social inequalities which constrain their lives" (18). To do this she argues that students should begin by historically situating themselves in the present. That is, they should create and analyze their own biographies in terms of the choices they have made and the constraints that have been placed upon them (19). Middleton (1992) argues that this process of writing and analyzing one's biography is a "process of deconstructing the discursive practices through which one's subjectivity has been constituted" (20).

Jennifer Gore (1992) problematizes feminist and critical pedagogy that attempts to posit the teacher as the empowerer of the student (61). Gardner et al. (1989) argue that it may be necessary to reassess prior feminist pedagogical attempts to decentralize the
power of the instructor in order to consider who is silenced by not having the latter actively mediate classroom discussions. Gardner et al. (1989) found that, in their women's studies course, it was necessary to silence the feminist majority to allow others to speak (65). Similarly, bell hooks (1995) reflects on the difficulty of teaching feminism when some students insist that some books they have previously read are essential to being a feminist. She argues that these women's shock that not all "feminists" have read these texts contributes to the sense that feminism is a "private cult", often of white membership (hooks 1995, 113). Feminist theorists and educators concur that feminism must continue to critique its theoretical assumptions, to question who is being included and excluded from each standpoint (Jaggar 1983; Pratt 1984; Mohanty & Martin 1986; Dehli 1991; Smith 1991; Luke 1992; hooks 1995).

1.3.2 Forms of Defensiveness in the Feminist Classroom

Given the backlash toward feminism and other social movements of the 1960s, progressive pedagogies must now take on a more complex role than ever. Teaching about feminism is as likely to be resisted by female students as by male students. To highlight feminist pedagogues' analyses of defensiveness, I will discuss works which address gender, race, class, and sexual orientation.

Much recent work focuses on students' reactions to the "dominant discourse of school knowledge," which is in contradiction to their own lived experiences (Lewis 1990, 471). Gardner et al. (1989) found that the way in which social class was addressed (either added on or incorporated into every topic) resulted in working-class students challenging middle-class assumptions until, eventually, social class was considered to be the personal problem of a few working-class students. Defensiveness around discussing social class
stems from the common-sense understanding that schools are “free zones,” where all, despite material differences, participate equally to gain upward mobility (hooks 1995). As hooks articulates, social class does not end at material differences, for it is an encoder of “shaped values, attitudes, social relations and the biases that inform the way knowledge [is] given and received” (hooks 1995, 178). She argues the middle-class classroom often forces non-materially privileged students to behave as passive victims who “can only reject or accept the norms imposed upon them” (hooks 1995, 183).

Gardner et al. (1989) argue that an assumed heterosexism causes students to react defensively toward discussions on of sexual difference. In particular, they contended that while, over time, women’s defensiveness lessened, women nonetheless had difficulty “moving beyond the security of their attachments to specific males in their lives” (71). Linda Eyre (1991) argues that, even though the classrooms are now gender-balanced, Grade 8 home economics continues to have gender inequalities. Eyre found that a male hierarchy dominated the class as, with their homophobic and misogynist discourse, the boys attempted to reaffirm their own sexuality by interweaving power and heterosexuality. While girls and teachers normalized the dominant boys’ discourse, girls did manage to seize short-term power by talking back. Girls’ “cleaning” habits tied them further to the private sphere, particularly when they cleaned up after the boys. Eyre also found that some teaching techniques aimed at gender-equal treatment actually normalized some male dominance while others problematized silent students. The hegemonic masculinities (Connell 1987; Frank 1993) operating in this home economics class kept power from both girls and non-dominant boys’. Eyre argues that gender equity involves more than addressing issues of access, sex-stereotyping, and student-teacher gender bias;
it involves "recognizing the diversity of human experience, revaluing women's knowledge and women's work and changing traditional ways of relating. It means placing gender relations on the agenda in the classroom (1991, 217).

Janet Lee's (1991) study of student responses to the situation comedy "Roseanne" indicates that those who identify with Roseanne's character do so through relating it to their own everyday lives. This seems to suggest that counter-hegemonic popular culture can only be appreciated by women who experience similar subjectivities. Lee (1991, 24) believes that feminist pedagogy is starting to understand the totality of women's subjectivities--those subjectivities "that both teachers and students bring to the classroom in the form of identities and experiences." Lee argues that feminist education should help students draw clear connections between their lived experiences and the systemic inequalities of Western culture. She contends that counter-hegemonic popular culture can be used to assist in analyzing how students understand/contest knowledge, how subjectivities are formed through schooling, and how student experience is central to critical pedagogy.

Similarly, Magna Lewis (1990, 469) reflects on her experience teaching a "Seminar in Social Class, Gender and Race in Education" to argue for a feminist pedagogy of transformation which would enable students to move toward a feminist politics. She believes that such a transformation would assist students in their "meaning-making" and would be used as a point of departure for social change (470). Lewis found that women often "organized around" nurturing men's feelings/reactions to classroom events and that they often did this through eye contact and body language. As well, young women often chose to change the subject from women's experiences to a global concern for a
presumably non-gendered “humanity”. For Lewis the transformational moment involved switching care-taking roles by having women focus on their personal lives and men being willing listeners.

Recent studies from non-white feminist educators illustrate yet another form of defensiveness. For example, Patricia Monture-Okanee (1995, 22) identifies classroom tensions, based on her being First Nations. These are evidenced in student evaluations, which focus more on her body than on her teaching: “She wore too many beads and feathers to class.” Similarly, Bannerji (1995) argues that students often use institutional forms of evaluation, rather than personally discussing their concerns with her (e.g., smoking, course content, etc.), as a means to contest her presence.

1.4 Feminism and Teacher Education

While pre-service teacher literature is aimed at “teachers as learners,” feminists remain critical of the “add-on” treatment given to gender (Shah 1989; Robertson 1992). The androcentrism of teacher development literature underlies its reliance on “rationality,” “quantifiability,” and “objectivity” and leaves unchallenged the conscious and unconscious beliefs and behaviours that construct female students as dependent and passive, with low self-esteem and low expectations (Robertson 1992, 44). It is not surprising that this literature also represents female teachers as uninterested in career commitment and vertical mobility (Biklen 1985).

Sandra Acker (1988) argues that teachers generally resist gender innovations because of (1) the gender regime in schools, (2) common ideologies, (3) work conditions, and (4) the way in which such innovations are introduced. She concludes that there are
indications that gender threatens teachers own gendered histories, roles outside and inside
the school such that it shapes their beliefs about what reform is possible or desirable
(Acker 1988). A British quantitative study of teachers’ attitudes toward educational
issues found varying degrees of teacher conservatism, depending on the subject area.
The most traditional attitudes toward sex equality were held by craft, technical, and home
economics teachers, followed by math and science teachers, followed by modern
language and English teachers, followed by humanities teachers (Kelly et al. 1985).

Supporting Kelly et al., are studies which find that pre-service teachers maintain the
status quo because they perceive inequalities to be “natural or unproblematic” (Ginsberg
educators do not successfully encourage critical examination of inequalities, pre-service
teachers are likely to become “apologists for or at least preservers of the status quo” (49).
Particularly since other research argues pre-service teachers do not generally consider
teaching to be a career choice that enables them to act as agents of social change
(Edmundson 1990). Perhaps underlying these findings are Erica McWilliam’s
(1993, 151) findings that much pre-service teachers’ discourse reflects a reliance on
binary understandings (e.g., theory/practice, idealism/realism,
progressivism/conservatism, etc.) of how teacher confidence is attained.

In grappling with how to make teachers more interested in issues of social justice,
Christine Sleeter (1993) argues that teacher education programs should increase the racial
diversity of those who enter the field. However, Cornell West (1994) warns that racial
diversity does not necessarily imply political divergence, and he warns that it can too
easily be taken as a form of essentialist politics and thus be politically paralyzing for
educators. As Lyn Yates (1993, 26) points out, educators must continually ask what should be taught in school and how schooling relates to the “social inequality of women”, but in a context that recognizes the diversity of girls’ experiences.

1.5 Rationale for Research

My study of pre-service teachers shows an interesting intersection between feminist theory and feminist pedagogy. While feminist theorists work to provide better ways of understanding the complexities of women’s lives, feminist pedagogues, largely in women’s studies, tackle the growing difficulties of teaching feminism. Through analyzing various forms of defensiveness, we may determine how progressive pedagogies could better address the complexities of the classroom. As earlier works indicate, the task is to analyze (1) how male heterosexual defensiveness dominates females and males (Eyre 1991), (2) how female defensiveness reinforces male discomfort with gender issues (Lewis 1990), and (3) how their duties in the private sphere (e.g., nurturing) overshadow women in the public sphere (Lewis 1990; Eyre 1991; Martindale 1992). Interwoven with these forms of heterosexual gender defensiveness are forms of defensiveness that reflect the racial identity and perceived social class of the majority of pre-service teachers (Gardner et al. 1989; hooks 1995). By studying what happens when a feminist teaches a coeducational pre-service teacher core course that treats gender as an add-on, I hope to illuminate various forms of defensiveness. In doing so, I hope not only to re-present pre-service teachers’ engagement and disengagement in feminist analyses of education, but also to contribute to feminist pedagogical debates.
Chapter 2: Methodology

The task of re-presenting my experiences in doing this research is challenging. I began this project with many uncertainties around whether or not pre-service teachers would be interested in this study and have the time for the effort it involved. To illuminate my experiences, I will first outline the common sense ways that I entered the research, and follow-up with the theoretical ways. Finally, I will discuss the strengths and liabilities of this research.

2.1 Common Sense Ways of Entering Research

Through discussing my own educational background and how I came to be interested in this research, I will outline my own common sense approaches underlying this research. I will then discuss my entry into the field and then the uniqueness of the primary research group.

2.1.1 Considering My Own Common Sense

My own entry into this study is as a Scottish Canadian woman who has had the economic privilege of pursuing a Master's of Arts Degree while working part-time. Though I began my post-secondary education studying the "pure" sciences, I shifted towards history and geography. Feminism, for me, emerged from my interest in women's history and geography during my Bachelor of Arts Degree at the University of British Columbia. My own teaching experience is in adult education in Continuing Studies at the University of British Columbia.

Though I primarily investigated women's experiences during my undergraduate course work, it was not until I took a Women's Studies course that I became engaged in
feminist theory. In this introductory course, traditional feminist frameworks were discussed: liberal, radical, Marxist and socialist feminisms. By historically situating each feminism, I preferred socialist feminism because it best addressed different forms of oppression, though it too is criticized for add-on analysis of oppression (see Jaggar 1983). That is, while earlier "add-on" analyses of oppressions were conceivably a way of developing understandings around these topics, they also led to a divisive politics that focused on multiple forms of oppression, instead of developing ways of intersecting forms of identity and finding a path to speak from (but also beyond) personal identities. Thus, I found socialist feminism offered a more adequate explanation of social class though earlier forms of socialist feminism are not unproblematic. They, like other feminist theories, were also based on assumptions of whiteness.

During my master’s course work, I pursued my interest in “sisterhood” through feminist and anti-racist theory. It was not until an anti-racist class that I began the ongoing process of considering my own assumptions of whiteness. When I read Canadian women describing their experiences from non-white racial locations, I realized how “friendly” Canada had been to me. Similarly, post-modern feminists’ critiques essentialized forms of oppression to illuminate “multiple voices” of experience within each and led some feminists to argue that there are no categories of analysis whereby all women of colour are united by virtue of racism, nor all women by virtue of patriarchy (Knowles and Mercer 1993). Caroline Knowles and Sharmila Mercer’s (1993) argument, however, also comforts white women, and other women of privilege, by dismissing political positionings beyond personal experience(s). That is, as a white women should I not investigate racism or how my presence or absence contributes to it? Bannerji (1995)
provides a clearer sense of the inseparable links between gender, class and race, through historicizing immigrant labour in the Canadian labour force.

By identifying the “concealed standpoint” of whiteness, Himani Bannerji (1995) moves toward an anti-racist feminism through invoking Gramsci’s notion of common sense. Within our daily use of “common sense” we learn what is socially acceptable and practical, despite its reliance on “contradictions, myths, guesses and rumours” (Bannerji 1995, 46). For example, within a context of a colonial history, present-day capitalist societies are constructed on “common sense racism” demonstrated in daily unstated understanding of everyday life expressed in newspapers, media, and the like (Bannerji 1995, 45). It is within this context, that she argues present claims of “reverse racism” and “political correctness” refer to “minimum, forced concessions such as multiculturalism or Human Rights” (Bannerji 1995, 38). A feminist anti-racism must move beyond essentialist politics and consider political positionings that include individuals across locations to collectively engage in issues of social justice (Brah 1993; Bannerji 1995).

2.12 Entering the Field

I advertised my study to two sections of the Education Studies 314 class. I approached each instructor to gain entry into these two course sections. Barbara was a former classmate and friend and Everet was an office mate. Both instructors expressed an interest in my study and allowed me to advertise my study to their class. I was particularly interested in their classes as they were both doctoral students in the Department of Educational Studies and both were teaching EDST 314 for the first time. Prior to teaching EDST 314 Barbara had several years of experience teaching at colleges.
and Everet had several years of experience in elementary schools as well as teaching The Principles of Teaching to pre-service teachers the previous year.

To allow for anonymity, when I advertised my study to each class, I handed out a brief description of my research project with my then telephone number:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Education 314 Students</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Interested in participating in a study?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I am seeking volunteer Education 314 students to discuss Gender Equity in Education. I would like to interview a variety of students with diverse attitudes toward gender equity in education. If you are interested, please leave a message at 732-****.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In Barbara’s class, Darryl and then Lynn contacted me by telephone and were interviewed prior to the first equity component. John approached me after the first class on gender equity and was interviewed that afternoon. In Everet’s class, Robyn, Janet and Brenda contacted me by telephone and I was approached in class by Amy, Jake, Steve and Henry. Henry was the only one from Everet’s class to be interviewed after the first class of the gender equity component; the rest were interviewed prior to the gender component being taught. The length of each interview ranged from twenty to eighty minutes.

Most of the interviews were held in a Faculty of Education building, but two were held at the homes of the participant’s (Janet, Robyn) or at a nearby cafe (Brenda). With the signed consent of each pre-service teacher (see appendix 2), interviews were tape recorded and later fully transcribed. Some tapes were inaudible so I relied on my
interview field notes where necessary. At the request of one pre-service teacher certain elements of our interview were eliminated from the transcription as they did not specifically pertain to this research project.

I completed my research on both classes, two instructors and ten pre-service teachers. However, since beginning this project my research question has changed to focus on the feminist classroom. Thus, though I have the data for a full comparison of pre-service teacher discourses in two classes of EDST 314, I will, for the purposes of space limitation, concentrate on the classroom which bears most directly on questions of the limitation and possibilities for feminist pedagogy as taught by a female feminist instructor and include data on pre-service teachers' responses to feminist course content. I will differentiate the two groups by referring to Barbara's class as the primary research group and Everet's class as the secondary research group. I will draw upon discussions from the secondary research group when it is relevant to substantiate my empirical claims in the primary (feminist) class under study.

2.1.3 The Primary Research Group's Curriculum

As EDST 314 is a compulsory course for all pre-service teachers enrolled in the Bachelor of Education Program at UBC, the general objectives of the course must be met across all sections. As well, the marking and evaluation procedures must contain some continuity across all sections.

Barbara's course objectives were taken from the Co-ordinator's syllabus and read as follows:

This course has been designed to help prospective teachers examine their educational beliefs, practices, and the social context of schooling. Educators need to acquire the language and concepts of education as well as the ability to reflect critically on its central ideas and alternative frameworks so that they may communicate as professionals. EDST 314 aims to help students develop the conceptual background to enter this dialogue and assess claims made about
education. It also acquaints students with some important, contemporary educational issues.

Each week the class read articles and discussed issues relating to one of the following topics: life in classrooms, approaches to analysis, conservative ideology, critical pedagogy, social class, gender and sexual orientation, ethnicity/race, First Nations Education, educational inequity and implementing equity. For one of each week’s two assigned articles, reading summary cards listing the author’s main points, mode of inquiry s/he used, evidence given, implications for teaching, and a self evaluation were submitted for marks. Each card was scored out of three: three for excellent, two for adequate and one for inadequate.

Evaluation for the course offered 10% for class participation (attendance and group exercises), 30% for reading summary cards and 60% for two short essay assignments. Suggested essay topics were included in the course syllabus. Later, for those who participated in my research, reflections on our discussions were included as a possible essay topic. Lynn and John generously offered copies of their work for this study.

2.1.4 Gender Equity Component

I advertised my study to Barbara’s class in early October and attended this class on October 12th and 14th and November 16th and 18th, as the gender equity component was divided into two separate weeks. Darryl was unavailable for the third interview due to time table conflicts and finally my unreturned phone calls.

During the gender equity component, the class was structured around using Wednesdays for introducing a new topic. Barbara would raise questions from the readings or present a film and organize small group work activities for the longer Friday
class. More specifically, for the gender component, the class watched *Educating Girls* (1990) and read and discussed (1) Barbara Houston's, "Gender Freedom and the Subtleties of Sexist Education," (2) Beth Reis', "Why Should the Public Schools Teach About Sexual Orientation," (3) Rosonna Tite's, "Sex-Role Learning and the Woman Teacher: A Feminist Perspective," and (4) Robert Connell's, "Cool Guys, Swots and Wimps: The Interplay of Masculinity and Education."^{15}

### 2.2 Theoretical Ways of Entering Research

To discuss theoretical ways that I entered this research I will first briefly outline debates among ethnographers and then discuss how I tried to implement some of these perspectives. I will then illuminate my interview objectives, analysis, and how I coded my interviews in this text.

#### 2.2.1 The Feminist Politics of Method

Critical ethnography has emerged to contest inadequacies of naturalism's subject/object assumptions in qualitative work (Roman 1993). Among these criticisms are the limitations naturalism holds for situating the researcher's own social location as exemplified in "going native" and "fly on the wall" ethnographic approaches (Roman 1993). The field practices involved in "going native" include blending into the routines and common practices of the subject, often to the extent that it valorizes the subjectivity rather than questioning the power relations which bound and constrain its spatial and socio-economic space. The field practices of "fly on the wall" include the researcher assuming his or her presence does not affect the daily practices under study. While the role of these two field practices vary, they both discount researcher bias and minimize the extent to which their presence affects the practices studied (Roman 1993). Nonetheless,
among critical ethnographers, there remain divergent and at times competing definitions of what constitute "critical ethnography."

While some have defined critical ethnography as representative of distinguishing research characteristics (Simon and Dippo 1986; Quantz 1992), others have questioned the power relations involved in a researcher's producing of narratives from "studying down" (Brodkey 1987; Roman 1993). Brodkey (1987) advocates producing counter-hegemonic discourse by exposing the social location of the story-teller. Drawing on this research, Leslie Roman (1993) illustrates the limitations she confronted in "fly on the wall" and "going native" to argue for changing research relations (e.g., including participants in feedback processes). She argues that this would make the "product" useful for their own understandings of their lives. At a broader level, Roman (1993) questions ethnographer's tendency to study down. Among her considerations for "studying down" are questioning who the voiced and silenced are in the study, the local and global power relations that constrain the researched, the relationship between subjectivity and objectivity in the study, and what ethical principals and epistemological traditions should guide the researcher through the contradictions of doing research (Roman and Apple 1990).

In considering the difficulties of doing research, I chose to allow the participants in my study to modify the questions I asked, and ask their own questions of me and my interpretations of events. This often led to shifts in interview power relations because of my gender, age and ethnicity.

In my initial draft I tried to understand the pre-service teachers lives and the words they used to described them within feminist frameworks. For me this allowed me to test
my initial feeling that the classes were predominantly conservative in their reactions to feminist analyses of education. There were, however, two problems with this draft. I had imposed feminist theories on pre-service teachers’ voices rather than listening to the voices as Sutherland (1992) has suggested and I also had not exposed where my own surprises, assumptions and misinterpretations of events occurred. In short, I had written a naturalistic ethnography exemplifying a ‘fly on the wall’ approach (Roman 1993).

In the analysis that follows, I investigate my own assumptions in the questions I asked, subsequently placing myself within the frame of this research, not at its edge as James Clifford suggests (1986). In my analysis of the data, I listened for the continuities and inconsistencies within and among pre-service teachers’ discourse. As well, to define my data and locate myself, I analyze interview and field note discourse from the standpoint of where pre-service teachers engage in and disengage from feminist analyses of education (Simon and Dippo 1986; Said 1989; Opie 1993). I also consider how the participants hinge their arguments for more equality on liberalism and “their failure to see beyond it and to question particular truths which adhere to it and the stereotypes which develop from it” (Opie 1993, 58). To do this, I consider on what bases pre-service teachers both support and negate an issue (i.e., equality) (Opie 1993, 60) as a way of understanding the “logic of their lives” and the discourse they use to describe their lives (Frankenberg 1993, 22). I have tried to illuminate the tensions in teaching gender equity from a feminist perspective in a core course (Brodkey 1987). I also situate this study’s importance as a reflection of the strengths and limits of feminist pedagogy, as taught by a feminist instructor with specific power relations to a Teacher Education Program as a sessional instructor (Simon and Dippo 1986; Brodkey 1987).
2.2.2 Interview Objectives and Analysis

At the time of my research proposal, I had intended to formally interview the pre-service teachers twice after the gender component. After the second interviews, however, I decided to change the third interview to an informal meeting to go over the interview transcripts and give the pre-service teachers an opportunity to respond to their earlier comments. This meeting gave pre-service teachers an opportunity to state if they disagreed with any of their earlier comments and discuss why. As the gender component in the primary research group was split, I interviewed each participant after each week, for a total of three times, with the exception of Darryl.¹⁶

For the first interview, I prepared a general interview schedule that would allow me to better understand the background experiences of each participant (Appendix 3). In the first interview, I also asked each pre-service teacher to choose their own pseudonym and sign consent forms and I then clarified the intentions of the study. My goal for the first interview was to better understand the social locations of the participants as well as their schooling experiences, reasons for pursuing a teaching career, and understandings of feminism and gender equity.

There are of course difficulties in merely assuming pre-service teachers’ reflections on childhood are as they were described. As Clifford (1986) has argued, ethnography, as well as other research, is “inherently partial, committed and incomplete” (7). Similarly, Neil Sutherland (1992) questions the confidence often given to oral histories to situate the reliability of his interest in understanding “communities” of Anglophone childhood between 1920 and 1960. Luisa Passerini (1983) argues that oral histories need to be considered as re-presenting different levels: “all-ready memory, stereotyped, revealing
general views of the world” and at another level “more directly connected with life experience”. Encompassing both of these levels is Sutherland’s (1992) work which illustrates gender-differentiated oral histories among reflections on childhood experiences. His research indicates that men’s stories tend to place themselves as the central figure in their “systematic stances, their games, their work, their sequence of occupations,” while women’s stories tended to focus on their relationships with their “parents, spouses, children, fellow workers and friends” (Sutherland 1992, 238-239). Reflecting on these distinctions, Ruth Frankenberg (1993) argues that oral histories need to be considered as having multiple positionings as they reflect both being “co-producers of the narrative” as well as being “observers” of the environment and of themselves in their own re-told history (42). As a representer of these narratives, it is important for me to question and critique the narratives and not just reproduce them (Frankenberg 1993). Following Brodkey’s (1987) advocacy for a “negative critique” I have interrupted the pre-service teachers’ stories to analyse their discourse.

Between the first and second interviews I attended EDST 314 classes which covered the gender component. Attending the classes informed my later interviews and allowed for another context to interact with the pre-service teachers. While attending these classes I took field notes and participated in some small group work. My participation undoubtedly changed small group work, particularly as groups often placed me in the uncomfortable position of being the gender issue “expert” by directing their responses and questions toward me.

In the second interview schedule, I pursued emergent questions from my first interview, class discussions, and silences. I was interested in creating a space for pre-
service teachers to report their interpretations of in-class and out-of-class discussions. I was often asked for my own interpretations of class incidents, articles, or whether I agreed with their analyses of events. While these discussions often shifted the interview from “information (data) gathering to [an] interactive process” (Anderson and Jack 1991, 23-24), I had the ability to guide the conversation, or change the subject.

The second and third interviews were also a chance for pre-service teachers to discuss the usefulness of the articles used and in what ways they reacted to the articles. The purpose of this was to investigate what pre-service teachers considered to be most and least useful about the articles. I was initially hoping to be able to have a discussion about the main points in each article, but found by the time we met for our interview, the pre-service teachers often only remembered either what they really liked or disliked.

Realizing that my own subjectivity informed my research, I kept field notes of my own reactions to interviews to explicitly explore my own assumptions (Haraway 1988; Said 1989; Harding 1991; Abu-Lughod 1993; Lewis 1993). To interrupt traditional power relations between “the researcher and the researched,” I asked pre-service teachers to ask me questions at the beginning and end of each interview. I also gave back copies of interview transcripts and asked if they still agreed with what they had previously said (Roman 1993). Recognizing that my own situated knowledge (Haraway 1988; Harding 1991) would influence my research questions and the interviews themselves, within my analysis I have tried to balance the assumptions in my questions with the responses.

Anderson and Jack (1991) argue that interviews should involve pursuing areas raised pertaining to the research itself, as well as any mentioned outside. Within this interactive process, however, I often found myself in the awkward position of having to somehow
respond to participants’ conversations by nodding or agreeing to illustrate that I was
listening or to encourage them to continue. These “supportive” conversational cues could
have been mis-read by pre-service teachers as agreeing with their opinions (Frankenberg
1993). To balance these two competing understandings, I often asked follow-up
questions to illuminate the underlying assumptions of their previous comments or I
juxtaposed some of their own comments. In this way, I tried to allow participants to
“reflect and re-evaluate their experiences as part of the process of being interviewed”
(Opie 1993, 63). For example, when pre-service teachers expressed their attitudes
towards affirmative action programs in their second interviews, I juxtaposed their
responses with their first interview responses (i.e., whether they thought society offered
equal opportunity for all groups to participate equally).

2.2.3 Coding of Interviews

Each quote will be identified by interview and month following each quoted section.

Within each quote I have used the following to aid in reading and to contextualize the
discussion:

‘.’ - denotes a short break in speech
‘[pause]’ - denotes a long time gap between what was said
‘…’ - indicates where I have deleted a few extraneous words
‘—’ - indicates words emphasized
‘—’ - indicates where the speaker changed focus of their
sentence
“italics” - denotes words that I have emphasized in the text.

I have also given “unknown” classmates pseudonyms for the sake of anonymity,
continuity and reference. I have also tried to indicate whether the speaker is part of the
white majority. To distinguish interviews from field notes, I will indicate each as
“interview” or “field notes” respectively at the end of each quote.
2.3 Strengths and Liabilities of this Research

The power relations involved in producing this research are complex. From the beginning of this study, I have questioned the tension-producing situation of placing myself in the position of completing a Master of Arts thesis by critiquing a course taught by the same department from which I intend to graduate. Nonetheless, the strengths of this work are at several levels.

At one level, considering how the teacher education program attempts to address "diversity" issues within a core course, raises important questions for how institutions maintain status quo and simultaneously address "difference." As Mohanty (1994) has pointed out, it is not so much a question of whether or not the academy acknowledges difference, but the way in which difference is acknowledged and engaged:

Difference seen as benign variation (diversity), for instance, rather than as conflict, struggle, or the threat of disruption, bypasses power as well as history to suggest a harmonious empty pluralism . . . A strategic critique of the contemporary language of difference, diversity, and power thus would be crucial to a feminist project concerned with revolutionary social change (46).

She also argues that at present, it is crucial to consider how institutional discourses "actively construct and maintain a discourse of difference and pluralism" even though this means "assuming responsibility for the politics of voice as it is institutionalized in the academy's "liberal" response to the very questions feminism and other oppositional discourses have raised" (Mohanty 1994, 149).

As EDST 314 is a core course, this research will also illuminate mainstream or hegemonic reactions to gender issues particularly within the context of a feminist instructor. As well, both will better inform feminist pedagogy debates, particularly those involving core courses: that is, (1) what are the characteristics of mainstream attempts to
address gender issues?, (2) how does this inform feminist pedagogical debates?, and (3) what is the interplay between male and female reactions to feminist analyses?

2.3.1 Should Publicly Mediated Feminisms be Critiqued?

While debates continue among feminist educators, it is difficult to know how non-feminist educators perceive these debates. In the context of this study, I feel a tension in pursuing debates among feminists in a mainstream context, as it is difficult to ascertain whether feminist criticism raised toward the teaching of gender issues in a mainstream course will be well received by an institution which often support hegemonic discourse. In particular, in an era of growing conservativism in education (Apple 1993), I must weigh my investigation of feminist pedagogy and feminist instructors in mainstream classes with possible detrimental effects of raising such criticism. That is, criticism raised could justify the deletion of the gender component from EDST 314 rather than re-assessing the intentions of "the component" and in whose interests it is serving.
Chapter 3: Introduction to Research Participants

Pre-service and in-service teachers offer a “double-exposure” to educational experiences because they are at once students and teachers. I am interested in analyzing how pre-service teachers’ own experiences have informed their common sense understandings of gender issues, particularly in education. By illuminating these understandings, I hope to further feminist pedagogues’ analyses and evidence strengths and difficulties in addressing gender issues in a mainstream course.

In this chapter, I will analyze the first interviews I had with three pre-service teachers to illuminate their common-sense understandings of teaching about sexual orientation, feminism and gender equity in education. Before I discuss these, however, I will contextualize the social backgrounds of each pre-service teacher. In my first interview perceived social class and educational experiences formed the first set of interviews, and the context for subsequent questions I explored with pre-service teachers. In general, pre-service teachers constructed an ambivalent picture of occupying both middle- and working-class locations. Then, when I went to the literature, I found there were solid sociological reasons for their perceptions concerning patterns of employment their parents held and the pre-service teachers’ memories of them.

Following my analysis, I will introduce Barbara’s goals for teaching EDST 314, particularly the gender component.

3.1 Starting From Home

The three pre-service teachers from Barbara’s class were similar in age, in interest in competitive sports, and in having graduated from universities within Greater Vancouver within two years of each other. While John grew up in a small town in the interior of British Columbia, Lynn and Darryl moved a lot with their families but settled in the
greater Vancouver region. All three grew up in two income households, though Darryl’s later became a single female income household.

Within their interviews, Lynn and Darryl located themselves as having both working- and middle-class consciousness, while John grappled, as do class theorists, with definitions of social class. As well, John, unlike Lynn and Darryl, broke with family traditional expectations by pursuing a university education. In the first interviews, there also emerged a gendered difference in memories of schooling. In reflecting on her schooling experiences, Lynn described her most favourable memories of teachers as being ones whose personalities were open and caring toward the interests of students. While John did not reflect on his schooling experiences until his essay, Darryl narrated gender differentiated memorable teachers’ teaching capabilities.

The three pre-service teachers and I interviewed across differences of gender, politics, physical ability and academic interests. We all, however, shared in being in our mid-twenties, physically able and several generation white Canadians. Before I analyze their perceived social class backgrounds, and the emergent familial differences, I will begin by problematizing the commonality of whiteness.

3.1.1 Whiteness

All of the participants in this research, myself and the instructor included, come from white ethnic backgrounds, as do the majority of the pre-service teachers in this course section and in this department. Though I differed from the interviewees in terms of my interest in feminism and anti-racism, we shared whiteness and its “inferred privilege” in a racist society. Toni Morrison (1993, x-xi) clearly articulates the underlying assumptions of white privilege embedded in our language which “powerfully evoke[s] and enforce[s] hidden signs of racial superiority, cultural hegemony and dismissive ‘othering’ of people.”
Following Becky Thompson and Estelle Disch’s (1992) suggestion to have students name their racial/ethnic identity, I asked the participants in this study to identify their ethnic background. Perhaps it is, as Thompson and Disch argued, the rareness of the question that initially led John to respond with his nationality, rather than his ethnicity:

Louise: Good. And how would you describe your ethnicity?
John: Canadian [pause] a bit of Russian--well almost all Russian I guess. Russian Canadian I guess you'd call me.
Louise: OK. What do you mean by Canadian?
John: Like well my grandmother was born here so there's not much Russian left. I think--actually I think my great grandmother was born here as well. {Interview, October 1994}

Though the relationship forged between race/ethnicity and nationality are always shifting in relation to one another, John’s use of nationality is not surprising as whiteness is intrinsically used in Canada’s nationhood imagery (Frankenberg 1993; Morrison 1993; Yee 1993). Lynn and Darryl identified their ethnic background as French/Acadian and Irish/Scottish respectively. Assumptions of whiteness and white defensiveness are important analyses in any research, but even more poignantly for this research as white privilege is shared by all of the primary research group, the majority of the secondary research group and the majority of the two EDST 314 classrooms. Thus, assumptions of whiteness and white defensiveness will be underlying themes raised throughout this thesis.

3.1.2 Perceived Social Class

The myth of Canada as a one-class society, “middle class classlessness”, is based on false assumptions, evidence and theory (Edgall 1993). Canada’s “middle class classlessness” myth is perpetuated through liberal meritocratic discourse in media, family, peers and schools (Forcese 1986, Edgall 1993). Lambert et al.’s (1986) Canadian research found the majority of their respondents based wealth and then ambition as the
primary indicators of social class. When they asked participants for signifiers of social class, three themes emerged: wealth of family when growing up, mode of labour, and education (Lambert et al. 1986, 385). As a result of their findings, Lambert et al. (1986) suspect many Canadians consider “social class” to be ideologically offensive because they believe it diminishes the importance of individual agency. Their faith in individual agency is reflective of liberalism and the myth of meritocracy (Lambert et al. 1986, 395). As my research will indicate, common-sense notions of success and failure, based on individual merit, are ever present in pre-service teacher discourse.

For my research, I found that considering the social division of labour occupying a number of contradictory locations enabled a better analysis of the pre-service teacher’s interview material. That is, Eric Wright’s theory would treat interviewees’ parents’ occupations as contradictory middle-class locations, because they have some social relational characteristics in common with the working classes and others with the professional/managerial classes of the bourgeoisie. According to this theory, because interviewees’ parents may control some aspects of their work, namely, some of the day-to-day supervising of the work of others, including the pace at which tasks are performed, they have these social relational characteristics in common with “middle class” locations. Because interviewees’ parents are also supervised and employed by others who may control larger aspects of decision-making over what they “produce” (Appendix 5), means they also share some interests in common with proletarianized labour (Wright 1978).

Wright (1978) defines “contradictory class locations” as referring to “objective contradictions among real processes of class relations” (61). His theory of contradictory class locations attempts to better understand the specificity of the “middle class” experience, by illuminating how such locations are, at once, “exploited through capitalist mechanisms and exploiters through skill or other secondary mechanisms” (Wright 1994, 45-46). Wright (1978) argues not to collapse contradictory locations “artificially into one
class or another”, but to treat them as (contradictory) class locations of their own (61). Thus, he created three new contradictory class locations within class relations: managers and supervisors (between bourgeoisie and proletariat), semi-autonomous employees (between proletariat and petty bourgeoisie), and small employers (between bourgeoisie and petty bourgeoisie) (Wright 1978, 63).

I was interested in the research participants perceptions of social class as I often find my own social class difficult to assess. Prior to having children my mother occupied semi-autonomous labour positions. Once children arrived she left the paid labour force to rear children and tend to farm work. My father occupied semi-autonomous labour positions throughout the majority of his life even concurrently to starting his own small business. Business growth eventually enabled our family to become a small employers. This shift is also evidenced in my six siblings socio-economic experiences. That is, being among the younger of seven children offered a chance to share in the spoils of this newly achieved social class, namely household income and parental time.

In the primary research group, all three pre-service teachers grew up with both parents employed outside of the home (appendix 1), though Darryl’s mother later became the sole provider, after his father suffered a permanent head injury in a work-related accident. Lynn, Darryl and John all perceived themselves as having association with both working class and middle class locations, which reflects Wright’s (1978) thesis.

Both Lynn and Darryl conceptualized themselves as working class during a discrete period of their life. For example, Lynn identified herself as middle class because her family was not “extremely well off” and identified herself as financially working class as a student:

Louise: OK, in what ways do you think you come from a middle class background?
Lynn: Well, I don't think that we were--I was never--I wouldn't consider my family extremely well off. My parents were both working, but my brother and I were given [pause] given opportunities to pursue certain things. Of course, we weren't always given money whenever we wanted it, but for certain things it was there. [pause]

We talked about this in class a bit actually. A lot of people were saying that they would consider themselves working class just now being students, but I guess a lot of us wouldn't be here. In a sense, now because of money we could be considered working class, but in a sense probably brought up middle class to have the opportunity to come here and we will probably [have] all the amenities that we need. So that's it. {Interview, October 1994}

The class discussions have, for Lynn, illuminated the short term basis of their “financial working class” identity. What class discussions appear to have done is confirm that class location is defined by income, rather than problematizing this notion.

Darryl bases his sense of working class consciousness on memories of growing up in a low rent apartment complex. He perceived a social class shift to middle class when his family moved into a house and bought a new car:

Louise: O.K. could you describe why?

Darryl: Because, I mean we always had enough to eat [pause] and we always--[pause] but we did live in an apartment. My mom worked all the time, [pause] but when she was off we did do things but--[pause]. I guess just the way she would say things like, “Oh I wish we had--”, sometimes. Once and a while she would say, I mean she wouldn't dwell on it but she'd say, "I wish we had money to do this or money to do that". [pause] But it was--well we had enough money to get by. And the reason why I thought we moved up to middle class is because then we sort of--she sort of I guess [started] working more--(laugh)--or making more I guess. We moved into a house and we had a new car and we went away a few more times and we had more--I guess more materialistic things basically. It just seemed I guess especially moving out from sort of lower district, lower status apartments, that I thought into a sort of a home, it was sort of a big step.

{Interview, October 1994}

Darryl’s family move to a house clearly impacted his personal perception of his social class. Despite Lynn and Darryl’s reliance on financial characteristics to define their social class, under Wright’s analysis their parent’s occupations (hotel manager, librarian
and nurse respectively) would be considered as occupying semi-autonomous labour as they experienced “mixed patterns of control” in work relations (Edgall 1993).

John, however, asked how I was defining social class, namely “working class,” as based on “income” or “what kind of job you have.” I misunderstood his question as a request to locate my own class background:

John: I don't know--OK. for instance, what is--what's your definition of working class? Is it based on income or is it based on what kind of job you have?

Louise: OK, for me I find I personally fit into various definitions of social class and that's why I asked you a follow up question, "In what ways you consider yourself middle class". With my parents background when I grew up, my family had a very much middle class financial background. But I think the attitudes in my family are very much working class--based on the job area that they [cut off by John].

John: What kind of job[s] do they have?

Louise: It's more to do with gravel pits, trucking--that sort of background. So the attitudes towards education--in literature dealing with class [it] is often referred to as [a] working class attitude toward education.

John: I think you had--you guys lived next door (we both laugh). 'Cause it sounds the same for me, because my parents were, well except for my mom. I guess you could call her a professional, but--no, when I was growing up she wasn't really. She was an ambulance driver or a First Aid instructor or something like that--she wasn't yet a professional then. But my dad was strictly logging--and sports were--didn't help you like didn't give you any money and this and that. It had--and everything that you did [pause] had to have something to do with earning a living. Going to the gym was [pause] meaningless, because you could chop some wood--use that energy to add to the family or I guess something (laugh). {Interview, October 1994}

Although John’s turning of the interview power relations (interviewer/interviewed) initially startled me, it also created a common bond between us, as we realized that we both came from families with similar non-academic backgrounds or interests. I laughed, when he said I was his neighbour, because I was relieved that the tension was over and we had developed a rapport based on perceived class commonalities and attitudes toward education and work ethic. As indicated by discussing his father’s hard work ethic and
attitude towards John’s interests (working out and sports), John did not have much family support for pursuing his interests. John’s lack of family support for his education was quite different from the experiences Darryl and Lynn described.

As well, when discussing their perceived social class backgrounds, John and Darryl discussed their parents’ attitude toward education, while Lynn mentioned it later when referring to why she pursued becoming a teacher. Both Lynn and Darryl expressed the support of their families in their post-secondary education. Lynn’s family “encouraged her decisions,” while Darryl recognized that his mother’s nursing profession drew him back to school even though many of his peers did not complete secondary school. Darryl described the kinds of “trouble” he and his peer group would get into at school. He then turned his attention to the influence his mother had in keeping him in school, despite his “trouble-making”:

Louise: What kind of things were trouble?
Darryl: Well, let’s see [pause] well [pause] we started [pause] well we started smoking a lot of pot all of the time and getting into drinking and partying. Not that it took over my life, but it just—it did have an effect on my life. [pause] School wasn’t important then. [pause] Oh, just prank things, [pause] you know. We did little things like we tried to steal a car for a joy ride, but sort of brought [it] back to near to where we took it. I remember [pause] with these other friends, this is probably the worst, this is when they used to break into houses. One night we met up with them and my friends went along [pause] and I mean now that I think of it—it was this beautiful house one with all of this thousands of dollars worth of stereo and all this stuff, and we’ll take like a bottle of--or a case of beer--or a bottle of booze. So I think it was just for the sort of fun of it--to go along and then I sort of started straightening out. I mean I graduated and some of my friends didn’t, but a lot of them did. But still a lot of them didn’t go to school and I did. I think that’s because that was the influence of my mom because she had gone to school and it was a big influence even though I didn’t listen to her at all, in the back of my mind I knew that it was important. I didn’t really know why, but I went. What else [pause] I was very friendly. I got along with a lot of people. I had a few part-time jobs and was a very hard worker, always a very hard worker, even at home and other things. I really enjoyed life [pause] do you want sort of younger years too? {Interview, October 1994}
While Darryl constructs himself as a hero of his peer group, his mother as a role model, and identifies himself as having a hard work ethic, John was the first family member to complete a bachelor’s degree:

Louise: Given your earlier mention of your own background how has that influenced your own education—going on to pursue a degree in Human Kinetics?

John: *As far as family goes, there was no influence.* I don’t think anybody in my whole family has ever gone to university. [pause] I mean they have other forms of diplomas and there’s mechanics in the family—there’s one uncle with a technical diploma of some kind, *but no one with a Bachelor’s degree.* Not that that means anything, God. But once I was in it [university], the family was supportive, except for Dad (laugh).

Louise: Could you define supportive?

John: *Like amazed I made it through.* [pause] [Especially after] hearing stories about not eating for three weeks and scrounging up change for bus fare to catch a bus to a final exam or something—and working 35-40 hours a week while going to school full time and stuff like that. But if you were down to like absolutely nothing they’d send me a couple dollars and stuff. *{Interview, October 1994}*

Working full time and attending school full time suggest that John’s schooling experiences were dominated by financial concerns. As well, his family’s eventual support, aside from his father, of his post-secondary schooling apparently did not reach the level of encouragement or role model. Both men, however, constructed their stories with themselves as protagonists, while Lynn defined herself only in relation to her family.

While all three primary interviewees initially expressed having characteristics that made them feel a part of both working class and middle class, each has articulated different levels of family support and/or influence upon their decisions to pursue post-secondary degrees. While Lynn and Darryl’s perceptions of belonging to working class were of a particular time period, John continued to grapple with how to identify his social class location. John best exemplifies the tension in defining social class by education, income, or modes of labour. John’s tension in defining himself as working class was that it contradicts his experiences of income. Yet the tension in defining himself as middle
class were the "kinds of jobs" his family had. In finding family support for post-secondary education, Lynn and Darryl did not express any difficulties, while John expressed difficulties getting both emotional and financial support.

3.3 Gendered Caring: Who Were Influential Teachers for Prospective Male and Female Teachers?

At the time of this research, John, Lynn, and Darryl spanned a variety of teaching subject areas (primary, high school level French/English, and Social Studies respectively), but all three graduated from British Columbian universities (appendix 6). In 1994, John and Lynn both graduated from UBC: John in Human Kinetics and Lynn in French and English. Darryl graduated from SFU in 1993 in geography and sociology. While Lynn and Darryl plan to teach in grades eight through to twelve, John will be entering the female-dominated primary teaching field.

During their own schooling days, all three attended public schools, except for the first five years Lynn spent in the Catholic school system. I asked them to consider in what ways their own schooling influenced their decision to teach. Influential teachers was a common theme.

When I asked what educational influences led them to become teachers, their responses ranged from having no influence on his decision to teach (John) to having a lot of influence on their decision to teach (Lynn, Darryl). Within Lynn and Darryl's reflections, Lynn reflected on influential teachers while Darryl reflected on influential teaching.

Lynn described influential teachers as either "fantastic" or "terrible." In defining what she considered to be a "fantastic" teacher, she predominantly described personality characteristics (compassionate, fun, fair) of a former PE teacher:

Louise: Could you also give an example, or examples, of "fantastic" teachers?
Lynn: [pause] I liked my junior high Phys Ed. teacher who was always there for everyone. *She would spend time after school talking to us,* if we needed to—and I guess that time was a very difficult time growing up. I remember having talks with her about—just relationships with other people. *She was fun, she was organized—she knew her subject matter—she was compassionate, she was fair* and she wasn’t at all [pause] she was very equal in the sense that *everyone was equal in her eyes.*

{Interview, October 1994}

As a contrast, Lynn described experiences of a “terrible teacher,” as someone whose personality was not trustworthy:

Louise: Could you give me an example of a terrible teacher?

Lynn: Well, I remember a woman—I guess I must have been in grade four. I remember asking if I could move seats because I couldn’t see the board or something like that. [pause] There must have been some sort of parent teacher interview or—she ended up phoning my mother and saying I had a real problem in class and one of the examples was that she had to move me several times because I wasn’t fitting—and you know *she changed everything.* I guess that’s the one thing I remember. *I’d come home in tears every night from this woman and I don’t really remember what went on in the class. I just remember she had an awful impact on me.* {Interview, October 1994}

While Lynn was unable to remember this teacher’s actual teaching practices or the details that led to her tearful nights, she clearly felt betrayed. Later, I will show how Lynn’s reliance on teachers’ personalities may prove to be a factor as to whether or not she enjoys Barbara or Barbara’s class.

Darryl, on the other hand, reflected on several influential teaching practices during his schooling. Within Darryl’s reflections of “teaching,” there emerged a gender distinction between the teaching practices he considered to be “good.” In describing some “fun” teachers, Darryl specifically referred to a male teacher with dynamic teaching methods:

Louise: In what ways do you think your own educational experiences influenced your decision to teach?

Darryl: OK well, I had some interesting teachers, and some is the word. I had a lot of not so interesting teachers to [pause] and [pause] but the *fun teachers*—it sort
of looked like a—they made it look like a fun thing to do. As where a teacher that was straight boring monotonous lecture made—like what a horrible job. It would just seem like it was just terrible. Then you would go to a teacher that’s making you do all this different things, and a variety of methods and things--this job seems so interesting, he’s so creative in the things he does and they way he relates to students. And I thought, “Oh yeah”. [pause] And it wasn’t control [pause] like some people like to have control and they think that having a class [pause] it’s my opinion that I think some people are control freaks—and it’s definitely not that isn’t why I want to go into teaching. [Interview, October 1994]

Here, Darryl distinguished “fun” (male) teachers as non-control freaks who used a “variety of methods,” were “creative” and “related well to students.” Darryl consistently used gender-specific male pronouns when describing his exposure to teachers, despite the fact that he singled out female teachers specifically as memorable.

Throughout our interview Darryl reflected on several teachers, specifically giving the gender of seven. Of the seven, all three female teachers were considered “unfair,” while the four male teachers were considered “more equal”. The “unfairness” of the female teachers was usually described as giving preferential treatment to young women in the class, whereas male teachers treated both genders more equally. Within Darryl’s gender division of “fair” teachers, he described several events where female teachers “came down” on males as a means of classroom control. In reference to a female English teacher “coming down” on males and a male PE teacher’s mode of controlling male students, Darryl created a gender division between what was acceptable teaching behaviour toward male students:

Louise: OK. Could you give me an example of the female teacher “coming down on males”?

Darryl: OK [pause]. OK, I remember my friend was talking to me and she said “Oh, you two again, What are you guys up to if you want to have a really personal conversation like that, why don’t the two of you get a small room after” and things like that. You know she would make fun of you and things like that. I mean I guess we could take it because we’d just laugh or but I never ever heard her say anything mean or demeaning to girls and I don’t know why. Maybe because they [young women] would have acted differently and she [teacher] wouldn’t have gotten away with it. [pause]
An example from our elementary school—our PE teacher like I mean I remember him, you know—if we did something wrong—*he'd give us a little whack or something with his arm*. I mean nothing major and I mean he was our PE teacher, so you know if you—I remember I tackled somebody and he'd you know sort of, "Hey", you know and hit us and say you can't push someone over or something like that. *He'd throw his glove at us* or you know *whip it at us* or if we were talking really loud—like this would be more coed activities that we would be more involved in with the girls. I can remember volleyball. *He would just whip the volleyball as hard as he could*, if you weren't paying attention, but it'd only be to a guy. It wouldn't be to a girl. *So, he was definitely more aggressive with guys and that was OK. It was accepted.* {Interview, October 1994}

The tone of Darryl’s imitating of his former English teacher indicated that he understood her comments “if you want to have a really personal conversation like that, why don’t the two of you get a small room after” to be homosexual innuendo, which were undesirable to Darryl’s homophobic cohort group. Thus, while Darryl’s male PE teacher’s aggressiveness towards the male students was “accepted,” Darryl, and presumably other (male) students, held little regard for their English teacher or her personal belongings:

Louise: So would it make you stop talking?

Darryl: At that time. At that time it would stop you from talking, but it wouldn’t stop us from talking after that. [pause] But I remember one class she brought up—*someone had slashed her tires—and I remember thinking “I’m not surprised” (laugh). I mean to this day I am not surprised that someone slashed her tires, *just the way she dealt with (male) students*, it wasn’t [pause]—I don’t know. I didn’t think it was very good. {Interview, October 1994}

While I do not condone the homosexual innuendoes the female teacher exercised to silence male students, Darryl’s two descriptions of teachers who both cross boundaries with male students result quite differently: the male PE teacher’s aggressive behaviours were accepted and the female English teacher’s verbal innuendoes were rejected and damage to her personal property condoned. Indeed, the only male figure who was not “accepted” by Darryl’s high school peer group was the male librarian whom they suspected of being gay. Darryl’s gender distinction in teaching practices raises questions
of how well he will be able to relate to Barbara's teaching, particularly during the gender component.

3.3 Why Become a Teacher?

I was curious to find out how pre-service teachers would respond to the question as to why they wanted to become teachers, if asked informally and anonymously. There emerged an interesting gender division among the research participants responses in terms of who included discourse relating to child care and family influence. My assumption was that because they were in a teacher education program, they had decided that teaching would be their primary or more desirable profession, not an alternative or a fall-back.

In their responses, Darryl and John did not use child care or family influence as reasons for why they entered teaching while used Lynn both, perhaps typical of gender socialization. Upon further questioning, however, John did refer to the rewards of working with children. To illuminate their responses, I will analyze responses from Lynn, John and then Darryl.

Lynn felt there were a variety of influences that led her to teaching, but singled out inspirational teachers, her family and enjoying working with children as the most influential factors:

Louise: And why was teaching your career choice?
Lynn: I had to answer this question a lot in the last while (we both laugh). Quite a few reasons. I think growing up I had a lot of really fantastic teachers. I had a lot of teachers that really made a difference—that really made me enjoy school—because I know a lot of people that really detested school and [pause] I really enjoyed it and I think a lot of it had to do with my family as well. I was always encouraged to [pause] to pursue anything and everything that I wanted to do, you know which is possible. And so, I’d say it was a combination of those things. I love working with children of all ages—and that’s important—I can remember playing school all the time with my brother (laugh). {Interview, October 1994}
Lynn mentioned inspirational teachers and family encouragement to pursue any career she wanted, yet she does not mention that she herself has entered a female-dominated profession—teaching high school French and English. Thus, it is perhaps no surprise that she decided to become a teacher or that she did not give alternate career options.

John and Darryl discussed teaching as a fall-back, not a first choice in careers. John initially described how he “fell into” teaching, but was pleasantly surprised when he discovered he actually enjoyed being around young people:

Louise: In what ways do you think your own educational experiences influenced your decision to teach?

John: It's kind of strange actually. In grade twelve we had to make a decision [pause] to write down something for the year book (laugh) or whatever—and that period before we were talking about Phys. Ed. or something like that---and the English teacher was talking about it. And I thought "Well that sounds good, I'll write that down" (we both laugh). And I just sort of went into it. I did a couple years of college—and thought, "Yeah this is all right". And I've played sports since I could walk, and I did academics in high school but I didn't really like them very much. As far as—I don't really think I--when I was doing my undergrad I think was I mainly [pause] just doing it to get it done [pause] and just assuming I would teach just for the sake that I would teach--without really thinking about it. [pause] I don't think it was really until I started coaching--like I coached soccer and baseball and I taught some swimming and I got my full certification in swimming and then teaching swimming was quite an eye-opener.

Louise: How so?

John: And kind of a booster--cause you deal with [pause] you deal with kids from 4 years old to fourteen years old. And holy I haven't been there for [pause] like 10-12 years. I didn't know they were like this (laugh). {Interview, October 1994}

Although John takes a fall-back approach to teaching, he was eventually open to the “booster” of working with young people. He chose teaching as a second choice or “fall into” position after his own first choice to coach or teach community sports. In doing so, however, John distinguished his degree as being non-academic. John also broke with
familial expectations by pursuing his interests in sports, even though they did not match what his family, particularly his father, considered to be a viable way of “earning a living” (p. 6-7).

Darryl, like John, described how he fell back on teaching. Though Darryl seriously thought of teaching after volunteering at a school, he only applied to the teaching program after other plans did not work out:

Louise: OK and why was teaching your career choice?
Darryl: [pause] At first, I didn’t know what I wanted to do [pause] and everybody said—well I had mentioned teaching a few times and everybody thought that I’d be a great teacher and then I wasn’t sure [pause] if I did. So, after I graduated I knew some people that were going into the program and I thought I’d just wait. So I volunteered that year [at a school] and worked in a restaurant. And I [pause] I enjoyed it [volunteering in a classroom]. I felt I would have enjoyed it more if I’d more control in the classroom and as a teacher of course you would. I was there to help and you can’t change things. So then, I actually I applied to go to Japan for a year and teach [pause] and that didn’t turn out. And so I thought why don’t I just apply into the program at UBC—cause I’d checked the one at SFU and I already missed the deadline for that--and I didn't care anyways cause I thought SFU was kind of constricted and small and I was--I wouldn't mind trying it at another school so I applied at UBC, and I was accepted and I was very extremely happy. {Interview, October 1994}

While Lynn, and later John, linked teaching to wanting to be with young people, Darryl described teaching as a fall-back. Indeed, Darryl may not have entered the highly competitive UBC teaching program, if his overseas trip had worked out, as he did not consider applying until after his trip was cancelled. These interviews reflect some evidence of pre-service teachers’ gendered discourse concerning how pre-service teachers rationalize their career choices, particularly in terms of who considers teaching a fall back from a higher status form of work. Darryl’s example suggests that in a one-year program, perhaps “picking up” a Bachelor’s Degree in Education is a fall-back choice for some applicants. Another notable possibility is that John and Darryl’s fall-back talk could serve to cloak their career choice in the face of a lack of social valuation of teaching.
3.4 Locating Heterosexuality, Masculinities, and Homophobia

As Robert Connell (1987) and Blye Frank (1993) have clearly argued, the construction of masculinities in schools is deeply tied to heterosexuality. Frank (1993) describes hegemonic masculinities as “actual and perceived practices of men that give them power, authority and privilege over others: heterosexuality, misogyny, heterosexism, and homophobia”. Frank argues that schools sustain the social construction and imposition of heterosexual hegemonic masculinity, allowing for the maintenance of heterosexual and masculine privilege.

The commonsense understandings of teaching about sexual orientation spanned a range of responses. Lynn and John advocated teaching about sexual orientation in schools, though both were concerned with students’ families, but for different reasons. Lynn argued that schools should discuss sexual orientation issues because some families may not be open to such discussions:

Louise: Do you think schools should teach about sexual orientation?

Lynn: I guess personally, I don’t think I had the need for it because my parents were fantastic and open with that sort of thing. But then, on the other hand I guess a lot of kids may miss out on that and they do need, that sort of thing. I went through the Catholic school system until grade five and then I went to public school and I don’t think back then--well it certainly wasn’t something they would want to do back then. And my parents weren’t even Catholic anyways (laugh). And I’m not sure how they should go about addressing it but it should be addressed because not all kids are given, given a chance to issues that need to be addressed and that some kids miss. {Interview, October 1994}

Lynn included awareness about AIDS, sexually transmitted diseases (STD’s), and the consequences of teen pregnancy as issues that should be taught in schools for the students’ benefit. Lynn did not specify one particular sexuality, but in a follow-up question articulated how heterosexism dominates schools:

Louise: In what ways do schools teach about heterosexuality?
Lynn: [pause] Probably by not teaching about homosexuality, [pause] by not teaching about non-heterosexual [pause] relationships or whatever. *Perhaps by allowing certain comments that teachers allow to be said, like coming down on homosexuals or coming down on lesbians.* Probably, *I always got the feeling when I was growing up that that didn’t really exist because all of the examples and things you saw were always heterosexually based.* I just never thought that it [non-heterosexual relationships] existed. {Interview, October 1994}

John also argued that sexual orientation should be discussed in schools, but specifically from early ages and with parental consent:

Louise: Do you think schools should teach about sexual orientation?

John: [pause] I think it’s a huge problem [pause]. Our society is [pause] in such a conflict over [pause] what’s right and what’s wrong. Reality and humanity would say like accept everybody, [pause] for what they are. But that’s not society and [pause] I don’t even know if you can--take a child who perhaps [does] not even know what it is--and hasn’t even been given any information by his mother who doesn’t think he is quite ready for it--and then all of a sudden he comes home and says that he knows what a homosexual is and he didn’t even know what the ‘birds and the bees’ were before. So timing might be wrong for a certain child. The [pause] family pressures on that subject may be neutral--they may be negative or they may be positive towards homosexuality and that could [pause] really cause a lot of conflict between the parents and the teachers and the child, and the parents and the child. It’s diggin’ up a real bad can of worms right there.

Like there’s a lot of problems with introducing orientation out there and I think the best place to start with that and everything else is in the schools because if kids can learn to live together and appreciate every one for whatever they are then they’ll grow up with this attitude and maybe over time--like tomorrow it’s not going to change and in ten years it’s probably not going to change either, but if we introduce it now then in twenty-five years maybe things will be better, if we start with them young. ‘Cause if you like--if you take that old adage “you can’t teach a new dog tricks” I don’t know how far it is--how true it is but I think it’s fairly true because I think if you try and tell someone who is 40 or 45 years old the way they’ve been thinking for the last 45 years, it’s no longer true. Like just forget it. There’s a new way of thinking--like it just doesn’t happen [pause] and they’re not going to go “Well, son this is the way I grew up and I understand that you guys are doing something new and don’t listen to what I’ve been telling you all of these years, ‘cause there’s something new out there’”. *So, I think you have to reach children and they have to [pause] they have [pause] they have to be [pause] it has to be let known to them that this--that that’s their parents and that’s the way it was for them.* Like some other force within their lives has to come in and say “Hey, that you do have choices and say that we’re going to do this and if this works then everybody works together”. Whereas, if they just go home and just get that one view [pause] and then they’ll get the media’s view,
and media’s view is sometimes tinted—and it often reflects the negative—so maybe if they got in the schools, they might get some correct information, I guess. {Interview, October 1994}

John described correct information as the “facts”: homosexuals are “part of the population” and it [homosexuality] is natural.” While Lynn and John’s views on parental involvement differ, they were both supportive of teaching about sexual orientation in schools.

Darryl, on the other hand, reflected on his own schooling experiences in Port Coquitlam in the mid-1980s and slowly supported teaching about sexual orientation. In his response, however, Darryl juggled fear of promotion of homosexuality with educating adolescents about “difference” so that homosexual students do not feel like “aliens” in schools:

Louise: OK and do you think schools should teach about sexual orientation?
Darryl: Yes, do you mean how our society looks at [pause]--could you just expand what you--[I interrupted]
Louise: OK. Sexual orientation in terms of heterosexuality, homosexuality and bisexuality.
Darryl: Oh. [pause] Oh that's harsh (laugh). That is, I don't think we should. In a way I have two views about this. I don't know, I'm kind of confused about this—but in a way I think we shouldn't teach it 'cause some kids might think that we are trying to promote it. So you've got to be careful because I wouldn't want that to happen. I--especially with parents because I can just see one, "Oh, you're trying to make my kid into a homosexual". No, I don't.

Our society is changing and homosexuality is a fact. It exists and we have to let children know about this [pause] and the way we do it [pause] we have to be really careful about how we do it because [pause] we want children to be aware that some children when they go through adolescence--young adults have sexual differences and we should accept this--they should know about these differences, but we just have to be very careful in how we do this.

I remember reading this one article about in Toronto, about this one teacher and they were bringing [up] these issues in the class and he was actually a homosexual. I think he was killed--he was--it was a school in Toronto--and he was shot. And when they were bringing the legislation in--and then the School Board of Ontario had to sort of come back a bit--and so they are important issues but they are very touchy issues so you've got to be really careful how you deal
with them. But it is really important 'cause I think a student--say a student was a
-- like a boy or girl say--was he was a homosexual or she was a lesbian say--all
through school she or he would feel like an alien and not accepted if we didn't let
children know that there are different views on sexuality. So that is important
[pause] so those people don't feel alienated, I think it is important--I think we
should move slowly on doing this though. {Interview, October 1994}

Darryl’s latter hesitation in teaching about sexual orientation is, perhaps, because of his
former fear of promoting homosexuality by discussing homosexuality in schools. Yet he
did not consider how schools legitimate or “promote” heterosexuality. In a follow-up
question, Darryl argued that homophobia is inevitable to male adolescence:

Louise: You mentioned that for a gay or lesbian person they would feel like an
alien throughout school, why do you think so?

Darryl: Well, once they reached adolescence [pause] well let's face [it] we don’t--
it’s becoming accepted more and more as time goes on, but I mean in school, I
mean, like all the males you’re going to--let’s face it--it’s--you’re homophobic. I
mean its cool to be. I mean anyway--that's just the way it is. I mean with the
school I went to you just--it was just not cool. As you age, you come to feel
differently about certain things, but at that age you’re just a total homophobic.
You just--”Don't touch me that way”, and, ”Don't do this”. I don't know there are
just certain things you don’t do. And you call everybody a fag. I don't know that
just seemed like a term that was thrown around--and [pause] so I'm sure someone
felt [pause] that their sexual orientation was different--I mean I'm sure that. Like
how would they feel [pause]. I'm sure they would hide it in those times I mean I
don't remember any students in my junior high--or even high school saying you
know "Oh I'm gay". I mean it was just not heard of [pause] and looking back, I
can see why it wasn't heard of. [pause] I don't know if it is now in high school
[pause] and I think as people get older we start accepting this a bit more--not
everyone but [pause] its [pause]. Society slowly is changing, as I said before, but
I don't know if schools are [pause]. But it would be very hard for someone--
especially, I think especially a guy because there is still that macho type kind of
image of what a guy and boy should be [pause] and I think that's changing too
but its—it's definitely still there. {Interview, October 1994}

As Darryl reflected on his own culture of adolescent male homophobia in school, he
illuminated how masculinities are tied to heterosexual “macho type” images of what
“boys should be”. Interestingly, Darryl drew a distinction between schools and society,
arguing at first that schools and society are separate, yet they cohere in an homophobic
society quite well. Darryl’s descriptions of his peer group and teachers exemplify how hegemonic masculinities maintain heterosexual dominance and homophobia within schools (Frank 1993). Darryl’s earlier concern for “moving slowly” assumes that societal change is slow and gradual, rather than an uneven social struggle to unsettle interests of dominant groups. As well, his concern for “moving slowly” does not prevent the “alienation” of students who cannot identify their sexuality in schools (Frank 1993).

Darryl’s school peer group were well aware of the existence of homosexuals; particular hand gestures, touching and tone of voice were all presumed to be “homosexual”. When I asked Darryl how schools taught heterosexual orientation, Darryl mis-heard my question, but upon correction he replied oddly for someone who previously suggested that homophobia is outgrown:

Louise: And in what ways do you think schools or education teaches about heterosexuality?
Darryl: It was ignored. It seems to be that they were misfits of society and they wouldn’t even talk about it because they were so different. They were so weird—so why even talk about it—[I interrupt him]
Louise: Heterosexuality or homosexuality?
Darryl: Oh sorry, hetero or homo?
Louise: Heterosexuality.
Darryl: Oh sorry. [pause] Here I’m saying we’re all freaks (homosexuals) (laugh). Could you repeat the question I’m sorry. {Interview, October 1994}

Initially, Darryl reflected on the absence of homosexuality in schooling, yet when I clarified the question he himself referred to homosexuals as “freaks.” After I repeated my question, Darryl gave lengthy examples of how schools teach about heterosexual orientation: male/female career gender stereotyping (e.g., auto-mechanics versus nurses), teachers’ heterosexual assumptions, as well as the curriculum’s emphasis on male heterosexual experiences (given in books, examples used in-class, etc.). Through reflections on how schools teach about heterosexual relationships, Darryl realized the
male centred schooling he received was ruptured only by having to read a book on a young woman’s experiences growing up.

Among the three participants, Lynn and John were the most in favour of teaching about sexual orientation in schools. Lynn argued for schools to educate young people where families may not and John argued for schools to educate young people with the support of families. Darryl, however, normalized male adolescent homophobia and argued for teaching about sexual orientation, but stressed concern for non-heterosexual issues to be slowly introduced.

3.5 Feminism, Feminists, and Educational Change

I was interested in what pre-service teachers’ common-sense understandings of feminism were, whether they consider themselves feminists, and how they understood the aims of gender equity in schools.

3.5.1 What is Feminism?

To my surprise, Darryl, Lynn, and John could give lengthy descriptions of what feminism meant to them. They distinguished among feminisms they found “acceptable” and “unacceptable” or extreme.

I will first give their responses to what feminism meant to them and then analyze how they differentiated among different forms of feminism.

Darryl: Feminine [sic] means [pause] that women are trying to be gain equality. They think that [pause] feminists think that life right now isn't that great cause men have more of the power and they hold more of the--and therefore they hold more of the positions, therefore they can control people coming through the info-structure and they sort of tend to have more men placed in higher positions than women and since they control these--these structures more they can sort of limit the amount of women that come in. And feminine--feminism is trying to get women in different positions in our society so that they are equal to men--they just want the same rights. That's a feminist, but then there is radical feminism and I think that is completely different. {Interview, October 1994}
Lynn: [pause] I think that—*the ideal would be equal rights for both men and women*, but I think some forms of feminism are centered around only the woman and *I would consider myself a feminist in the sense that I think both men and women should have equal rights* [pause] *should be given the same opportunities, same pay for certain jobs, should be able to excel in sports*, should be able to be whoever they wish to be, and that means *not being stuck in traditional roles*. But if they so chose they should be able to do that without feeling that—feeling guilty because I think some extremes in feminism would not encourage that—*I’m not sure, I don’t really know a lot about it*. {Interview, October 1994}

John: *Feminism* [pause]. *I think it’s good*. [pause] I think women have been victimized for a long time and it’s good that there’s people out there that are speaking up and trying to change the world [pause]. [That] doesn’t really define it though. all right, I’ll define it [pause]. *People who [pause] are in favour of improving [pause] the quality of life for women*, for example, *equal opportunity for equal pay for equal work*, [pause] *equal access to everything that is accessible for their counterpart male*. {Interview, October 1994}

The above definitions imply that feminism is “acceptable” when it attempts to give equal rights to women: defined as equal pay, some opportunities to compete with men and boys, and access to arenas traditionally defined as male dominated, such as sports. In their responses, both Darryl and Lynn alluded to “unacceptable forms of feminism’ (“radical” and “extreme”). I will describe what they meant by these.

Upon further questioning, Darryl described “radical” feminists as wanting “more than equal opportunity,” not viewing “men in a positive light,” and not “supporting women who choose to stay at home.” In short, “giving feminists a bad name” because some ‘radicals’ feel “they can do without men.”

Lynn, however, defined “extreme” forms of feminism as a revenge movement which desired women to become in control and “perhaps be[come] the dominant sex.” Despite Lynn’s reservations of “extreme” feminism, she did recognize several positive aspects to feminism:

Louise: Are there any positive aspects to feminism?
Lynn: It has certainly helped people see and made a lot of improvements for women than we had a few years ago. A lot more. A lot more opportunities, a lot more women working so in that sense I think it is fantastic that you can see things have improved, perhaps not as much as some people would have liked to have seen, but I still see it as an improvement. {Interview, October 1994}

Lynn identifies “more opportunities” and “more women working” as the positive aspects of feminism, yet remains hesitant of the negative connotations associated with calling herself a feminist.

Thus, definitions of “acceptable” forms of feminism remained within a liberal feminist framework, while “unacceptable” forms of feminism advocated women desiring more than “equality.”

3.5.2 Who is a Feminist?

While definitions of feminism remained within the realm of liberal feminism, I was curious as to whether, after carefully defining and distinguishing “acceptable” and “unacceptable” forms of feminism, anyone defined themselves as feminist. The responses ranged from fear of negative connotations, to passive support and surprise at the question. Lynn was fearful of the label feminist because of the negative connotations associated with the word:

Louise: And would you describe yourself as a feminist?
Lynn: I don’t know because there is so many negative connotations to that, and there are so many definitions of the word that I don’t know that I would want to. I think I’d rather [pause]
Louise: In what ways do you consider yourself a feminist?
Lynn: I don’t believe that any sex has the right to be more dominant than the other, to make more money at the same job, to be allowed to be more athletic, to be allowed to be more outspoken, to be given any more rights than the other.
Louise: And in what ways do you not see yourself as a feminist?
Lynn: I guess not being any of the negative—not being any of what I said as being negative in the sense of being a revenge movement to be the more dominant sex, that sort of thing, cause I think there are some [pause] and I don’t know if they really call themselves feminists. {Interview, October 1994}

Clearly, even the accomplishments of feminism, for Lynn, do not outweigh the personal burden of defining yourself as a feminist.

John and Darryl were a little shocked at the question; John, however, answered by distinguishing himself as a passive feminist:

Louise: Do you consider yourself a feminist?
John: Oh god (laugh)—I don't actively—I don't—I don't go to any meetings (laugh) if that's what you mean [pause] (laugh) I don't take part in any polls (laugh) [pause] I don't donate money [pause] so actively I guess I'm not. Passively --I guess in my own frame of mind I am but probably doesn't help anybody anyway. But so [pause] like am I [pause] I guess I'm not, if I don't do anything about it I guess. {Interview, October 1994}

John’s non-participation in feminist meetings, polls and fund-raisers leads him to believe he could only be considered a passive feminist, if at all. For Darryl, though he had taken a feminist undergraduate sociology course previously, he was quite surprised at my question:

Louise: Would you consider yourself a feminist?
Darryl: Do I consider myself a feminist. I haven't considered myself a feminist but when I think of my views I guess I would—I do think that women should be treated equally. But I've never really considered myself a feminist—that's funny because that's the first time I've been asked that question (laugh). {Interview, October 1994}

Though initially Darryl was open to defining himself as a feminist, he left the interview saying that he would have to think about it more.

In general, all participants defined feminism in terms of a liberal feminist fight for equality. Clearly, the word feminist can have a perceived negative connotation for both men and women, as evidenced in their own stigmatizations of feminists and feminism.
Consequently, none of them wanted the stigmatization associated with the word. Following this discussion I was interested in how pre-service teachers understood the linkages between feminism and gender equity in education.

3.5.3 Gender Differences in School

In my own attempts to understand pre-service teachers’ understandings of gender difference in schooling, I inadvertently based my question on liberal feminist ideological assumptions of equality. That is, I asked in what ways education treated boys and girls equally and unequally. Nonetheless, a gender division in the responses emerged. That is, while Lynn simply stated “ideally it [education] would like to,” Darryl and John gave several examples of equal treatment between boys and girls. John argued that “boys and girls” are given the same opportunities:

Louise: In what ways do you think education treats boys and girls equally?

John: Equally. all right, on a really basic level, both boys and girls can go to school (laugh). I guess that’s equal [pause] a little naive but—how else are they equal? [pause] They’re given the opportunity to take the same things, [pause] there’s no barricades that say a boy can’t do this [pause] slowly the barricades for women playing competitively with males in sports [pause] is falling, but it’s slow. There’s a few and the few that do make it. They hit the media, so hopefully that helps. {Interview, October 1994}

Darryl’s commonsense understandings of gender issues in education reflect that he was less aware of gender inequalities. Darryl argued that equal treatment of boys and girls occurs in marking, classroom activities and usually from teachers. Darryl clarified that male teachers usually treated students fairly, but female teachers were often more concerned with the welfare of girls in the classroom.

When I asked how education treats boys and girls unequally, several examples were given by Lynn, but only a few from Darryl and John. Lynn argued that boys and girls are treated unequally in gender-segregated activities in PE and teachers called on boys more
than girls, which taught girls to be accepting of situation(s) and not to be outspoken. Darryl mentioned that there are few co-ed sports or sports where girls can participate. John mentioned teacher bias generally, though he said he did not remember any, he had just read about it.

From my interviews, Lynn appears to have more knowledge of unequal treatment of girls in school, Darryl appears to have misconceptions, and John appears to be unable to mesh reading material with experience(s). I will now analyze the pre-service teachers’ commonsense understandings of gender equity in school and society.

### 3.5.4 Gender Equity in Education

Pre-service teachers understood gender equity in education as revolving around using non-stereotypical texts (Lynn, Darryl), using non-traditional role models (Lynn), needing equal number of male/female elementary teachers (Darryl), creating equal opportunity for girls/women (Lynn, John) and creating equal access for girls/women (John).

Both Lynn and Darryl elaborated at length on this question. Lynn began by discussing classroom types of equity, but quickly moved to discuss her experiences in gender-segregated sports:

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**Louise:** What does gender equity in education mean to you?

**Lynn:** I think it would mean perhaps *giving more examples of non-traditional roles*, having more--I think instructors see a trend already happening, where you see photographs in a textbook of maybe a man or a woman doing construction--certainly those kinds of images--I'm not really sure where I stand on it.

*I love sports, but I'm in swimming--it's an individual sport.* Men and women don't compete against each other, for obvious reasons, not that--it's just not measurable--you may be given same opportunities to training, but it comes down to the fact that males have a body structure that is on the top level of the sport. Certainly there are a lot of men that I can swim faster than, but at the very highest level it's just a factor that happens.

It's funny, participating in sports. Whenever our swim team does anything else like soccer, the boys dominant the sport because they were encouraged more in school to be athletic [and] they perhaps want to win more than girls. *I mean, I am*
extremely competitive. I always want to win too. They [boys] wouldn’t pass the ball to the girls—you know not giving them [girls] a chance to prove themselves. I think that that really needs to be dealt with in schools and I don’t think that separating Phys Ed. classes helps boys and girls at all because they are never required to work together. I think having a teacher to encourage that everybody plays together, and perhaps a bit less of an emphasis on winning, might change that whole thing. You know it was always fun being in an all-girls class because you got to play more—but why was that—was it because you were socialized or you were brought up to believe that boys were better than the girls. {Interview, October 1994}

Lynn’s experiences in competitive swimming often centered on her reflections of schooling and illuminated gender-sensitive areas in sports: non-competitive co-ed activities.

Darryl argued that gender equity in education should change at two levels. On one level, Darryl argued that teachers should give the same amount of attention to boys and girls and that there should be more males teaching elementary school. At another level, Darryl argued for new textbooks with women and men in non-traditional roles and not to dissuade students from their goals, traditional or non-traditional.

For the most part, pre-service teachers argued for gender equity within a liberal feminist framework, though John gave brief mention to needing to create equal access for girls and women. Because of the tendency toward liberalism, I asked pre-service teachers to consider factors that inhibit women.

John specifically defined various forms of “victimization of women”: “mocked” for going to work outside the home, “frowned upon when they attain a higher position,” and expected to take lower paying jobs. John also mentioned the subtleties of how women’s contributions to household income is perceived:
John: Yeah. Their [women’s] income is seen as a supplement to a family rather than a . . . either a main form of income or an equal income. {Interview, October 1994}

When I asked Darryl and Lynn ways in which society may inhibit women’s attempts at advancement, both responded with a critique of privatized nuclear familial ideology, observing that families are important sites for teaching unequal gender roles and preparation of women for service sector work. Only Lynn referred to a public reason preventing women’s advancement, namely school, as supporting gender stereotyping already learned in the home:

Louise: Could you give me an example of what might inhibit women from achieving equal opportunities?

Lynn: Probably the biggest thing would be in the home. If they were brought up to believe that women only did certain things and men only did certain things and they only saw their mother at home, they only saw their father working they would probably grow up feeling that was the only way. And of course that could be enforced in schools if teachers are only giving certain examples where traditional roles are the focus, or textbooks have all these pictures of women being mothers and nurses and all the men being construction workers etc. It’s sublimely reinforcing—I think you probably need some sort of role model on a continuing basis that shows you alternatives. {Interview, October 1994}

Essentially, public forms of oppression were not discussed and only Lynn alluded to the public sphere when she discussed schooling. Similarly, Darryl interpreted the large number of women instructors in his teacher education program to be evidence that “things are changing.” Darryl is unaware that the number of women in the education faculty is an indication that education is a predominant form of women’s work, though only recently at the university level.26 Darryl also said that he was “shocked” to find out he only had one male professor, in his teacher education program, though he claimed it did not “bother” him:
... it doesn’t bother me at all, because I know we’re trying to gain equality. I think it’s good that there are more professors that are female.

{Interview, October 1994}

Darryl’s support of predominantly female professors is inconsistent with his earlier reflections of female teachers’ teaching abilities and may stem from his misunderstanding of teaching as a form of low status, underpaid work. I later asked what factors might inhibit women achieving equality, to which Darryl responded, the fear of not being able to juggle a family and a career:

... and it’s harder for a woman to go out ‘cause society sees her as the main--main person responsible for the kids. [pause] There’s not much a push for women to further their education it’s changing, but there wasn’t as much of a push because they weren’t the bread--they weren’t the bread winners it was the men who have been in the past who have been and that’s changing too.

{Darryl, Interview, October 1994}

Darryl’s recognition of social pressures placed on women to be the “compulsory parent” illustrates difficulties women face leaving the private sphere and perhaps even reflect pressures his own mother felt when she became the “bread winner” of their family. Liberal assumptions of public/private spheres are evident in Lynn’s and Darryl’s common-sense understandings of barriers for women’s advancement. John, though he had only briefly mentioned equal access a few times, did articulate several public sphere gender inequities. John bridged liberal ideological assumptions of private/public spheres when he discussed the perceptions of how women contribute to household income.

Before I begin the next chapter, which details how these three pre-service teachers’ understandings of gender equity are affected by the class, I will introduce Barbara.
3.6 A Feminist Instructor’s Perspective

To illuminate Barbara’s perspective on the gender component in EDST 314 I will analyze what feminism means to her, her goals for the gender component, and how she felt her goals were met.

Undoubtedly, an instructor’s perspective on any marginal issue influences the way in which a classroom responds to the topic (Fullan 1991; Kagan 1992). In our interview, Barbara described feminism as being an integral part of her life at both personal and professional levels:

Louise: And I’m wondering what feminism means to you?

Barbara: [pause] Personally, it’s been really important to me as a woman, obviously, and as a mother, and as somebody who’s trying to go into a fairly male-dominated profession. It’s been important to me personally in trying to make sense of the world around me, and professionally. I suppose theoretically what feminism means to me is the struggle for all people to achieve equality it’s not equality of opportunity, but equality of outcome, and looking at the structures in society that tend to constrain women. {Interview, December 1994}

Unlike the pre-service teachers, Barbara personalized her definition of feminism to specifically include how feminism has helped her “make sense of the world.” Barbara’s definition of feminism indicates that she does not represent the course’s interests in liberal feminism, but rather the systemic inequalities that “constrain women” in society.

Similarly, Barbara described the goals for her course section as being both personal and professional. In this sense, Barbara argued that her goals extend beyond the general course objectives of thinking about “how and what” education is to a further analysis of problematizing education and the involvement of the pre-service teachers themselves:

Louise: What were your goals for the Education[al Studies] 314 course?

Barbara: Well, certainly one of my objectives is to encourage students to think about their own existing ideologies or ideas. To first of all, to acknowledge that they do have an ideological perspective, or that they do have a presence in the classroom, and by that very presence, that they’re sending out certain messages to students by how they deal with the materials and by how they conduct their
classroom. That’s all going to have an impact, that they’re not neutral beings [pause]. Then, to challenge the students with more progressive or radical notions about such issues as gender, sexual orientation, social class, and ethnicity. {Interview, December 1994}

Barbara’s interest in having pre-service teachers consider themselves as biased moves beyond the residual of presumed neutrality underlying the liberal course framework. How could a course designed by instructors to question presumptions of neutrality, and based on readings that challenge presumptions of neutrality be based on a framework of presumed neutrality? Ironically, though the course did aim to add-in gender, race and class, it constructs “difference” as an add-on.27

Barbara also explained that her specific objectives for the gender component were to have pre-service teachers use the course readings to question common-sense understandings of gender (e.g., why women have stayed at home with kids, why girls tend to be less athletic than boys, etc.). Though “success” of any objective is always difficult to measure, I wondered how, at the end of the course, Barbara perceived her own objectives were met:

Louise: In what ways do you think your objectives were met?

Barbara: That’s a really difficult one. I think had I answered this last week, I probably would have been quite pessimistic about it. Our discussions in class tended to really frustrate me, because I found myself spending much of the time defending the right to even address such issues. [Pause] There was a lot of resistance to it vocalized in class, which was really frustrating. We never got to talk about a lot of the issues that I wanted to talk about. There are different ‘takes’ on this [gender equity], even among feminists. It’s a very complex issue. {Interview, December 1994}

I am hoping that my analysis will illuminate the frustrations Barbara experienced trying to move beyond a liberal feminist framework in the midst of hostilities toward, and a general unwillingness to accept, feminist analyses of social inequalities.
3.7 Conclusion

Overall the first interviews with pre-service teachers exemplified their reliance on liberal feminism and its application(s) in education. The differences in perceived social class locations and educational experiences were bridged by shared conventional gender differences to validate who influential teachers were and reasons for entering teaching. Though teaching about sexual orientation was advocated by Lynn and John, tensions between public (school) and private (family) were discussed by each. Darryl, however, had difficulties balancing a tension he saw between teaching about sexual orientation and promoting non-heterosexual orientations. Within understandings of feminist educational change, only John mentioned public sphere barriers against women (e.g., pay inequities). Darryl and Lynn, on the other hand, focused on private sphere (family, care giving) as reasons why women have difficulties pursuing careers. From the first interviews it becomes evident that Barbara will have to challenge Lynn, John, and Darryl's common-sense understandings of feminism.
Chapter 4: A Friendly Place For White Middle Class Feminists?

Several critics of liberal feminism have argued that liberal feminism offers a “friendly home for middle class white women” (Jaggar 1983; Bannerji 1995). Broadening the scope of feminism to include men, I have wondered if these criticisms raised towards supporters of liberal feminism would be the same if white middle class men considered themselves to be pro-feminist. In beginning this research, I questioned whether any form of feminism, even the less radical or structurally challenging liberal feminism, would find a “friendly home” in a feminist’s mainstream teacher education class.

In this chapter, I will analyze classroom dynamics and subsequent interview responses about them, during the gender component of Barbara’s class. In doing so, I will illuminate some of the difficulties a feminist may encounter when teaching anti-oppression topics, such as anti-sexism and anti-heterosexism, particularly in a compulsory course. This chapter will also evidence what change(s) occurred in pre-service teachers’ common-sense notions of gender equity. As well, this chapter will illustrate how conservativism led to stigmatizing of equity, the de-legitimisation of course material, and the consequent claiming of oppression by white men. By identifying some pre-service teacher’s defensiveness towards Barbara’s feminism and anti-oppression pedagogy, I will consider institutional influences and implications in the next chapter.

To illustrate the intensity of the events that occurred in this class is challenging. Nonetheless, through examining my brief time in this class, I will draw linkages among in-class comments and interview responses, to contextualize the changes that occurred.

It is difficult to pinpoint all the influential factors creating change in the common sense understandings of gender equity in the program. Within each section I have tried to
discuss topics in a timely fashion: in-class material before interviews and second interviews before third. I have divided discourse that illustrates disengagement from feminist analyses in education into three sections: wilful ignorance, defensiveness (masculine, feminine, social class, and heterosexual), and open hostilities. As much of this information comes from my second interviews, I will use interview material to illuminate some pre-service teachers’ understandings of the events. To begin, however, I will discuss areas where pre-service teachers did engage in feminist debates in education.

4.1 Engaging in Feminist Debates in Education

In the next two sections, I will analyze classroom and interview discourse that engaged in feminist debates in education. As there are few in-class examples, and Darryl and John did not remember the class work well, I will primarily draw from Lynn’s interviews. I will then discuss a few classroom examples of where pre-service teachers engaged in discussions regarding the teaching about sexual orientation.

4.1.1 “I don’t think that it’s something we can just ignore”

During Barbara’s class, there was never a formal introduction nor a critique of feminist frameworks in education, though examples of liberal, radical and socialist feminist initiatives were exemplified in course readings and class discussions. Despite the variance of analysis offered by the readings, class discussions largely focused on liberal feminist perspectives. This was evidenced by the liberal assumption that a teacher could achieve a bias-free curricula. That is, classroom activities for EDST 314 often/frequently involved the students reading about teachers doing activities free of “gender” or “heterosexual” bias. For example, teachers could have students do math problems using domestic contexts and could remove heterosexist metaphors when discussing items like positive and negative magnetic attractions. Overall, interview discussions gave far more in-depth reflections on each article than class discussions.
In my interviews, an emergent reason for pre-service teachers’ continued focus on liberal feminist initiatives emerged through difficulty expressed in (mis)reading Houston’s (1985) article which argued for a “gender sensitive” approach in education. Houston’s complex article focuses on critiquing what she calls “strong and weak versions of gender free” education. She argues that a gender-sensitive strategy is preferred because it distinguishes between different “times and circumstances” where adopting opposing policies may be necessary to eliminate gender bias (Houston 1985, 368). Lynn, John, and Darryl specifically expressed difficulties in understanding and differentiating between the labels and categories with which Houston constructs her argument {Interviews #2: John, Lynn, and Darryl}. For example, John was interested in Houston’s gender sensitive approach, but felt she did not “build on it [enough] or really define it” {interview #2}.

Lynn, however, misunderstood Houston’s argument, as supporting a gender blind approach. Lynn, despite her difficulties in “decoding” the article, critiqued “gender blind” education:

Lynn: Out of the three different categories that were mentioned in the article I think one of them was just ignoring it. Was it gender free or gender neutral? One of these I think--and the author was saying just to ignore it and I don’t, ideally that would be the ideal at some point in the future to be able to operate that way. But I don’t think people are able to acknowledge that there are bias [sic] and that there are problems. I don’t think that it’s something that we can just ignore without some way of solving it. {Interview, November 1994}

Lynn was particularly aware of some of the short-comings of liberal feminist educational recommendations, but also did not agree with radical feminist suggestions that were discussed in Educating Girls (1990). That is, Lynn was reluctant to advocate gender segregated schooling as a means to solving current gender relations:

Louise: I’m wondering how you reacted to the film that was presented in the Wednesday class?
Lynn: Well, first of all, I’m not sure if I really agree with the physics class they developed with women only. I mean in principle I think, in general, they were getting at maybe the right sort of idea, [pause] but I think that in doing that sort of thing we’re not really working at solving any of the problems as—it’s just kind of putting it to the side, so I don’t really agree with that kind of class.

Louise: OK, what do you think are other options?

Lynn: [pause] I think that teachers need to be better trained of maybe recognizing that maybe they focus their attention in certain ways or allow certain behaviour because it’s perhaps from a male or a female—I think a lot of teachers would probably be surprised. [pause] Just to, for instance, have someone at the back of the room count how many times they call on males. [pause] It would be sort of interesting to have some sort of training or observation for it and [pause] could be dealt with that way, rather than making it an even greater issue. I mean, I can just see kids in the school [pause] almost making fun of it—saying, “Girls need their class ‘cause they need more attention.” {Interview, November 1994}

While Lynn recognized some limitations of segregated schooling for present gender relations, she also argued against making “too big an issue” out of girls’ schooling and falls back on liberal feminist concerns of monitoring teacher/student interactions. Lynn’s unwillingness to make a “big deal” out of girls’ schooling could be a result of how gender issues were received in her own EDST 314 class.

In my third interview, responses to Tite and Connell’s articles were less in-depth and continued to remain within the domain of liberal feminism. While Lynn agreed with Tite’s suggestion of having either women in the community or students themselves discuss difficulties for women in non-traditional careers, the majority of her own suggestions for implementing gender equity in the classroom were of a liberal feminist perspective:

Louise: And how do you foresee implementing gender equity in your future classroom?

Lynn: I think that it’s really important to look at some things that are really subtle, like certain things in materials in textbooks and films, that perhaps perceive women and men in roles that are considered traditional, and providing both men and women with opportunities to see themselves in other roles, in any sort of role [pause] to get the student to realize the things just in the English language, which are often sexist, and talking about gender neutral terms and
things like that. [pause] To put forward, especially to the men, that the way they are perceived by certain people, is affected by the way they use the language. {Interview, December 1994}

Despite Houston's argument to move beyond liberal feminist initiatives, pre-service teachers, both in class and in my interviews, did not verbally support more than liberal feminist changes to education. This could be because Houston's article was too difficult to access and Tite's article remained largely in the realm of liberal feminist changes, thus, few curricular alternatives were offered.

Another reason for the difficulty in moving beyond liberal feminism in education could have been the marginalization of gender equity in their practicum and across course sections. That is, both Lynn and Darryl mentioned practicum experiences where they tried to change gender relations in class: Darryl tried to implement non-sexist language and Lynn a gender-sensitive PE class. Both met with unwelcome comments from their respective sponsor teachers. As well, in another teacher education course, Darryl mentioned having gender neutral language marked incorrectly which confused him.

Thus, while pre-service teachers are being introduced to more gender equitable approaches in education, they seem to find varying levels of support for gender issues in their practicum and other teacher education courses.

4.1.2 'The big deal is, homosexuality is treated like a disease'

While there was heterosexual defensiveness during discussions considering whether sexual orientation should be taught in public schools, there were also moments where pre-service teachers did engage in these discussions. I will discuss two examples in which sexual orientation was discussed in class and pre-service teachers advocated addressing it in public schools. In a later section there will be examples of where addressing sexual orientation in schools was accepted, but within heterosexual limits.
In class, a male pre-service teacher expressed a “fear” of teaching against the heterosexual grain which was countered by a female colleague, who stressed the need to address the silence that is brought on by fear:

Male1: The big deal is it’s [homosexuality] treated like a disease.
Male2: There was a homosexual [teacher] fired in Seattle for being homosexual. All of a sudden [s/he] was not a good teacher.
Woman1: Because of fear there is a lot of silence and people don’t express themselves.
Woman2: Is it getting better?
Barbara: Not in the Charter [of Rights].
Male3: We are treating other minorities better than homosexuals.
{Field notes, October 1994}

The fear surrounding teaching against, and offering alternatives to, heterosexism was clearly articulated by male 2. Meanwhile, male 3, though perhaps expressing concern, articulated a liberal perception of hierarchies of oppression when he, arguably, placed homophobia below other forms of oppression. His comments, much like EDST 314 component analysis of oppressions, consider homosexuality and other forms of oppression as separate rather than as interconnected. What is unclear from male 3’s comments is where a homosexual “minority” would be placed in his analysis.

In a later pre-service teacher presentation on AIDS Education, a group’s spokesperson appeared to challenge the idea that AIDS is merely a gay disease, but does so with a bio-deterministic analysis which does not consider social behaviours that cause AIDS:

Woman: AIDS is not a drug or a gay disease, a lot of kids are sexually active and we need to get rid of the myths surrounding AIDS/kids. [I] advise [you] approach the subject in a fact based, non-judgmental science base and [you] have to discuss homophobic issues. Be prepared to deal with immortality as kids often believe that they are immortal.
Barbara: And talk about condoms. {Field notes, October 1994}

Clearly, this group approaches AIDS education with scientific rhetoric rather than the social behavioural approach to AIDS education. By discussing sexual practices that lead to, versus prevent AIDS, perhaps socio-behavioural attitudes could be addressed. That is, it is difficult to know if the intention of "fact based, non-judgmental science base" will increase knowledge about safer sex or create a "fear based" curricula that emphasizes the "dangers of sexual arousal... [with] biased inaccurate information about sexually transmitted diseases, abortion and sexual information" (Trudell 1993, 3). By discussing sexual activity as "risky" or less "risky", Bonnie Trudell and Mariamne Whatley (1992, 313) argue that behaviours that lead to AIDS can be discussed in a manner that includes all sexualities.

While recognizing the moments of engaging in debates raised in the curriculum are important, they did not preoccupy class discussion. Rather, there were several instances where pre-service teachers disengaged from feminist analyses and other anti-oppression themes and issues, such as the aforementioned examples of defensive hetero-sexism.

4.2 Disengagement from Feminist Analyses of Gender Relations in Schooling

There were various forms of disengagement from feminist analyses of gender relations in schooling during the gender equity component. I have divided these moments into three different spaces: wilful ignorance, defensiveness (masculine, feminine, social class, and heterosexual), and open hostilities towards equity issues. This is done because each represents a different level of conservatism (passive, verbal, and verbally confrontational) supporting the status quo, and may entail different measures when addressing such incidents in a classroom.

In my analysis of wilful ignorance I will draw on Peggy McIntosh's (1990) argument that men's "unwillingness to grant they are over-privileged" creates "taboos around the
subject” that serve to “protect male privilege from being fully acknowledged, lessened, or ended” (76). In my analysis of masculine/feminine and heterosexual defensiveness I have drawn on Britzman et al.’s (1993) analysis of high school students’ imagery to consider how pre-service teachers’ verbal discourse imagery supports or confronts hegemonic discourse. As well, to include women in my analysis of wilful ignorance and defensiveness I will draw upon Roman’s (1993) concept of “privileged incredulity” to describe instances where women or men express shock and surprise that sexism still exists. In analysing the hostilities raised during the component, I will draw upon Roman’s (1993) definition of white defensiveness as a space where whites, in this case white men, erroneously claim to be “history’s oppressed subjects of racism” (71). I do not consider these three forms to be rigid, but rather dynamic and notable, supporting each other’s vested interest in hegemonic discourse. To support this analysis, and provide evidence that these forms of defensiveness also happen in non-feminist classrooms, I will include my field notes from Everet’s class. After discussing these three spaces of disengagement, I will analyze interview responses to the open hostilities exhibited toward gender equity issues.

4.2.1 Wilful Ignorance of Feminist Analysis

It is difficult to analyze all the ways in which wilful ignorance operated, as there are clearly active and passive forms. Namely, lack of involvement in discussions and missing classes could be wilful ignorance or fatigue. Nonetheless, I think it is important to briefly mention a few active forms of wilful ignorance, or passive aggressiveness, that occurred during the gender equity component. On the first day of the gender component, Barbara introduced to the class Educating Girls (1990) as a film that illuminated current gender debates in education and thus served as an introduction to the component. Nevertheless, soon after the lights were turned off, three men put their heads down on their desks and slept through the entire film. As well, though I can not speak for other
components, late arrival and absenteeism were common during the gender component. John was a late arrival to one class, and upon his arrival participated minimally in his small group discussion, despite his participation in this research.

In class itself, John never spoke in large class discussions, and only briefly in small group discussions. Initially, he described his silence as a way of “getting by” in his course work without ever “looking like a moron”:

Louise: Could you tell me why not?
John: (laugh) This is anonymous right? I generally go to class just to go to class. I read the article and I do my papers and I try to get away with not participating as much as possible in class. And so far it has worked.
Louise: OK. And why do you not want to participate in class?
John: I feel uncomfortable speaking in front of the class. I feel perhaps I won’t know what I am talking about. I don’t like being put on the spot. I feel like people like—like a moron or something (laugh). There you go. {Interview, November 1994}

Similarly, in our third interview, John said that he had not spoken in a class devoted to discussing constructions of masculinities because he was “always silent in-class” for fear of “looking stupid” {Interview, December 1994}. 28

There were also examples of verbal passive aggressiveness towards feminist analyses. In Barbara’s class, a female pre-service teacher expressed concern about homosexual’s discussing their lifestyle(s) too explicitly:

Homosexuals don’t usually talk about sex, but they [homosexuals] could make it [homosexuality?] less explicit. {Field notes, October 1994}

Barbara asked why homosexuals should be denied the right to discuss their relationships. No one responded. The class’s lack of involvement in considering Barbara’s question could be considered at a number of different levels (e.g., a form of passive aggressiveness, being considered gay friendly, never having considered it, etc.). Given the wealth of information on masculinities in my first interview, particularly from Darryl,
it is notable that no men were willing to publicly discuss social pressures they have
experienced.

In the secondary research group, one older white male student persistently responded
throughout the component with the same biological deterministic response he had stated
on the first day, illustrating that he had not reconsidered his position at all. His comments
on gender issues were always based on his understandings of anthropological accounts of
gender relations in hunting and gathering societies:

*Everyone knows that men and women are wired differently* [pause] it’s going to
take another one hundred or two hundred years before they are equal. {Field
notes, Everet’s class, November 1994}

Initially no one responded to him, but by week 2 a woman expressed her dislike of his
opinion. As he was shocked at the woman’s emotional response, I think he was passively
choosing not to “know” about women’s oppression and, in doing so, supporting anti-
feminist ideologies (Feldthusen 1995).

The seating pattern in both classrooms was a less verbal sign of passive
aggressiveness whereby white men sat in clusters in the corners of the classrooms. Upon
my entry to one of these groups in Everet’s class, one male student turned and asked me
if I was “getting lots of good stuff.” The comments themselves mean little; the tone,
however, told me to be less concerned with immediately writing my field notes while in
his group.

Though these forms of wilful ignorance may not appear as individually important or
crucial to a classroom atmosphere, collectively they created and supported an anti-
feminist atmosphere in both classrooms. Within the general atmosphere of wilful
ignorance pre-service teachers’ defensiveness and hostilities were left uncontested by
colleagues.
4.2.2 Defensiveness

During class there were a number of statements made during the gender and sexual orientation unit that expressed verbal defensiveness towards anti-oppression issues. While all forms of defensiveness contributed to supporting the status quo, there were nuances among them: that is, (1) masculine verbal defensiveness operated both individually and collectively, (2) feminine verbal defensiveness dismissed the relevance of feminist analyses by arguing for humanitarianism and the dismissal of gender neutral language, and (3) open masculine hostilities toward anti-oppression issues and toward Barbara led other pre-service teachers to stigmatize equity programs.

1) Masculine Verbal Defensiveness

I have used the term masculine defensiveness towards feminist analyses to illustrate two male forms of defensiveness that defended the status quo. Within masculine verbal defensiveness this occurred in two forms: individual and collective. The first form, individual masculine verbal defensiveness, occurred when Darryl described reactions to Educating Girls (1990). Darryl initially distanced himself from the class and then later realized he too was influenced by the appearance and conversational style of a woman in the film. That is, Darryl, a student who was aware of both liberal and radical feminisms, clung to conventional gender stereotypes, rather than focusing on the arguments raised over whether or not girls should have segregated schooling:

Louise: Was there anything you didn’t like about the film [Educating Girls (1990)] shown in class?

Darryl: Anything I didn’t like about the film.[pause] Well, they just--I guess they were arguing their points [laugh]. It seemed that the woman from the public schools was really battling the other woman and after class it was kind of funny, everyone was [saying] “Well she’s a kind of a battle-axe.” It was almost like they were looking at her, and I guess I was too, as a bit of a--as a macho woman, [laugh] sort of less feminine than the other woman. {Interview, November 1994}
Darryl’s description of the woman as a “battle-axe,” “macho-woman,” and “less feminine” reinforce conventional stereotypes of how women should appear and illustrated how he expects women to speak and dress.

Collective masculine verbal defensiveness occurred among several men in reaction to a handout summarizing Canadian women’s marginalization in the work force, violence against women, wage disparity between men and women and the like. Several males in the class contested claims of systemic inequality, particularly women’s exclusion from professional sports. In their rationalizations of women’s exclusion from sports, several men refused to question why “big business” does not support women’s sports, as they do men. That is, they normalized capitalist expenditures on male sports: “that’s just the way it is.” One man even said that there is/was a well funded female professional sport: beach volleyball! The immediate defensive responses to the inequalities women experience in Canada exemplifies how strongly held the sentiment/belief in male entitlement and privilege is among men (McIntosh 1990).

2) Feminine Verbal Defensiveness

A recurring theme in Barbara’s classroom was some white women claiming they had not experienced oppression, therefore they did not understand what “all the feminist fuss” is/was about. Supporting this position was the perception that “things have changed” or will be when all the “older teachers” are replaced with new ones. Yet among their colleagues, there were a number of conservative voices who considered concerns of “humanity” to be of higher importance than any feminist analysis:

It just depends who’s teaching. Society is changing, more women are coming in. We need to learn how to deal with humanity. Cannot the teacher be made aware? {white female pre-service teacher, field notes, October 1994}

The focus on “humanity” illustrates the difficulty women have in including their experiences in classroom discussions. Likewise, white women in Everet’s class argued
against “policing kids about using his/her,” arguing that gender issues were secondary to “maintain[ing] other person’s dignity.” They called for a differentiation between language considered to be “going overboard” versus “needs to go.” That is, the latter argued that gender specific prose weakened prose:

Using non-gender specific language is going overboard [pause] by not using “man”, gender inclusive language doesn’t make as strong prose. But I do agree, other terms like ‘chick’ need to go. {Field notes, Everet’s class, November 1994}

This woman’s defensiveness toward gender neutral language was surprising to me, but no one in Everet’s class challenged her comment, not even Everet. Women’s defensiveness in Everet’s class also emerged in ways that normalized inequalities between men and women as “proven by science.” That is, in two separate incidents women used “science” to justify inequalities between men and women’s thinking patterns and employment patterns. The latter normalized women’s exclusion in the science field:

Woman: I have a question. People have been trying for years to get women in science, yet they’re still not there. But why aren’t there more women in these roles, for example women in science? Maybe they don’t want to be there.

Everet: So is it [the differences between men and women] biological or social?

Two women: Who cares. {Field notes, Everet’s class, November 1994}

The above examples of “privileged incredulity” illustrate the difficulty there is in specifically addressing the experiences of young women in education in both a feminist and a non-feminist classroom, particularly when the issues were often contested by men and women. The defensiveness surrounding feminist analysis of gender relations often made it difficult to problematize pre-service teachers’ own gendered experiences either in or out of school.
3) Social Class Defensiveness

While there may have been several modes of social class defensiveness present in class, it was in my interviews with John that I realized how “categorized” he felt by his social class. In our first interview John had been up front about his concern of how social class is defined (ch. 3). In our last interview, John repeated his concern for “categorizing people” by their social class. That is, when I asked John what other issues EDST 314 should have discussed, he said that they all should have been discussed, except social class, as “it’s not necessary to categorize people that way” {Interview, December 1994}. Consistently over the period of our interviews, John was defensive about social class and continually expressed discomfort with speaking in class.

4) Heterosexual Defensiveness

Heterosexual defensiveness occurred when pre-service teachers were trying to advocate teaching about sexual orientation. I will briefly highlight three examples of how teaching about sexual orientation was accepted as long as it did not promote homosexuality or homosexual lifestyle(s). Then, I will discuss male silence toward recognizing the social constructions of masculinities.

In class, a number of pre-service teachers responded in ways that acknowledged homosexuality as “the other” form of sexual orientation, but in doing so reified homosexuals as preying on young boys and being sexually deviant:

> We [her small group] decided it didn’t matter, *unless they [homosexuals] openly promoted or influenced their values*. It would be good to discuss sexualities but [pause] *have to watch for modelling homosexuality, especially for boys*. {female pre-service teacher, Field notes, October 1994}

Here sexual orientation was accepted, but within liberal limits of keeping the private/personal “behind closed doors” and separate from the public/political domain (Myerson 1992, 159). The class did not respond to this woman even though her position
assumed sexual orientation is limited to two sexualities, that heterosexual teachers are less biased and less “preying” than homosexual teachers and that young boys are more susceptible to sexual orientation “modelling.”

In our interviews Lynn, Darryl and John appreciated the straightforward approach of Reis’ article and agreed with her argument, though Darryl and John also discussed potential “problems” in implementation. For Darryl, discussing sexual orientation in schools was a juggle between recognizing the importance of the topic and being fearful of objections to the topic:

Louise: Is there anything about the article that you particularly like?
Darryl: [pause] I agree, like I said I agree with what she is saying, but like I said before you really have to be careful. It’s easier to talk about it than to implement it and if she [Reis] talked about more ways of implementing it then I would be able to criticise it, but how do we go about implementing it? That’s a huge problem. {Interview, November 1994}

Much like his first interview, Darryl is cautious about implementing teaching about sexual orientation, yet he places himself as an advocate.

When it came to discussing social constructions of masculinities, Barbara asked the class for the main points raised in Connell’s article (e.g., what kind of choices exist for boys/men and how Connell draws links between gender and feminism). The discussion was unusually dominated by women until Barbara specifically asked the men whether Connell’s article “spoke to their experience.” No men in the room responded. After a long silence, a woman then further discussed her experiences of being gender stereotyped. Robert was the first male to respond, not to reflect on constructions of masculinities, but to question his colleagues’ claims of socialization:

Has anyone ever said that, “Be sweet and nicer?”
{Field notes, November 1994}
This is a good example of male defensiveness, as Robert chose to tackle notions of girls' socialization rather than consider his own. Robert was particularly hostile toward anti-oppression issues. He will come up again in the next section.

Both these remarks in class and in those made by male respondents in my interviews regarding implementing sexual orientation grew increasingly defensive, particularly the closer the topic came to the location of the classroom and the context of teachers. Interestingly enough, young girls'/women's sexualities were not discussed during any discussion about sexual orientation. A silence remained around lesbians even though male homosexuality was discussed both in terms of teachers' and students' sexualities. This is not necessarily surprising, since the course content addressed constructions of masculinity (Connell) and discussed reasons for teaching about sexual orientation (Reis), but never explicitly addressed women's sexuality.\(^{30}\)

4.2.3 Open Hostilities toward Equity Issues

Over the two weeks of the gender equity component there were hostilities towards the topics covered in class discussions and in small group discussions.\(^{31}\) I will outline how one white male student (Robert) continuously interrupted class discussions by directly confronting the instructor (week 1) and used "humour" to discredit discussion (week 2). I will then discuss another white male's (Daniel's) hostilities towards equity issues, which emerged in a small group discussion (week 2).

i) White Men "Carrying the Burden"

During the larger class discussions, Robert was one particularly vocal white male who consistently challenged the instructor and his female colleagues. I will briefly outline a few hostile challenges he made. In the midst of discussing gender segregated schooling, Robert interrupted a female colleague's reflections of inequalities to discredit her by discussing at length the number of female instructors he had in his teacher
education courses, much like Darryl had in his first interview. He assumed all female instructors had taken over from male instructors. Not long after this, Robert interrupted two other male pre-service teachers discussing whether affirmative action was a form of "reverse racism," with colonial and patriarchal comment to identify white men as oppressed:

Robert: If you haven’t been discriminating, then maybe we [white men] shouldn’t carry the burden. {Field notes, October 1994}

The assumption that whiteness is not privileging, enabled Robert to resurrect colonial discourse of white men “carrying the burden.” Barbara responded by postulating what she would do if she did not get a job because she is white. Barbara discussed how it would be hard to accept, but also recognized the importance of diversifying traditionally white occupations. Robert responded to Barbara by claiming it was easy for her to say that because she was “safe”:

Robert: You’re just saying that because you’re safe. You’re safe because you are a female.
Barbara: No, I’m saying that because I’m white.
Robert: You’re dodging the point. Why won’t you answer my question? It’s easy to say you’re not a victim until you are a victim.
Barbara: Why are you only tackling me on this?
Robert: Why are my views being attacked? {Field notes, October 1994}

Robert’s defensiveness positioned himself as “the real victim,” an appropriation of the speaking space of oppressed groups. Barbara ended Robert’s baiting by asking to continue the discussion after class as they obviously had differences of opinion. Barbara approached Robert’s comments, as well as other conservative remarks, by asking students to support their arguments or by asking them to think of it in terms of power relations. For example, in a later discussion on gender bias in schools, Robert interrupted two
women discussing girls’ school uniforms (dresses) when Robert interjected his concern about bias towards boys:

Robert: Bias which way? [laugh] Well, boys don’t get to wear dresses.
Barbara: How do boys’ not wearing dresses hinder them? I think some of this [issues being discussed] is structural.
Robert: I was just joking. [most of the class laughs]
{Field notes, November 1994}

Robert’s mocking of Barbara and soliciting the class to join him in making fun of her, at her expense, is unacceptable humour. Addressing class conservatism is clearly a difficult task for teachers, particularly when other members of the class support subversive humour, rather than recognizing it as defensiveness toward anti-oppression topics. Though Robert only attended three of the four classes on gender equity, he was a noticeable presence: he challenged female-led discussions of gender socialization, challenged the instructor’s feminism and used “humour” to demean class discussions of equity issues. His challenge to the instructor’s feminist authority/pedagogy will be discussed further when I analyze the instances taken from the follow-up interviews.

ii) Small Group Domination

On the last day of EDST 314, seven groups were created to discuss critical incidents drawn from experiences of teachers or former pre-service teachers. One group discussion I joined was between three white pre-service teachers: Sandra, Kathy and Daniel.

The group was having difficulties understanding what was critical about their incident which was taken from “Responding to Differences in the Classroom: The Politics of Knowledge, Class, and Sexuality”:
Deo McKaig describes herself as working-class. Both of her parents worked in factories. She was the first in her family to go to university and frequently felt out of place there. "During one disturbing [class] discussion about the lack of good child care and the fears about the sexual abuse of children in day care centers, which ignored the realities of working-class women, one student stated that she did not consider these issues to be a social problem, since one could just hire a nanny. In following the instructor's suggestion, I challenged the student's assumption that all working women can afford to hire a nanny and asked her to consider who is supposed to take care of the nannies' children. Both the instructor and the students responded with an uncomfortable silence" (1989, 69).

I explained that I thought the incident focused on social class privilege, implicitly racial division of labour force, as well as an assumption about the gender of child-care givers. In specific reaction to my explanation that nannies may have children that need caregiving too, Sandra quickly replied:

*People who can't afford to have babies shouldn't be having them.* I know my husband and myself are waiting for improved economics before we have our own. {Field notes, December 1994}

Evidently, Sandra does not consider the freedom of choosing when to bear children as a privilege and luxury. Neither Kathy nor Daniel countered this eugenic promoting statement. Rather, Daniel continuously interrupted and dominated our conversations with deep exhaling breaths, a reddening face and statements like:

*I'm tired of having all this bull shit shoved down my throat!* [heavy exhale] I'm tired of everything I say being taken the wrong way and of being attacked if I bring up something that's not politically correct. {Field notes, December 1994}

Here, Daniel's use of "politically correct" served to centralize his vested interest in hegemonic white masculinity and keep marginalized the "otherness of those who challenge that hegemony" (Smith 1995, 47). Daniel continued to discuss how his entire post-secondary education was out to get him, a white male. He resented that the focus on gender issues always focused on women, specifically claiming that their critical incident should have been about a man, as men also have the experience of being nannies! Daniel, however, refused to comment on Connell's argument addressing social constructions of
masculinities or even consider how it was that he came to dominate a group discussion with three other females present.

Kathy, who disagreed with much of Daniel and Sandra’s discussion, grew increasingly quiet as Daniel and Sandra discussed similar experiences during their undergraduate years at a nearby university, Simon Fraser University. Both mentioned political correctness and the bias of their (apparently) left-wing professors repeatedly.

I feel this small group exemplifies defences raised when gender issues are discussed and the difficulties that non-conservatives (Kathy) have arguing against mainstream anti-feminist ideologies. As Daniel was a tall, broad shouldered man, I personally found his controlling of the small group both verbally and physically intimidating. Beyond his appearance, Daniel’s nonsensical statements (men as nannies) and reluctance to believe that men are privileged made it difficult to pursue any meaningful conversation.

In my next section, I will analyze how the three pre-service teachers understood Robert’s confrontation with Barbara, Robert’s defensiveness, the class’ silence. Though they could not directly comment on Daniel’s hostilities, their comments on Robert will raise awareness regarding both hostilities.

4.3 Interview Reactions to Hostilities

Subsequent interview discussions illuminated aspects of Robert’s discourse that I had not initially considered. I asked each participant to interpret the class’ silence during and after the incident. Three themes emerged from these discussions: stigmatizing equity, understandings of Robert’s defensiveness, and interpretations of silence.

4.3.1 Stigmatizing Equity

An aspect of Robert’s confrontation with Barbara that I had not considered was that his comments would undermine Barbara’s position as instructor. In describing the incident, both Lynn and Darryl questioned Barbara’s role in the classroom.
specifically, Robert raised uncertainty as to whether or not Barbara herself was teaching the course as a result of an "equity appointment" and, in their own definitions of such appointments, not the most eligible person for the job:

I would hope [pause] UBC would not hold on to people just because of those sorts of things (gender, ‘race’ and the like). {Lynn, Interview, November 1994}

[pause] He [Robert] might--see this is where reverse discrimination comes in and I think this is where somebody like him [Robert] would think that reverse discrimination is pretty bad and I can see his point but at the same time she [Barbara] could have--she could have [pause] come in on her own merits. But because there is reverse discrimination maybe people think that she didn’t... {Darryl, Interview, November 1994}

Both Lynn and Darryl validated Robert’s assumption of equity hiring policies, as hiring under-eligible applicants. Darryl explicitly, and Lynn implicitly, argued that even if Barbara did fulfil necessary “merits” to obtain the position, Robert’s questioning of her “appointment” was valid.

Another aspect that contributed to Barbara’s delegitimization was the contestation over the material. That is, while Darryl initially discussed the incident with Robert as an unusual occurrence, he referred to Barbara as trying to “brainwash” the class:

Louise: Did you have any observations of the way the class responded during these discussions.

Darryl: Well, no. I think--I think that if someone thinks that they’re being treated unfairly and is not--like I said is not used to these ideas and the professor is trying to curve their minds or brainwash them or--but the mainstream in class [pause] are becoming aware of these issues just through class discussions there may be arguments or disagreements but certainly that’s how you evolve in your thinking... {Interview, November 1994}

Darryl likened “thinking differently”, or non-conservatively, with “curving minds or brainwashing” and the teaching techniques of “discussion and debates” are labelled underhanded when not supporting conservativism. This leaves little room for an
instructor teaching marginalized topics to work within. Darryl’s description of Barbara’s teaching as ‘unfair’ echoes his previous descriptions of female teachers’ poor teaching (ch.3).

4.3.2 Understanding Defensiveness

Both Darryl and Lynn openly discussed Robert’s defensiveness: Darryl from his own experiences and Lynn’s from interpretations of Robert’s defensiveness. Darryl identified with Robert’s defensiveness because he was once in a similar position during an undergraduate sociology course on gender issues. Darryl linked Robert’s defensiveness with Beverly Daniel Tatum’s stage theory to learning about racism:

...I hated that course [undergraduate sociology course] in the beginning. I said something in the beginning and then I just shut up and wouldn’t say anything because whatever I said everyone would just come down on me. A couple of us were just trying to show a male perspective. In this course EDST 314 I think he [Robert] feels, like a lot of theorists have labelled—you go through these different perspectives or these different stages of understanding racism or inequality and I think he feels, right now, that he is being bombarded by all these issues and it’s sometimes natural to throw up a defence. So he’s [Robert] in an early stage... through the course he will change and through society he will start looking at different like people and at school or in society he might start to think “Well, I guess there are a lot of the principles there.”
{Darryl, Interview, November 1994}

After Darryl had given lengthy examples of feeling marginalized within his sociology course, he considered how his experiences of feeling marginalized had affected him. Darryl said that he could now identify with how “women will feel when they’re in class and all these males are barking out things.”

Lynn described Robert’s defensiveness as a result of mis-interpreting Barbara’s intentions:

Louise: And when you say he interprets things the “wrong way” could you describe what you mean by “wrong way”? 
Lynn: Like I said before, I think he [Robert] feels attacked [pause] and I don’t ever get the impression that she’s [Barbara] ever attacking him I think she is just trying to get him to think about what he is saying or try to back it up [pause]. And he’s [Robert] making it sound like what he has to say--has no value or his ideas are maybe--maybe not good--that’s not the impression I get at all. {interview #2}

Similarly, Lynn later attributed general male defensiveness to Barbara’s gender, arguing that some males were not used to having a female “challenge their thinking” by asking them to support their arguments and give examples. Darryl and Lynn’s analyses of Robert’s defensiveness were probably because this was not the first time he had challenged the instructor or the course material; Robert had repeatedly challenged the material, or the instructor, during every other equity topic as well.

4.3.3 Interpreting Silence

Interestingly enough, when I later asked Lynn, Darryl, and John how they interpreted the class’ silence they all perceived the class as supporting their own personal perception of the instructor’s point of view. Lynn supported Barbara’s comments and actions in how she dealt with the incident. John supported Robert’s position largely because he disagreed with Barbara’s wanting to postpone what John called a “showdown” to after class. Darryl said he was shocked by the entire incident, but later conceded that Robert had valid reasons for pursuing whether or not Barbara herself was a “product of equity.”

Lynn also stated that perhaps Robert was “falling back on the fact, perhaps, that his fellow students would be some sort of safety net for him,” so he would find support no matter what he said {Interview, November 1994}. Lynn argued, on behalf of the class, that silence was protective, “whereas [speaking up] there is a risk of getting [pause] hurt” {Interview, November 1994}. Lynn correlated voicing disagreement with possibly leading to “harm.” It is difficult to know if she meant physical or emotional harm. However, Lynn’s impressions of Robert were clarified at the end of the interview when
she confided that to her it "seem[ed] frightening that this person wants to be an educator" (Interview, November 1994).

Lynn was not the only female pre-service teacher who had difficulties with Robert. Rather, towards the end of the course Barbara informed me that after one class eight to ten female pre-service teachers discussed their fears of Robert with her. The women told Barbara that they felt threatened, silenced and intimidated by Robert’s presence in their classroom. A few women even stated that they intentionally remained silent because they feared having to sit through future classes with him, while still others feared for their safety. Clearly, while interrupting discussions is one thing, student’s and staff safety raises several institutional questions about the teacher education program. In chapter 5, I will revisit institutional implications of Robert and Daniel’s hostilities.

4.4 Reconsidering Who Is Oppressed

The demeaning of Barbara’s feminist authority and equity issues evoked interview discussions on Affirmative Action programs, but through the discourse of reverse racism. The latter held interviews demonstrate that Darryl, John and Lynn’s attitudes towards equity became equivocal. In the next two sections, I will discuss Lynn, John and Darryl’s reconsiderations of who is oppressed. Their attitudes towards equity issues in general, and feminist analyses in particular, have changed, but remain complex.

4.4.1 Equity for Whom?

Following up on Darryl’s in class claims of white men experiencing reverse discrimination, I asked him in our interview to further discuss what he meant by “reverse discrimination.” Darryl’s assumption that “reverse discrimination” awards less qualified applicants with jobs was articulated in his definition:
Louise: I wonder if you could define for me what “reverse discrimination” means to you?

Darryl: OK reverse discrimination--like in applying reverse discrimination you can do that in a variety of ways. Like say in jobs there is a lot of males or there is a lot of whites say higher professional jobs and so reverse discrimination would be to say OK we need to hire--like this is even for a RCMP officers and firemen [sic] and so it’s not just professional jobs. And OK we don’t have many Asians and we don’t have many East Indians and we don’t have many women so we have to hire them. You know we have to hire a minority over a white. So then people argue that whites are being discriminated against and that’s what reverse discrimination is. Now we are discriminating against whites in order to create equality which—and I have problems with reverse discrimination because I think it breeds discrimination--then people will say “Hey”, say someone hired a woman or an East Indian and they’ll say, “Hey! That’s not fair! I mean what about this other guy? he had better qualities!” And then bad feelings are evident and I think that sometimes it can lead to ugly situations and it breeds racism.

{Interview, November 1994}

Darryl obviously does not agree with Affirmative Action programs, yet his discourse even grew beyond “qualifications” to intrinsic “qualities” or character traits. His articulation focuses on white men as the victims of policies, to redress systemic racially and gender-based discrimination against people of colour and women, and not more accurately on the denied opportunities for employment and advancement to women. That is, Darryl’s own defensiveness can be seen in his use of only androcentric examples of Affirmative Action “working.” For example, in his examples he only used a woman or an “East Indian” getting hired over a man, not an example of where a white woman may not be the most desirable candidate. Thus, in Darryl’s perception of “affirmative action,” white women are denied their racial identity, consequently Barbara’s position is labelled as “safe.” Darryl also supported Robert’s questioning of Barbara’s position because he perceived that “reverse discrimination worked” to employ his predominantly white female teacher education instructors. He also recognized areas in teacher education
where “reverse racism” has not “worked” as successfully at employing more “ethnic minorities”:

\[ \ldots \text{but then I have problems thinking if it [reverse discrimination] [sic] has worked because there aren’t very many minorities in the education system that I have seen around. I don’t think I have. When I say ethnic minorities--I haven’t seen many ethnic minorities [pause] I mean they have to work on it.} \{\text{Darryl, Interview, November 1994}\} \]

Thus, Darryl criticized Affirmative Action programs for not working extensively enough, but also for closing the door on white males, hence the label “reverse discrimination.”

John, like Darryl, agreed with Robert’s claim that white men are “carrying the burden.” That is, even though white males are sorry for their ancestors’ wrong doings’, today white men have to “carry the burden”:

\[ \ldots \text{There is nothing we can do about it but we still have to carry that torch because that’s what we are, and there is nothing we can do about that.} \{\text{Interview, November 1994}\} \]

John’s mode of compensating for ‘white man’s burden’ was to alter affirmative action programs to allow more opportunities for white men! John argued that even at the governmental level, Affirmative Action “shuts the door on people that might be able to give a contribution”, namely white men. When I asked him what he would suggest, he argued for merit to be assessed before ‘politics’:

\[ \text{Louise: In efforts to achieve equality what other methods do you suggest might work?} \]

\[ \text{John: I say open the forum to everyone, give everybody equal opportunity. Let the people who make the decision have to be more concerned about filling that position with the best person possible rather than what colour they are so that they get [chosen on merit] and then on political basis.} \{\text{Interview, November 1994}\} \]
John’s ideology of meritocracy emphasizes competition and presumes erroneously that people of unequal location will be able to compete equally with members of dominant groups. John also assumed people who are hired, and are not white men, are less qualified. That is, his concern for “the best possible person” receiving the job implies that more white men would be hired and opposes earlier claims of societal inequalities (ch.3). Thus, John does not argue for equality of condition only equality of opportunity, therein, remaining within the premise of liberalism.

Lynn’s view of affirmative action was the most indecisive, as she perceived it as both attempting to better practices of the past and as a form of “reverse discrimination”:

I think that what they are trying to do in principle is a lot better than what maybe happened in the past . . . [but] I think because what you are doing is you are discriminating if you say 50% of all the let’s say applicants or people that get a job or whatever have to be women. By saying that 50% of the positions have to be women, you are discriminating against the possibility that 100% could be men that are far more capable than women or vice versa. I think that someone who is capable on merit that should be the issue or the deciding factor. {Lynn, Interview, November 1994}

Despite Lynn’s strong anti-affirmative action statement, Lynn later recognized that she also believed society is unequal, so then argued that employers have to be objective in their hiring procedures.

Pre-service teachers’ common sense notions of present affirmative action programs are that they reward under-qualified persons with jobs and consequently “shut the door” on white men who are presumably more qualified. Implicit in their discourse are racist and sexist assumptions that only white men could be the most eligible persons for any job. Their assumptions that “women and ethnic minorities” do not make “contributions” to job positions assisted in the devaluation of Barbara’s role as an instructor. Needless to say, their attitudes towards equity shifted from the first interview to the latter interview, in that they became less willing to rectify social inequalities. That is, in the first
interview everyone argued for more equality in society, yet in the second and third interviews John, Darryl and Lynn argued for white men to have more opportunity to compete in the paid labour force. Consequently, programs like affirmative action were labelled "reverse discrimination," and no better alternatives were given to level historical and systemic discrimination.

4.4.2 Reflecting on Feminism and Feminist Analyses:

By the time of our third interview, only Lynn and John were still interested in this study, while after a few initial attempts to meet, Darryl no longer returned my telephone calls. At this time both Lynn and John had reflected on gender issues in their essays. The essays offered Lynn and John an opportunity to re-consider the course articles and the interviews they held with me. To illuminate important aspects of their essays, I will first analyze Lynn’s rethinking of feminism and then John’s reflections on his own schooling. I have focused on these two areas because they stand out from the interview material.

By the third interview, Lynn considered herself to be a humanitarian, rather than a feminist:

Louise: I’m wondering if you define feminism differently now than you might have previously?

Lynn: ... I don’t think I define it differently just because I think it's such a vague term. So many people have different ideas about what it means. So I’m very careful to use the term, because I don’t want people to misinterpret it. But I think, for me, ideally feminism should be providing equal opportunities and situations, or what have you, for both men and women, so that people are equal. But some people view feminism as a way of having women on top, women getting their chance to be more influential and I think that is the wrong way to approach it, because I think that just turns a lot of people off, especially men. {Interview, December 1994}

Lynn’s androcentric usage of “people” indicates her own fear of “turning off” male approval and support. In Lynn’s essay she referred to feminism in the same manner and called herself a “quasi-feminist.” Lynn’s change was initially quite startling to me. In
chapter five, I will offer several possible reasons for this. One possible reason is that the undesirable outcome of treating gender issues as a component. It is in this context that conservative sexist male reaction can shift young women’s pro-feminist stances to more conservative ones. When Lynn described the overall course objectives, she did not specifically discuss sexism:

Louise: Now that the class is over, I’m wondering if you see any similarities between gender and other issues discussed in your educational studies class?
Lynn: I think it’s probably pretty closely linked to any kind of discrimination, whether it be racial or cultural discrimination that can exist, depending on I guess members of the class, or the teacher or I guess certain factors in that society or community. {Interview, December 1994}

How did a course section aimed at exposing the gendered dimensions of students’ experiences and how girls’/women’s experiences are dismissed or distorted lead Lynn to become even more reluctant to claim the label feminist? Is it the course or the male anti-feminist reaction to it effect her views? Though I have already discussed the anti-feminist discussions held in class, in the next chapter I will revisit Lynn’s changed attitude toward feminism.

John reflected on his schooling far more in his essay than he had in any of our interviews. I will first discuss his reflections on former teachers, and then his comments on societal inequalities. John questioned the weight of a former teacher’s conservative views beyond the classroom: community leader, baseball, soccer, and ski coach. This is an important linkage that no other student drew, considering the role of teachers in the community as a whole, rather than just in an educational community.

After reading Connell’s article, John reflected on how “inadequate” one math teacher made male and female students feel, by “ignoring the boys and patronizing the girls” {essay}. Similarly, John reflected upon how his high school PE teacher reified gender assumptions with gender specific teaching practices: “by creating gender segregated
activities and gender differentiated exercises . . . reinforce[ing] girls as the weaker sex” {essay}. Espousing a whiggish view of progress, John argued that these conservative views are a mere product of a particular age group, and once they retire, a new, more astute group of teachers will improve the situation:

... it will be up to the new generation to listen to the researchers, the public, and the students in developing a curriculum for the students that will provide a positive and equal learning experience for both genders. {Essay, December 1994}

In my first interview, John recognized public barriers for women and some gender inequities in schools. He later reflects on my question: “In what ways do you think education treats boys and girls equally?,” and offers an inconsistent response that attempts to stay within the bounds of liberal feminism. Yet he did recognize some forms of structural inequalities:

... both genders have equal opportunities to society (education, jobs, social activities). Where this answer changes in direction is once females become part of that opportunity. For example, women today will earn, on average, less than men (but they can have the same jobs). Women in the classroom are still being oppressed (more attention towards males). Yet they are equal, but unfortunately, it is a “lesser equality.” {Essay, December 1994}

John began to recognize gender inequities in classrooms and pay inequities, yet he chose to use an oxymoronic phrase, “lesser equality” rather than inequality or inequity. Why is he not able to say inequality?

John felt the course did a good job of educating him in areas with which he was unfamiliar. However, he would have preferred to have fewer student-centred classes and have more guest speakers and movies: in other words, more entertainment. John’s suggestions are not a surprise, since he discussed at length, in interviews two and three, his discomfort with speaking in class.
In terms of implementing gender equity in future classrooms, while Lynn gave several in-class examples of liberal feminism, John was less reluctant to take proactive steps at creating a gender neutral space. Rather, he said that he would be prepared to “collaborate with colleagues and professional people” when gender issues came up in his class {Interview #3}.

4.5 Conclusions

By analyzing the complexity of events that occurred in both classrooms, it appears that while some pre-service teachers did engage in discussing liberal feminism it was brief and difficult in the midst of anti-feminist comments. Despite some mention of liberal feminist analyses, conservative and anti-feminist understandings of education dominated discussions. The pervasiveness and strength of the conservative voices in the feminist class made it difficult for Barbara to analyze gender issues at all, let alone move beyond a liberal feminist analysis.

During the interviews pre-service teachers “talked” of equality (October interviews), but when it came to actively addressing social inequalities in their potential classrooms, Lynn, John and Darryl were reluctant at best (November and December interviews). In particular, the closer the equity issue came to their classroom and/or profession, the more reluctant and/or conservative the view became. The results of my final interviews are less than inspirational for feminist teachers, yet I feel must be contextualized within the classroom conversations where equity topics were vilified, despite Barbara’s best efforts. Even more noteworthy are the locations of the voices recorded in this chapter, mostly young, white, able-bodied pre-service teachers. Yet, several complexities with regard to this class remain to be examined.

While John was able to reflect more critically on his own gendered schooling experiences, Lynn became less interested in defining herself as a feminist. As well,
moments of silence in classroom interaction (Daniel’s small group, reactions to Robert, and women discussing their fear of Robert after class,) seem to indicate the effects of pre-service teachers choosing not to confront the conservativism because of intimidation. Barbara, a sessional instructor, thus had to contend with being conceived of as a stigma of equity and a sole defender of anti-oppression pedagogy in a class where hegemonic discourse prevailed. In the next chapter, I will consider some institutional implications of female pre-service teachers’ fear as well as revisit EDST 314’s objectives and structure.
Chapter 5 Implications

In both the primary and secondary research groups, I analyzed the complexities of what can happen when addressing girls’/women’s experiences within the liberal framework of a compulsory course. Pre-service teachers were both observers of, and participants in, the "specific political moments" that arose due to the "gender equity" content of EDST 314 (Lewis 1990).

I will now reconsider my analysis of the primary and secondary research groups by analyzing how pre-service teachers' discourse re-presented binary pairs (e.g., men versus women, theory versus practice) within the course structure of EDST 314. I will also analyze how masculine and feminine forms of defensiveness coalesced in response to specific forms of discourse. I will then turn a feminist pedagogical lens on EDST 314 in order to address institutional considerations with regard to support for feminist and "pro-feminist" teachers.\(^{34}\)

5.1 Reconsidering Institutional Influences

I will use critiques of liberal feminism (Jaggar 1983; Lewis 1990; Luke 1992) in order to consider the oppression inherent within EDST 314’s assumptions. I will then discuss the instances in which pre-service teachers either remained within or moved beyond the binary nature of the course’s gender equity component.

5.1.1 Freeze-Framed Analysis of Oppressions

The 1994 EDST 314 course structure attempted to cover several forms of oppression within various discrete components of analysis. Though EDST 314 raised awareness of
“gender” issues in education, it did so in the form of an “add-on,” thus failing to challenge the course’s masculinist theoretical standpoint (Luke 1992). Treating “gender” as an “add-on” makes visible “the other” while maintaining an “epistemology which privileges public man and his speech” (Luke 1992, 32). In other words, with regard to addressing oppression, “add-ons” validate male dominance in the public sphere, “protecting androcentric ‘human’ interests,” while subordinating and excluding “the private from the public/political” (Luke 1992, 31). Consequently, despite the best efforts of the instructor of this section, attempts to include feminist struggles within “gender issues” resulted in a diluted view of feminist issues.

As far as radical feminist pedagogues are concerned, “add-on” curricula isolate forms of oppression, thereby simplifying the lived realities of girls/women (Ellsworth 1989; Luke 1992; Bannerji 1995; hooks 1995). As well, analyzing gender oppression as discrete is problematic because it assumes that it exists in isolation from other forms of oppression (Bannerji 1995; hooks 1995), thus leading to the essentializing of identity (i.e., students become either “victims or perpetrators”) (Ellsworth 1989, 315). During the ten weeks of EDST 314, pre-service teachers were grouped in opposition to each other in just such a fashion. This meant that the way in which present social relations are shaped and structured by the historical relations between privileged and non-privileged was not considered. Subsequently, both course sections exemplified liberalism’s public/private dichotomy maintaining the “masculine public/private power structure,” by extending women’s domestic abilities (teaching/nurturing) to the public sphere (Luke 1992, 32; McWilliam 1995).
The component-style analysis offered by EDST 314, along with its readings, also worked against situating forms of oppression in a historical context. Within the gender component itself, no historical context was provided either for the women’s movement or for the gay and lesbian movement. Consequently, neither movement was problematized (i.e., for its heterosexism, racism, and classism) and neither movement had its struggles and advances in education recognized. Without a historical context with which to situate either the women’s movement or the gay and lesbian movement, their respective identities were frozen and hence rendered timeless. Thus, women who asked, “Why the feminist ‘fuss’”? were not able to appreciate the gains made by feminists. In class, the lack of a historical understanding of women’s advances in education was illustrated when pre-service teachers interpreted Rosonna Tite’s initial decision to meet and work apart from administrative staff as covert and suspect rather than as counter-hegemonic. The tensions of addressing feminism in a coeducational mainstream course left little space for the contradictions and continuities of personal life histories (Bannerji 1995).

The component-style analysis and the ahistorical approach of the “gender issues” readings supported the assumption that white middle-class values are “universal,” and this allowed pre-service teachers to view themselves as neutral, disinterested observers of social relations. This also ensured that white women did not have to consider their own vested interests (Bannerji 1995). Despite Barbara’s attempts, the gender component of this section of EDST 314 challenged neither the assumed neutrality of a white middle-class position nor the implicit assumption that gender can be understood as a discrete form of oppression. The course thus reified white middle-class values. Needless to say, EDST 314 readings did not encourage pre-service teachers to examine how their own
situated knowledge of oppression(s) is implicated in systemic inequalities. As is evidenced in Lynn, John, and Darryl's reactions to affirmative action programs, there is much defensiveness surrounding the privilege of being white.

5.2 Rethinking Results

Liberal philosophy and subsequent liberal feminist theories implicitly operate within binary pairs: man/woman, theory/practice, public/private, and the like (Jaggar 1983; Luke 1992; Orner 1992). Deconstructing these binaries reveals not only their assumed homogeneity, but also the spaces between them (Orner 1992). A number of binaries operated within pre-service teacher discourse, and they were in keeping with the course's liberal framework. By analyzing four such binary pairs (man/woman, theory/practice, personal/public, public/private), I will reveal both (1) areas where pre-service teachers maintain the assumptions underlying the course's liberal framework and (2) areas where they begin to challenge these assumptions. Finding the spaces between binaries is particularly important with regard to assessing the primary study group, as Barbara positioned herself left of liberal feminism and pretty much adhered a radical feminist pedagogy (Ellsworth 1989; Gardner et al. 1989; Lewis 1990). In other words, Barbara furthered the curriculum by creating a classroom atmosphere in which pre-service teachers needed to critically examine their arguments.

5.2.1 Man/Woman: An Essentialist Sisterhood

In a sense, merely discussing gender issues in a mainstream course given in any department or faculty of education is an accomplishment. EDST 314 course content raised awareness around liberal feminist initiatives in education (e.g., text bias, teacher bias, etc.). Within the liberal framework, the category "women" assumed the sameness of
all humans, with gender and “race” being considered secondary characteristics (Frankenberg 1993, 147). In other words, the course content of EDST 314 isolated gender from “race” and class, by having readings that did not address the interplay among forms of oppression.

Within the classroom, the homogeneity of the category “women” was never contested: universal sisterhood was assumed possible. The intersection of gender with race, class, and sexual orientation(s) was never raised. Rather, the category “women” spoke largely to white middle-class women’s experiences, even though Barbara tried to broaden its scope. In discussions of gender, whiteness was the unspoken position of “racial neutrality, or the racially unmarked category” (Frankenberg 1993, 55), as was exemplified by claims for eugenics, claims for humanism, and the silence surrounding racial and cultural differences among women. Thus, within the primary research group, spaces representing political possibilities between essentialized politics of men versus women were not explored.35

5.2.2 Theory/Practice: Problematizing Women’s “Lesser Equality”

A recurring theme in Darryl and John’s responses to articles covered in class was a concern with how to “practise” gender and sexual orientation issues that were discussed in EDST 314. This is indicative of a tension within EDST 314’s liberal framework, which assumes that a teacher’s common-sense understandings will not influence her/his teaching practices. In keeping with this assumption, feminism was not necessarily considered as a movement that has the potential to represent the everyday lives of girls/women more adequately than do other social movements. My research supports
earlier findings, which show that pre-service teachers often presume “that what they are doing is something ‘neutral’ or objective, unlike the ‘biased’ [work] of other teachers” (McWilliam 1994, 115). If they became aware that every practice is theoretically based and non-neutral, then pre-service teachers would not be able to easily dismiss “theories” that do not support their common-sense hegemonic understandings. Pre-service teachers need to become more aware of how they contribute to the “destruction of learning pleasure despite being very nice people themselves” (Shah 1989; McWilliam 1994, 135).

Although both EDST 314 sections addressed the experiences of marginalized groups, it did not discuss such groups per se (despite Barbara’s attempts to discuss power). It is typical of the course that John and Lynn mentioned becoming more aware of “discrimination” but not of systemic inequalities. “Difference” was levelled, as that which results in specific forms of identity being centred and others being marginalized was not discussed. Not having to deal with difference, pre-service teachers assumed that neutrality was both possible and desirable. When forced to recognize that “difference” is that which is non-male and non-heterosexual, pre-service teachers were torn between wanting to advocate equality while refusing to recognize the existence of inequality (e.g., John used the phrase “lesser equality” to describe girls’/women’s experiences). Unfortunately, neither study group came to understand that all practices are rooted in theory, and that one must consider which theory best advances the desired goals of education.

5.2.3 Personal/Political

During interviews, pre-service teachers’ reflections on their respective schooling experiences broadened the time-frame of my analysis. Their personal reflections threw
much light on their current attitudes. For example, Darryl’s earlier schooling experiences of homophobia and sexism persist in his descriptions of EDST 314 (particularly in his individualization of Robert’s hostilities). In effect, he created a discursive history of gender differentiation and heterosexism.

Throughout our interview categorizing people by their social class was a concern for John, as was his silence in the classroom. By the end of the course, John had reflected on the role(s) of previous teachers and had realized that his experiences were not the same as were those of his female classmates. However, he only alluded to observing gender inequalities; he never wondered whether he had participated in them.

Lynn, on the other hand, continually expressed the personal difficulties she experienced as a female competitive swimmer: the tensions that developed between her and her teachers, professors, and peers over the “unfeminine” amount of time she spent training. Lynn’s desire to “fit in” was reflected in her stigmatization of feminism as something by which men would be “turned off.” Nonetheless, Lynn used Robert as an example of how men in the class were reacting to having a female challenge their views. Unlike Darryl, who localized male defensiveness in one colleague, Lynn was able to generalize across male responses to gender issues.

Lynn was the only one who drew on present forms of gender inequality in order to generalize about masculine defensiveness. Both Darryl and John drew on inequalities they remembered from their respective childhoods, but they made no connections between these and the present material realities of girls’/women’s lives. As well, John and Darryl’s references to inequalities in schooling revealed a dinosaur theory of social
change: inequalities will disappear once older teaching staff retire. Hence, though John and Darryl were able to recognize gender inequalities, they did not personalize this recognition to the point of considering how their own gains may have been made at the expense of girls/women (McIntosh 1990; Frankenberg 1993). In other words, Darryl and John did not consider their own privileges to be political, and, consequently, they did not problematize them.

5.2.4 Closed Spaces: Defensiveness and the Public/Private Dichotomy

The spaces where various forms of defensiveness halted discussion were numerous in both classes. In considering what kinds of discourse elicited defensiveness, I will re-think how masculine/feminine defensiveness worked both individually and collectively to support liberal notions of gender specific public/private spheres.

I) Masculine Defensiveness: Reinstilling the Centre

Individual and collective forms of masculine verbal defensiveness supported three things: (1) gender blindness, (2) gender-evasiveness, and (3) power blindness. Those who were gender blind did not “see” gender differences in either schools or society, and, thus, supported a male-dominated public sphere. Gender-blind masculine defensiveness is exemplified in Darryl’s support of conventional stereotypes as well as Darryl and John’s support of male aggressiveness (i.e., Robert). Neither John nor Darryl questioned Robert’s dominance in the public sphere, but they did question Barbara’s non-nurturing response to him.

Gender evasiveness is exemplified by the extent to which masculine forms of defensiveness refused to acknowledge that systemic inequalities support men’s
dominance in the public sphere and their absence in the private sphere. The in-class discussion of Canadian women’s structural inequality and their lack of funding in professional sports led to the largest collective demonstration of gender evasion. This occurred when male pre-service teachers recognized the gender imbalance of sports endorsements but insisted upon collectively normalizing it. Sports was a common interest among the majority of these men, and this may have made them defensive (particularly with regard to football and hockey, which appear to glorify “male” aggressiveness).

Power blindness is exemplified by the attempt to refute statements regarding (white) male domination in the public sphere and to portray white men as victims of the system (Frankenberg 1993). Power-blind masculine defensiveness appeared in interviews, small group work, and classroom discussions. This form of defensiveness used both gender blindness and gender-evasiveness to contest white male privilege and to label white males as victims. For example, in his interview, Darryl reflected on his own schooling experiences in a gender evasive manner, which led him to conclude that girls were given preferential treatment. In his small group, Daniel’s use of gender blindness and gender evasiveness not only enabled him to control the small group discussion, but also to label white men as the victims of “political correctness” (Smith 1995). Robert’s confrontation with Barbara over equity issues, as well as Darryl and John’s acceptance of it, also supported the construction of white men as victims. Claims of “reverse discrimination” and the evocation of a colonial discursive history that places the burden of creating a just society on the backs of white men illuminates the complexities involved in challenging hegemonic assumptions (Bradley 1991; Frankenberg 1993). Such power-blind discourse
is contradicted by the material reality of marginalized groups. The goals of the civil
rights movements have not yet been met: “Character and merit are not the basis on which
individuals take their places in a hierarchical social structure” (Frankenberg 1993, 148).

Masculine defensiveness allowed for the discussion of only certain forms of gender
difference. Men were generally willing to allow women to discuss individual instances of
gender socialization, but not systemic inequalities that showed men to be privileged over
women.

II) Feminine Defensiveness: Nurturing in the Public Sphere

Women, in both the primary and secondary research groups, became more defensive
of “gender issues” as the course progressed. Why did this occur? I think the answer may
be found in how feminine defensiveness is constructed within a nurturing model (Lewis
1990; Martindale 1992) and, at times, function to protect white middle-class assumptions
and privilege (Frankenberg 1993; hooks 1995). To illustrate this I will revisit some forms
of feminine defensiveness.

Women in both research groups often responded defensively whenever feminism was
discussed, preferring to use the word “humanism,” as though it would better represent
their lives (Lewis 1990). Female individual defensiveness often took the form of women
acting as nurturers in response to male defensiveness, thus supporting white male
dominance.

In the primary study group, forms of feminine defensiveness were predominantly
individual. For example, within the small group discussion, Sandra appeased Daniel’s
concerns over political correctness in his schooling and his “marginalization” in the
curriculum. In doing so, she supported both whiteness and classism. As well, after the confrontation between Barbara and Robert, a female pre-service teacher tried to nurture the latter by comparing his “unease” with that of her husband.

Heterosexual defensiveness moved from an individual to a collective form when discussing male homosexuality in the classroom, primarily because of a concern over paedophilia. While male pre-service teachers were publicly unwilling to discuss heterosexism and the social construction of masculinities, their female colleagues were not. However, female pre-service teachers were not willing to discuss feminism or differences among women.

Within these discourses, feminine forms of defensiveness (individual and collective) reinforced the role of women as nurturers and, thus, the assumption of white middle-class values with regard to mothering (Lewis 1990; Martindale 1992). In other words, feminine defensiveness appeased masculine discomfort with feminist analyses and prevented white women from considering themselves. Feminine defensiveness emphasizes the fact that white women need to begin questioning the material realities of inequality, rather than “simultaneously conceal[ing] or normaliz[ing] race privilege from the standpoint of its beneficiaries” (Frankenberg 1993, 161).

5.3 Implications of Typology

The above foregoing outline indicates how pre-service teachers’ discourse occurs within a binary space, and leads to individual and collectively supported forms of defensiveness; however, it does not investigate the silence surrounding whiteness, class, racial identity, and women’s sexualities. My research supports Lewis’s (1990) and
Martindale’s (1992) work on nurturing, but it also reaches further in that it considers why women needed to meet outside of class in order to discuss a particularly dominant male (i.e., Robert).

With regard to the examples of defensiveness toward gender equity reveal in my study, liberal assumptions about society were in the forefront. The defensiveness surrounding equity measures such as affirmative action may have resulted from the uncontested whiteness of the class members. Lynn’s defensiveness toward affirmative action programs illustrates the dilemma of women who both nurture male defensiveness and argue for liberal feminism: they are caught between being nurturers and being oppressed.

The discourse of pre-service teachers, exemplified in what seemed, initially, to be liberal feminist advocacy, really only adhered to claims for equality that coincided with non-feminist societal “rights”: equal access, equal pay, and the like (Ramazanoglu 1993). What was most difficult was getting this group to recognize that society unequally rewards individuals (employment) and just as unequally distributes resources (e.g., look at the difference between funding for day care and funding for sports). Thus, when it came to analyzing power and resource differentials in society, these pre-service teachers relied on non-feminist rationalizations to justify systemic inequalities. “History” was deemed to be neither the fault of white men nor something that was contributed to by white women; it was merely “inherited” by both its “willing and unwilling beneficiaries” (Frankenberg 1993, 238). As the male role was problematized only in the private sphere, men remained “free to defend public, universal human interests” (Luke 1992, 32).
5.3.2 Institutional Considerations

Given the defensiveness of both research groups toward feminist analyses of education, I suggest some institutional considerations that may create a safer, more productive space for feminist and pro-feminist instructors of EDST 314. I will consider three ways of improving the classroom atmosphere: (1) change the admission policies to teacher education, (2) develop new program guidelines and standards for “professional” behaviour, and (3) change the course content and pedagogy of EDST 314.

A) Changing Admission Policies

To improve the chances of attracting less hostile pre-service teachers, the Teacher Education Department could re-think its admission requirements. Presently, gender- and colour-blind patriarchal liberalism (Luke 1992, 49) is evident in Teacher Education Admission policies that fail to consider in what ways the program implicitly privileges whites over non-whites. Given the rapidly changing ethnic distribution in British Columbia’s schools, the Teacher Education Program should consider having more non-white teachers, particularly in the Greater Vancouver area (Sleeter 1992). Currently the threshold for applications to be considered is prior work experience with the age group that applicants wish to teach. The admission policy’s latter focus on grade point average could be broadened to include a variety of criteria: grades, languages, community involvement and volunteer work (perhaps even work that is not school-related).37

In order to reaffirm the Teacher Education Program’s interest in representing “diversity” issues in EDST 314 (Ungerleider 1994), it could alleviate the stress placed on feminist and pro-feminist instructors by accepting applicants who have already completed
undergraduate level courses in areas of feminist and anti-racist analyses. While this may not result in pre-service teachers understanding the connections between various forms of oppression, it would at least alleviate some of the pressure currently placed on feminist and pro-feminist instructors. Also, since issues of social inequality are highly emotive and personal, they need to be raised in more than one component of a course and, indeed, in more than one course. Unless anti-oppression issues are raised in all course work, and unless there is time for pre-service teachers to "reflect [upon] and discuss" these issues, there is little likelihood of altering mainstream perceptions of inequality (Shah 1989, 228; Calderhead and Robson 1991; Rothenberg 1994).

B) Create Program Standards of Professionalism

Another way of helping female faculty and students would be to institute a code of professionalism that makes it clear that treating colleagues with respect is a crucial part of professional development. While reported cases of harassment and intimidation are acted upon by the Faculty of Education, this study evidenced grey areas where hostilities toward certain subject areas seemed to ignite emotional responses. A code of professionalism would not prevent disagreements in the class, but merely that in the event of a pre-service teacher's hostilities becoming a threat to the safety of an instructor and/or class members, there would be clear steps to be followed. Furthermore, the program should certainly address whether or not a pre-service teacher who intimidates his female colleagues, and is ill disposed toward equity issues is a desirable teacher. Again, this is not to say that all confrontations should be avoided, only that there should be a professional framework within which discussions may occur. Adding to the need for clearer procedures are the number of sessional instructors that teach EDST 314, who
themselves are placed within a hierarchical academic power structure. In short, the Teacher Education Program has to recognize that by not providing measures that address unacceptable behaviours, it is condoning it.

C) EDST 314 Changes

As discussed earlier, EDST 314’s course structure is problematic. Restructuring EDST 314 would entail avoiding using the word “gender” in place of “female teachers and students,” as it “skirts altogether the politics of gender that structure the possibilities (of critique) for women teachers and female students[.] [T]he (textual) discourse of critical pedagogy constructs, and addresses an androgynous and colourless subject” (Luke 1992, 39). A restructuring of EDST 314 should address the backlash against equity movements and perhaps ways of easing into critical social inquiry. In many senses, a restructuring of EDST 314 would return it to what it was in the early 1990s; gender issues would be conceived of as involving race, social class, and sexuality in any number of different patterns (Frankenberg 1993). In other words, the complicity of girls’/women’s lives would be analyzed through a consideration of the genderization of race and/or the racialization of gender, both of which imply a class analysis. This would involve both men and women in considering how they are implicated in a society that valorizes masculinity and whiteness. Crucial to this would be naming “whiteness” and white people as constituting a vested set of interests with regard to race relations. Naming would be one step in a counter-hegemonic attempt to “dislodge the claims [of dominant white groups] to rightful dominance” (Frankenberg 1993, 234). The material relations of whiteness, and its expressions, could be problematized over time, thus locating and
naming colonial discourse. Clearly, more emphasis should be placed on representing authors who attempt to discuss the relationships between various forms of oppression.

EDST 314 could also assist pre-service teacher’s awareness of current debates and struggles within the feminist community by inviting members of local feminist organizations or feminist public school teachers to be guest lecturers. By increasing ties to community organizations and feminist public school teachers, EDST 314 could evidence current lived struggles inside and outside of schools. Either event would also evidence feminist struggles as a present concern for society and schools. In doing so, feminist and pro-feminist EDST 314 instructors would appear less isolated in their concerns.

Lastly, EDST 314 should be called “An Analysis of Education” or “Analyses of Education” in order both to do away with the assumed neutrality and holism of “The Analysis of Education” and to reflect the expertise offered by individual instructors. This would encourage instructors to frame their analyses critically and plurally, thus enabling pre-service teachers to recognize that there are always several positions, none of which are neutral.

5.4 Re-visiting the Feminist Classroom

Despite recommending the critiques that feminist pedagogues’ have directed at mainstream attempts to discuss “gender” issues, it is necessary, in turn, to critique these critiques. Given the need to have a curriculum that better represents various forms of oppression, feminist pedagogues should constantly assess (1) what their presence in the classroom should be, (2) how to teach beyond forms of defensiveness, (3) who is being
represented within feminist pedagogy, and (4) how to continually ensure that no one
group is normalized as an “other” (Luke 1992).

5.4.1 Re-visiting the Feminist Teacher

While feminist pedagogues have articulated the epistemological problems of
discussing girls’/women’s lives in the public sphere, few have focused on the
Evident in reflections on such courses is the need for feminist instructors to create a
classroom that facilitates and encourages a critical position, thus enabling marginalized
groups to speak (Gardner et al. 1989; Currie 1992). A radical feminist pedagogy does not
involve an “anything goes” attitude, toward classroom discourse but, rather, a linking of
the “politics of local struggles” with the “politics of global structures and justifying

A problem for feminist teachers is defensiveness in the classroom(s). As Barbara’s
class exemplified, creating a critical stance did not silence either male or female
defensiveness. It is necessary for feminist pedagogues to focus on how to teach beyond
defensiveness and assumed neutrality (Ellsworth 1989; Gardner et al. 1989; Lewis 1990;
Martindale 1992). In order to locate instructors and students within a historical context of
privilege, it is necessary for feminist pedagogues to avoid (1) situating themselves as
nurturers and (2) levelling difference by allowing equal time for mainstream opinions
(Martindale 1992). Feminist pedagogy must consider whose interests are supported by a
system that has no corrective measures for dealing with hostile pre-service teachers (Luke
5.4.2 Talking about Feminine Defensiveness

Feminist pedagogy needs to reconsider in what ways pre-service teachers’ personal realities are re-presented, understood, and analyzed during discussions of various forms of oppression (Martindale 1992), but it also needs to avoid constructing courses in which topics divide the class into essentialized categories of “perpetrators and victims” (Ellsworth 1989). As evidenced by the forms of defensiveness exhibited in both EDST 314 classes, pre-service teachers tend to defend hegemonic discourse. The particulars of this defence should be of concern to feminist teachers. Perhaps feminist teachers should consider not only how to interrupt patriarchy (Lewis 1990), but also how to interrupt (white) women’s nurturing defences of patriarchy.

As feminists have shown, white women are comfortable with the dichotomies of liberal feminism and perhaps even with their “white female denial of the reality of racist domination” (hooks 1995, 102). It is time feminist pedagogues “examine the degree to which white women (and all women) who assume powerful positions rely on conventional paradigms of domination to reinforce and maintain that power” (hooks 1995, 105). A radical feminist pedagogy recognizes the diversity of women’s experiences and argues that this should lead not to relativism but to “locating perspective, experience, and knowledge in historical, political, and cultural contexts” (Luke 1992, 47). There is no one answer, to the question of how to get students to situate themselves, but some argue that, through autobiography, one may investigate whiteness as a signifier of “a set of ideas linked to and embedded in /.../ material relations” (Lewis 1990; Frankenberg 1993, 70; Martindale 1992; Middleton 1992).\(^{38}\) I argue that this could also be the case with pre-service teachers.
Finally, it is important to consider pedagogical approaches that allow marginalized groups time to talk amongst themselves. As evidenced in Barbara’s class, women did want to meet to talk together; they needed a space where they could discuss their common feelings around being silenced by a dominant male.
Chapter 6: Summary and Concluding Thoughts

While earlier feminist studies have illuminated feminine/masculine defensiveness in feminist classrooms, little work has addressed the particularities of teaching feminist analyses in core courses of professional training programs. The teaching of feminist analyses in a teacher education program has raised a number of administrative and pedagogical questions.

This research indicates that feminist and pro-feminist teacher education instructors remain in the position of confronting oppressive views in her/his respective classrooms. To improve classroom atmosphere, I have suggested three institutional considerations: (1) change the admission policies to teacher education, (2) develop new program guidelines and standards for "professional" behaviour, and (3) change the course content and pedagogy of EDST 314. I have also suggested that feminist pedagogues should constantly assess (a) what their presence in the classroom should be, (b) how to teach beyond forms of defensiveness, (c) who is being represented within feminist pedagogy, and (d) how to continually ensure that no one group is normalized as an "other."

In short, my research provides insight into the complexity of defensiveness toward issues of oppression, particularly among predominantly white classmates. Through investigating forms of defensiveness that arise in a professional training course it is evident that more research needs explore how students situate themselves in the historical present. Autobiography is suggested as one method which enables personal life histories being brought to the public sphere to contest male privilege and dominance. As indicated by this study, feminist and pro-feminist instructors must be prepared for (1) compulsory
masculinities, (2) feminine/masculine defensiveness, (3) social class defensiveness, (4) hostilities toward feminist analysis, and (5) consider pedagogical approaches that allow marginalized groups time to talk amongst themselves.

In an exploratory way this study spells out some of the difficulties facing feminist and pro-feminist instructors in university classrooms, particularly mainstream teacher education classrooms. It represents the need for programs to consider the process in which individuals are accepted and unquestionably passed through professional training.
Chapter 1

Applicants to the elementary teacher education program apply to complete a two-year program after having completed a minimum of 90 university credits (including specific prerequisites) or a one year program after completing a 4 year bachelor’s degree. Applicants to the secondary teacher certification program must complete a Bachelor’s degree in order to be eligible to teach in one or two teaching subject areas.

Because of the way in which grade point average is calculated, assessing the average grade point average of accepted pre-service teachers is a slippery issue. For example, in the elementary program the best sixty credits are averaged, not the entire set of grades. As well, in the secondary teaching program, grade point averages are taken for specific courses within one or two teaching subject areas. Assessing the average grade point average of a secondary teacher applicant becomes even more slippery when the grades are not consistent either within or among teaching subject areas. Once the grade point averages have been assessed, applications within similar teaching subject areas are compared with each other. Thus, while there is a common-sense notion that teacher education is one of the most difficult professional programs in which to gain entry, one must view this against how grade point average is selected and weighed. Admissions information and statistics for successful 1994 applicants was obtained through a meeting with the admissions officer for the Teacher Education Program.

From conversation with admissions officer, 22 February 1996.

This brief look at some of the origins of EDST 314 is not attempting to rehearse the totality of the course’s history nor all of the discipline influences it has had. EDST 200: Introduction to Education emerged from EDUC 200. In the 1983 university calendar, EDST 200 carried the same course description as did EDUC 200 from 1980 to 1982.

The description of Educational Studies 200 is identical to that for the EDUC 200 course that was given from 1980 to 1982.

At a faculty level, multiculturalism became an important issue in 1983. Gender-inclusive language, however, was not tackled until 1987, when Dean Sheen’s proposed the Education Faculty adopt gender inclusive language.

This same description is used to describe EDST 314 from 1987 to the present.


In the 1992 reader, the ten sections around which the articles were organized were: Approaches to Analysis, Gender Equity in Education, First Nations Education, Multiculturalism and Education, Teachers’ Working Conditions, Social Class and Educational Tracking, Metaphor in Educational Discourse, Critical Thinking, Public and Private Education, and The Context of Educational Reform.

I would like to thank Dr. Sutherland, Dr. Ungerleider, and Dr. Bruneau for their assistance in reconstructing a history of this course.
Jaggar (1983) clearly analyzes feminist traditions for their inherent assumptions. Liberal feminism is critiqued for its inherent reliance on positivist notions of neutrality (scientific objectivity) and its belief in universal human values; Marxist feminism is critiqued because it only allows for two forms of feminism (liberal and revolutionary) and does not enable women to have their own epistemology; radical feminism is critiqued because it relies on mystical and spiritual experiences rather than on isolating and examining various forms of "patriarchal thought," and because it pits working-class men against working-class women.

Fuss, drawing on Althusser, argues that "experience" is a product of ideological practices (118-19).

Chapter 2

For example, Wendy Luttrell's (1989) study of working-class women in higher education found that both white and black women describe themselves in relation to their domestic abilities and duties in the private sphere; that is, women were defined through "relational activities that [were] embedded in the care of and affiliation with others" (40).

In addition the course syllabus included a grid perspective of conservative, progressive and radical ideologies as well as subsequent perspectives on the educational tradition, their main concerns, the educational process, the teacher's role, representative authors for each ideology and critiques of rival traditions. The original source for these listings is D. Liston and K. Zeichner, Teacher Education and the Social Conditions of Schooling, (New York: Routledge, 1991), ch. 2. David Livingstone, "Class, Educational Ideologies, and Mass Opinion in Capitalist Crisis: A Canadian Perspective," Sociology of Education, 58, no. 1 (Jan. 1985): 3-20. John Dewey. Ken Osborne; Frank Pignatelli, "Toward a Postprogressive Theory of Education," Educational Foundations, 7, no. 3 (Summer 1993): 12. The above are sources used by Deirdre Kelly, the Coordinator of Educational Studies 314 from 1993 to Spring 1995

Everet's class did not read any of these articles. Rather, Everet had his class read Barrie Thorne's "Boys and Girls Together, but Mostly Apart".

In the secondary research group, the gender component spanned two and a half weeks. Within that time, however, only one article was read and pre-service teachers were asked to participate in an on-going classroom drama.

As quoted in Frankenberg (1993, 42).

Several pre-service teachers in both the primary and secondary research groups referred to conversations among other pre-service teachers outside of EDST 314 class-time.

Chapter 3
The Teacher Education Admissions Officer said that the admissions committee does not have a quota system or an affirmative action program, nor do they keep records of the "racial mix" of their programs. She also said that the admissions committee felt the program had "enough of a [racial] mix." Nonetheless, in the two classes I attended the students were predominantly white.

In 1985, Wright modified his original class map to include a division between owners and non-owners. Within these two categories, Wright also differentiates between owners who work versus hire workers and the skills/credentials of the non-owners (Edgall 1993, 20). In total, Wright (1985) creates twelve possible class locations, and acknowledges that his new theory breaks with Marx’s sociology by considering the propertyless middle class as a class force that could “pose an alternative to capitalism” (Wright 1985, 89 as quoted in Edgall 1993, 22).

Darryl did not discuss whether his father received any worker’s compensation for his injury, but did mention that his father was permanently hospitalized from the head injury. In the secondary research group, all except Steve’s mother worked in the paid labour force as well. Steve’s mother did work until health problems prevented her from continuing to do so.

The secondary research group echoes the gender division between men’s and women’s reasons for entering teaching. Women, for example, entered teaching to be with children, while men entered teaching as a “fall-back choice.”

Similarly, slightly more of the secondary research subjects considered feminism as having “acceptable” and “unacceptable” forms. That is, “acceptable” feminism was defined as attempts made to achieve equal pay for equal work (Robyn, Henry), create equal rights (Robyn, Steve, Brenda), “an awareness and sensitivity to issues that face women” (Henry) and a “movement that seeks equality between the sexes--economic, academic, social” (Jake). On the other hand, “unacceptable” forms of feminism were considered to be “fanatical” by attempting to “totally exclude males from everything . . . rather than working toward a balance” (Robyn) or a label that signifies women as “radical feminist bitches [that] label women as man-haters” (Henry) and signifies feminist men as “not real men--panzies” (Henry), women wanting to dominate and exclude men (Steve, Brenda), as well as Jake’s dislike for seeing feminism “branded by its extreme poles [from] either a wishy-washy desire for some equality or the radical desire for complete power over men.”

Two female pre-service teachers in the secondary research group defined feminism without constructing “acceptable” and “unacceptable” forms within their definitions. For example, Amy described feminism as individual and personal but also as “working for equality of each individual” and Janet described feminism as individual as well but described as “women trying to get a better[financial] position in society.”

In the secondary research group Janet and Brenda defined themselves as “humanists” rather than feminists as they had “nothing against men.” Steve, Amy, Robyn and Jake considered themselves to be feminists, while Henry said he hesitated to say yes for fear of the “panzie” label.
John also referred to women's "victimization" in society as being exemplified in not being able to vote.

While females only represent 17% of British Columbian University faculty, they are concentrated in education, arts, and human and social sciences. At the public school level, females represent 91.8% of elementary teachers and 35.2% of secondary teachers (though they remain a minority in math and science subjects) and compose 19.8% of principals at secondary and elementary schools. Within British Columbia's Ministry of Education, females represent 90.9% of clerical positions but only 31.2% of the management positions. Gender Equity: Distribution of Females and Males in the British Columbia School System, October 1991.

Chapter 4

This is not unique to EDST 314, as teaching about histories of oppression is difficult because it "potentially poses very fundamental challenges to the academy and its traditional production of knowledge" (Mohanty 1994, 151).

As John was discussing his general dislike for public speaking and/or speaking in front of his peers, I took this to mean in his classes generally, not just EDST 314.

Articles relating to masculinity were added to the course reader to engage men in discussions questioning constructions of masculinity and femininity (Courtney-Hall). Connell's and Reis's articles were added for this purpose (Courtney-Hall).

It should be noted that Everet did not discuss sexual orientation in his class at all. A pre-service teacher did complain that the "gay posturing" by male pre-service teachers in a drama was harmful, but Everet argued that it was necessary to allow others to experience that role.

Martha Vicinus (1987) argues the suppression of female sexuality is because of society's denial of and control over the "public expression of active female sexuality" (174).

In Everet's class the most hostile comments in the class occurred during a drama he had created to "solve gender relations." That is, during this drama three white men chose to use the drama as a forum of macho exhibitionism. In the drama, they interrupted women and consistently made sexist remarks: "My name is Roco, and I'm sick of political correctness. If I want to call a chick a chick, I will"; "Why don't we go back to the old days when men were men, and women were women"; "You're [female colleague] definitely not a babe"; "Who's going to wear teddies [if women and men become equal]." The show of macho sexism was entertaining not only to the three participants but also to the rest of the class who watched the drama take place with much laughter and clapping.

The phrase "carrying the burden" illuminates the pervasiveness of colonial discourse in present discourse (Morrison 1993). Rudyard Kipling's "The White Man's Burden" describes the bitter rewards of fulfilling colonial Anglo-Saxon "responsibilities" overseas. The pervasiveness of Kipling's "White Man's Burden" was evidenced in advertising ventures which reified colonial expansion. For example, Pear's Soap constructed its
advertising on the imagery that Kipling’s poem conjured for Anglo-Saxons in 1899. Central to this imagery was the white man washing his hands while surrounded by images of colonial expansion and in the lower left corner a grateful partially-clothed “colonized” kneeling before the gracious and well dressed White man offering him soap. The undertext read “The first step towards lightening The White Man’s Burden is through teaching the virtues of cleanliness. Pear’s Soap is a potent factor in brightening the dark corners of the earth as civilization advances, amongst the cultured of all nations it holds the highest place” (Bradley 1991).


34 I will use Richer’s (1995) term, “pro-feminist,” to denote male instructors who teach from a feminist standpoint.

35 Everet often asked his class how culture and gender relations were related, though he himself did not say in what way(s) he felt they were (if at all). The pre-service teachers, did not offer any connections between the two, remaining silent until the topic was changed.

36 As John discussed his general uneasiness with speaking in front of his peers, I understood his comments to reflect his self-silencing in general.

37 Candidate interviews are done at some institutes but are considered to be costly and to offer limited success in screening applicants.

38 Frankenberg (1993) discusses whiteness as an ideology that is not embodied solely in white people. In my secondary study group, this was particularly evident with Greg, a Chinese Canadian, who orientalized himself and his culture.
Appendices

*Appendix 1: UBC Pre-Service Teacher Age and Gender Statistics, 1994*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Program</th>
<th>Average Age (years)</th>
<th>Female (number/percent)</th>
<th>Male (number/percent)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Elementary (1-3)</td>
<td>25.67</td>
<td>294 79.24%</td>
<td>77 20.75%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Middle School (4-7)</td>
<td>26.02</td>
<td>18 48.64%</td>
<td>19 51.35%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Secondary (8-12)</td>
<td>26.97</td>
<td>207 46.51%</td>
<td>238 53.48%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Note: These statistics were gathered on 31 August 1994.
Appendix 2: Consent Forms

Subject Consent Form -- Pre-service Teachers

I will be interviewing volunteer Education 314 students regarding gender equity in education. I am interested in documenting participants' understandings of gender and education issues prior to and after being taught the gender equity component of Education 314. This study will involve three interviews and my observations of your Education 314 class during the time that gender equity is discussed. The interviews will draw from issues raised in your Education 314 class regarding gender equity. The research gathered in this study will be used to complete my Master of Arts in Education.

With your permission, I will tape record our conversation. Only myself and possibly my Faculty Advisor will hear these tapes. The material gathered in this project will be held in the strictest confidence. I will use pseudonyms for the individuals with whom I interact. You may refuse to answer any particular question, stop the interview or choose to end your participation in this study at any time.

If you have any questions regarding my research, please feel free to contact me.

Louise McLean Deirdre Kelly
Department of Educational Studies Assistant Professor

Your signature below acknowledges that you have received a copy of the consent form for your own records and signifies your giving permission to be interviewed and observed.

_________________________________________  ________________________________
Signature                                      Date
Subject Consent Form -- Instructors

I will be interviewing volunteer Education 314 students regarding gender equity in education. I am interested in documenting participants' understandings of gender and education issues prior to and after being taught the gender equity component of Education 314. This study will involve three interviews and my observations of each participant's Education 314 class during the time that the gender equity component is discussed. The research gathered in this study will be used to complete my Master of Arts in Education.

I am seeking your permission to observe class discussions while the gender equity component of Education 314 is being taught. These observations will inform my second interview schedule. The material I gather will be held in the strictest of confidence. I will use pseudonyms for the individuals with whom I interact.

If you have any questions regarding my research, please feel free to contact me.

Louise McLean
Master's Candidate
Department of Educational Studies

Deirdre Kelly
Assistant Professor

Your signature below acknowledges that you have received a copy of the consent form for your own records and signifies your giving permission for the observation(s) in your class during the gender equity component of Education 314.

Signature
Date
Appendix 3: Interview Schedules

Interview Schedule 1:

1. Could you briefly describe your background? (Social class (parents’ occupations), ethnicity, and where they grew up)

2. In what ways do you think these identities have influenced your own educational experiences?

3. In what ways do you think these identities have not influenced your own educational experiences?

4. Why was teaching your career choice?

5. In what ways did your own educational experiences influence your decision to teach?

6. In what ways did your own educational experiences not influence your decision to teach?

7. In what ways do you think education treats boys and girls equally?

8. In what ways do you think education treats boys and girls unequally?

9. Do you think schools should teach about sexual orientation? Why or Why not?

10. What does feminism mean to you?

11. What does gender equity in education mean to you?

Interview Schedule 2:

Primary Research Group:

1. What were your reactions to the film you saw in class?

2. What were your reactions to Beth Reis’ article “Why Should Public Schools Teach about Sexual Orientation?”?

3. What were your reactions to Barbara Houston’s article “Gender Freedom and the Subtleties of Sexist Education”?

4. What were your reactions to the eight critical incidents discussed in class?
5. What were your observations of class discussions?

6. How did you feel about the discussion that occurred between the instructor and a male in the classroom regarding his comments that what men today are "carrying the burden" and that the instructor is "safe" because she is female?

7. Do you think this incident was handled well?

8. What does the term "reverse discrimination" mean to you? {Same as used in class?}

9. What does feminism mean to you

10. What does gender equity mean to you?

11. Do you have any questions for me?

Secondary Research Group:

1. What were your reactions to the Barrie Thorne article? likes/dislikes

2. How would you describe the classes reactions to Barrie Thome’s article?

3. What aspects of the biological versus social differences from in-class discussion did you agree with? What aspects did you disagree with?

4. What were your reactions to the drama done in class?

5. What are your reactions to the ‘fishbowl’ discussion held during the drama?

6. As a result of the fish bowl discussion, Brian proposed having boys and girls spend time each week talking together about gender issues. Did you like this suggestion? Why or why not? How did you feel about the classes reaction to this proposal?

7. What does transformative mean to you?

8. What does transformative not mean to you?

9. What did you think of Rosonna Tite’s article?

10. Do you think there are any similarities between gender and other topics discussed in the EDST class? Which ones and how so?

11. How do you think culture and gender relate to each other?
In class during the gender portion of your 314 class cultural differences was raised as an exit log theme. Brian also stated that he believed gender issues to be transcultural—do you agree?

Interview Schedule #3

Primary Research Group

1. What are your reactions to Connell’s article?

2. What are your reactions to Rosonna Tite’s article?

3. Why do you think the men in the class were silent when asked to give reactions to Connell’s thesis on the construction of masculinities? Why were you silent?

4. Which discussion question did your group discuss on the Friday class? What were the main themes discussed in your group? What was your opinion of the question? Do you think this was a useful exercise?

5. Do you see any similarities between gender and other issues discussed in your EDST 314 class? Which ones and how so?

6. How do you think gender and culture relate to each other?

7. How do you foresee implementing gender equity in your future classroom?

8. How do you now define feminism?

9. Do you consider yourself to be a feminist?

10. What topics do you think should be discussed?

11. What do you think would be a better way of organizing the course?

12. Do you have any questions for me about any of the interviews?

Instructor Interview Schedule

1. What did you consider the objectives of EDST 314 to be?

2. What were your own general objectives for the course?
3. What were you objectives for the gender component of the course?

4. In what ways do you think your objectives were met?

5. In what ways do you think your objectives were not met?

6. What factors do you think inhibited the attainment of your objectives?

7. How would you describe your experience of teaching EDST 314?

8. How do you feel your class responded to the gender equity component?

9. Do you think your class’ reaction to the gender equity component was similar or different to other components? If so, which ones?

10. In what ways do you think your class was able to understand the relationships between gender, class, racial identity, sexual orientation and the like?

11. Which pedagogical methods did you find successful?

12. How do you think the course could be improved?

13. How do you think the gender equity component could be improved?

14. Do you have any questions for me?
### Appendix 4: Pre-service Teacher Cultural Background

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Pre-service Teacher</th>
<th>Town/City of Origin</th>
<th>Parent’s Cultural Background (mother/father)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Primary Research Subjects</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lynn</td>
<td>Throughout Canada</td>
<td>French/Acadian</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Darryl</td>
<td>Coquitlam, BC</td>
<td>Irish/Scottish</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>John</td>
<td>BC Kootnies</td>
<td>Russian</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Secondary Research Subjects</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Janet</td>
<td>Berlin, Germany</td>
<td>German</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jake</td>
<td>E. Van. &amp; White Rock</td>
<td>Ukrainian/Scottish.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brenda</td>
<td>Vancouver</td>
<td>Chinese</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Steve</td>
<td>Montreal, Quebec</td>
<td>French Canadian/Greek</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Henry</td>
<td>Vancouver</td>
<td>Chinese</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Amy</td>
<td>Toronto</td>
<td>British</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Robyn</td>
<td>BC Kootnies</td>
<td>English/Irish</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## Appendix 5: Pre-service Teacher's Home Backgrounds

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Primary Research Subjects</th>
<th>Household Status</th>
<th>Parent's Occupation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Lynn</td>
<td>two parent</td>
<td>Librarian and Hotel Manager &lt;br&gt; <em>semi-autonomous wage earner &amp; manager</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Darryl</td>
<td>single parent (f)</td>
<td>Nurse and Unable to Work &lt;br&gt; <em>semi-autonomous wage earner &amp; under classed</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>John</td>
<td>two parent</td>
<td>Worker's Compensation Board First Aid Officer and Logger &lt;br&gt; <em>semi-autonomous wage earners</em></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Secondary Research Subjects</th>
<th>Household Status</th>
<th>Parent's Occupation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Janet</td>
<td>single parent (f)</td>
<td>Factory worker &lt;br&gt; <em>proletariat</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jake</td>
<td>two parent</td>
<td>Legal Secretary and Computer Systems Analyst &lt;br&gt; <em>semi-autonomous wage earner &amp; manager</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brenda</td>
<td>two parent</td>
<td>Receptionist and Accountant &lt;br&gt; <em>semi-autonomous wage-earner &amp; manager</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Steve</td>
<td>two parent</td>
<td>Unable to work and Restaurant Owner &lt;br&gt; <em>under-class and petty bourgeoisie</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Henry</td>
<td>two parent</td>
<td>Secretary and College Instructor &lt;br&gt; <em>semi-autonomous wage-earners</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Amy</td>
<td>two parent</td>
<td>Principal and Assistant Director of Toronto School Board &lt;br&gt; <em>manager &amp; supervisors</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Robyn</td>
<td>two parent</td>
<td>Grocery/Gas Station Owners &lt;br&gt; <em>petty bourgeoisie</em></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Note: The above social class designations are approximations, as they may only indicate one time period of a parent's occupation.
### Appendix 6: Pre-service Teacher Educational Backgrounds

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Bachelor's Degree</th>
<th>Institute</th>
<th>Teaching Subject Area(s)</th>
<th>Teaching Program</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Darryl</td>
<td>Geography/History SFU 1993</td>
<td>Social Studies</td>
<td>Secondary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lynn</td>
<td>French/English UBC 1994</td>
<td>French/English</td>
<td>Secondary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Janet</td>
<td>French/German U. of Quebec</td>
<td>French/German</td>
<td>Secondary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jake</td>
<td>English UBC 1994</td>
<td>English</td>
<td>Secondary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brenda</td>
<td>Recreational Education UBC 1987</td>
<td>English</td>
<td>Elementary (Primary)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Steve</td>
<td>Fine Arts Concordia 1993</td>
<td>Art</td>
<td>Secondary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Henry</td>
<td>Chemistry UBC 1992</td>
<td>Science</td>
<td>Secondary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Amy</td>
<td>Physics/Math UBC 1994</td>
<td></td>
<td>Elementary (Intermediate)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Robyn</td>
<td>Music U. Vic 1979</td>
<td>Music</td>
<td>Elementary (Intermediate)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
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