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The Ethical Paradox:  
Exploring the pedagogical potential of ethical gender relations  
between pre-service teacher and student.

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## **ABSTRACT**

Providing children with ethical experiences has been an educational struggle fraught with theoretical and practical incompatibilities. Post Foucauldian theorists, such as Deborah Youdell and Laura Teague, have attempted to disrupt processes of inequality in schools by exploring how teachers might utilise performatives to constitute their students in ways that let them live. These ethical experiences disrupt unethical pedagogies that may injuriously constitute students – limiting the freedom of their existence. This study focuses on gendered constitutions specifically by engaging in discourses with pre-service teachers that explore their perceptions, beliefs and attitudes of gender. This study found that pre-service teachers were apprehensive when grappling with gendered discourses which diminished their agency. The roles of teachers, schools and institutions were considered whereby this study found that each struggled to implement ethical pedagogies that let students live. Finally, suggestions were made in an attempt to bridge the gap between theory and practice; promoting pre-service institutional training in performative politics to allow for ethical relations between teachers and students.

# **CERTIFICATE**

I hereby certify that this work has not been submitted for a higher degree to any other  
University or Institution.

This study has been approved by Macquarie University Human Research Ethics Committee  
(No. 5201500287)

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## Introduction

We must understand our own contribution to creating and withholding the conditions of possibility of particular lives. We must constantly ask what it is that makes for a viable life and how we are each implicated in constituting the viability or non-viability of the lives of others (Davies, 2006, p. 435).

Schools operate as sites for production – a space in which students may be injuriously constituted as particular gendered subjects. At the heart of micro political mundane, minutiae events of everyday school life (Teague, 2015) are teachers; knowingly or unknowingly engaging in performatives that constitute. These performatives carry discursive meanings through our utterances, silences, facial expressions and body language. Teachers, in their daily performatives may unknowingly engage in subjectivation – the process of constituting a subject. By engaging in gendered discourses with pre-service teachers this study attempts to explore avenues for injurious gendered constitutions in schools. Furthermore, this study hopes to highlight pre-service teachers' concerns surrounding the implementation of ethical pedagogies that let their students live. Essentially this study seeks to apply Davies' above illustration by questioning and problematising the ways in which students may be constituted. Through this problematising it is hoped that practical recommendations might be made concerning pre-service teacher training.

For this study it is necessary to consider how injurious constitutions might exacerbate gendered educational inequalities. In 1991, Gill documented the ways teachers perceived boys and girls and how these perceptions were enacted through classroom behaviours... this stereotyping has devastating effects. For example, over half of lesbian, gay and bisexual young people have experienced homophobic bullying at school (Guasp, 2012). Furthermore, half of all teenage boys get into physical fights each year (Foster, Kimmel & Skelton, 2001). Teachers have been found to underestimate, hold low expectations and reinforce strictly feminine behaviours in girls (Berekashvili, 2012). Not surprisingly then when adolescent girls were given the statement: The best thing about being a girl is... the number one response was 'appearance' followed by 'nothing' (Zittleman, 2006).

Problematically, governmental policies seem to exacerbate these issues rather than challenge the crux of the problem. In an attempt to disrupt gendered educational inequality the Australian Government released the policy 'Boys: Getting it right' in 2002. This policy was used to implement school programs for boys, boy-friendly pedagogies and encourage more males to enter the teaching profession. This policy was an interesting reaction to gendered issues in education: gendered achievement gaps, disengagement, retention, stereotypical subject choices and career paths which correlate with wider societal problems of wage gaps, sexism and sexual violence. The report positioned gender as biologically determined resulting in gender binaries being catered to rather than challenged (Gill, 2004). 'Boys: Getting it right' took an anti-feminist stance that deemed male teachers the solution to the unfounded hysteric media reports and moral panic about failing boys (Dee, 2006; Gill, 2004; Gill & Trantor, 2014; Martino & Frank, 2006; Mills, Martino & Lingard, 2007; Carrington, Tymms & Merrell, 2008; Francis, 2006; Martino & Kehler, 2006; Kilby & Olivieri, 2008).

The male role model 'solution' was based upon the notion that if all individuals are given the same then they have no excuse to fail (Kilby & Olivieri, 2008) – failing therefore to recognise that disadvantage cannot be fixed with blanket equality because in order to achieve equality there must first be equity. Gill (2004) explains that the male role model agenda assumes that men and women have distinct qualities to offer. This assumption is problematic and raises the following questions: If the male role model were homosexual would this gender identity fulfil the agenda? Do masculine females fulfil boys' needs more than feminine females? How far does the role model agenda stretch?

Thirteen years prior to the release of 'Boys: Getting it right' Bronwyn Davies published 'Frogs and Snails and Feminist Tales'. Here, Davies argued that non-sexist curricula, equality programs and feminist tales are not enough to disrupt dominant gender binaries. Whilst providing these foundations during pre-service teacher training may be useful, it has been argued that teachers need education in the subject, performative politics and subjectivation (Youdell, 2006; Davies, 2003; Turner, 1988) to provide teachers with the agency necessary to implement ethical pedagogies. At the university in this study, pre-service teachers do not receive compulsory education in gender. Although there is an elective 'Gender in Education' unit it does not make use of the above philosophical tools. This study therefore hoped to investigate how institutions might prepare pre-service teachers for gendered situations in schools in consideration of the recommendations made in gender theory.

This study will investigate the roles of teachers, schools and institutions concerning the processes of subject constitution. Within the literature review it will be suggested that the theory poses somewhat of an ethical paradox to teachers that must be reconciled; although there remains pedagogical potential in their performatives. Then, an account of the methodological process and research epistemology will be provided – detailing the influences and approach to this study. The research findings are presented and discussed within three chapters: pre-service teachers doing gender, gender constitution in schools and pre-service teacher training. Within these chapters the various roadblocks to implementing ethical pedagogies will be explored. Finally the conclusion offers a summary of the study, recommendations for current institutional training and implications for future research.



## **Literature review**

Disrupting processes of gendered educational inequalities requires consideration of the role of teachers, schools and pre-service institutional training. Often described as *in loco parentis*, teachers have a unique opportunity to help shape future generations. There is therefore pedagogical potential in teacher's performatives to produce ethical experiences for their students; ethical experiences that create a free space for subjects to develop their own subjectivity. This thesis has made use of Judith Butler's thinking about subjectivation and her notion of performative politics to unpack the establishment and maintenance of male and female binaries. Binaries that reinforce injurious stereotypes that punish those whom do not fit within them. Interrupting the cultural habitus and engrained ideologies that teach children how to do their gender continues to challenge us (St. Pierre, 1999). Simply opposing sexism is not enough to disrupt the school microcosm that reaffirms gender inequalities (Leask, 2012) whereby identities are produced, resisted and reinscribed (Teague, 2015).

Recommendations made by researchers including Deborah Youdell and Bronwyn Davies have aimed to educate teachers of their role in dismantling gender binaries. These recommendations however have scarcely been deployed with inconsistencies between governmental and institutional reactions to injurious gendered constitutions. Pre-service teachers continue to receive little, if any education on how subjectivation and the performative can be utilised to dismantle inequality and simultaneously, produce it. The following review will examine feminist postmodern literature concerning the subject, subjectivation, performative politics and ethical experience to interpolate their usefulness in dismantling gender inequalities. The scope of this review will not delve into critiques of subjectivation but rather focus on its usefulness in applying these theoretical concepts to an educational setting.

### **The subject**

According to postmodern philosophical literature the process of identity construction begins first with the notion of the subject. Becoming a subject concerns itself not with what one is but how one is recognised. In other words, the real self is not available to be observed as the self is only seen amongst socialisations (Davies, 1990). One can only view a subject through one's own subjectivities and as a consequence one can never truly know the other outside of these subjectivities. Althusser (1971) explains that individuals are always subjects; there is no

true nothingness whereby individuals create their identity. Therefore the subject is not a point of departure but the destination in which we arrive (Diken, 2011); one's identity is not the cause of one's actions but one's actions construct one's identity. The subject is therefore a product that has undergone a process of judgment, assessment and classification (Leask, 2012) and schools operate as a site for this production.

## **Subjectivation**

One influential analysis of the process in which a subject is constituted is provided by Foucault (1988), described as subjectivation (also called subjectification and subjection). A person is at once subjectivated; rendered a subject and subjected to relations of power via discourse (Teague, 2015). Subjection is thus the making of a subject. Althusser (1971) foreshadowed subjectivation in his theory of interpellation as the process by which ideologies constitute subject's identities through discourses. Althusser also called this process hailing whereby subjects are hailed into social interactions and constituted. Subjectivation and interpellation problematise consciousness by stating that the subject does not exist prior to these processes of identity constitution (Atkinson, 2004).

It is necessary to establish however that the discourses in which subjects are subjectivated can potentially misfire on behalf of the constrainer or deflected by the subject him/herself through resistance (Youdell, 2006a). So although productive power constitutes it does not determine. Subjectivation is not as simple as one subject dominating over the other because the subject acts within the limits of subjection (Youdell, 2006b). Discourses must be recognisable and as a consequence of this recognisability some subject positionings are accessible to some individuals and not others, making identity construction constricted (Ferne, Davies, McMurray & Kantor, 1993). In other words, in being subjectivated there is vulnerability on behalf of the subject (Davies, 2006) but production is never certain because the process of subjectivation relies upon the recognisability of discourses but also the absence of subject resistance.

Subjects weave themselves into recognisable discourses within the limits of possibility. In other words, subjects have agency in their identity construction by actively resisting subjection or willingly adopting subjectivities (Davies et al., 2001). However, these choices are made within the limits of available discourses. One cannot be subjectivated in ways that

are unrecognisable. This process can be observed when a popular footballer reveals he is homosexual – this discourse is confronting for people that prioritise gender binaries because it is not easily recognisable within traditional masculine and feminine discourses. Some discourses are therefore more difficult to access or are not available to certain subjects rendering certain identities inaccessible although not impossible. Discourses are constantly shifting within social structures and thus new identity possibilities are always forming. A gendered example would be a sexist joke about a female making a man a sandwich. This discourse makes sense because females have been subjectivated as certain passive (sandwich making) subjects. If the joke were to be reversed, the comedic effect would be lost because men have not endured the same subjections. Due to the continuous shifting of discourses, new recognisable gender categories are available for subjects to be subjected to, willingly or unwillingly.

### **Performative politics**

In his understandings of power and discourse Foucault (1982) demonstrates how discourses are used to subjectivate one another. He suggests that communicating is a process of acting upon others and exercising power limits the responses to that action. Butler (1997) explains that when a subject acts by deploying discourses that are constitutive they are engaging in what she calls performative politics. Performative politics are more than verbal utterances; they are the various discursive strategies the subject employs to shape the identity of self and others either intentionally or not. Performativity is therefore the process of producing own and others existence by establishing or deregulating identity (Rasmussen & Harwood, 2003). Discourses are intentional or unintentional meanings, associations and omissions in utterances and body language that render some things acceptable and others nonsensical. Butler reminds us that discourses do not need to be explicit or intentional to have a performative force. These notions are crucial in understanding identity formation. It is here Youdell (2006a) argues that performative politics has “massive implications for education” (p. 519).

Performative acts produce what they declare; so in the act of designation the subject is constituted (with the possibility of subject resistance or performative misfire). Teachers engage in designation routinely in their branding of students as boys, girls, smart, distracted or naughty. These discourses can only be recognisable if they continue to be cited (Youdell, 2006b). This does not mean that discourses that are silenced do not have a performative force.

When teachers ignore students brandings of others this non-citation still constitutes. If discourses fail to acknowledge or challenge inequalities stratification and segregation continues – widening the gap between how one is and how one is represented. Evidently teachers must do more than merely ignore citations. Youdell (2006b) reminds us that citations can be re-inscribed to change the performative force such as the altered discursive meaning of “nigga” by black communities. The meaning of this citation has been changed by citing it in different discourses and therefore changing its performative force. Youdell states that teachers can engage in such performative politics to constitute students differently rather than as particular raced, classed and gendered subjects. Schools are the gatekeepers of enabling and silencing such discursive performatives and students are the recipients of the discourses that pass through the gender filter. This power can be used to constitute students in ways that challenge and deconstruct inequality.

Citations are not enough to liberate oneself from subjection. Diken (2011) explains that in order to resist subjection one must physically stage this emancipation. It is not enough therefore for a teacher to verbally say that pink is not strictly a feminine colour. In order for this to have performative force the teacher must both discursively and performatively resist such stereotypical subjections. Although citations alone cannot liberate oneself from subjectivation – citations alone can be enough to subjectivate another. It is therefore easier to subjectivate another than it is to resist one’s own subjectivations. The mere enunciation of labelling a student as feminine for example facilitates actions where both the verbal and physical performatives constitute. Whilst “discourse does not tell the truth of bodies” (Rasmussen & Harwood, 2003, p. 33) these labels can be detrimental and problematise agency as a subject cannot necessarily reject the label and succeed in resisting the subjection.

Performative politics can have unexpected and unwanted effects (Youdell, 2004b). To be labelled is to be subjectivated and such a naming joins a citational chain (Derrida, 1988) or discursive thread (Youdell, 2006b) that inevitably inscribes hierarchical binary relations. For example once a subject is labelled a ‘girl’ she is immediately subject to female rules. In order to maintain this subjecthood she must become part of the female discourse: cooperative, passive, empathetic, kind – this discursive thread ensures her membership (Youdell, 2006c). These citational chains reinforce both sides of the hierarchical constitution. In labelling someone a ‘fag’ for example the mere citation reinforces dominant hetero-masculinity (Youdell, 2004b). These injurious performatives are often momentary, fleeting and easily go

unnoticed. Furthermore, the recognisability and normality of injurious discourses demonstrates the historicity of inequality (Youdell, 2004b). Labels limit our thinking to structures that are static and stereotypical and mask the reality of the fluidity of identities (Fernie et al., 1993). Unfortunately, these normative discourses are embedded within societal structures and cannot easily be disrupted.

Yet it is not merely our words which act to subjectivate others but also our physical bodies. One's physical body is open to the public and through one's bodily discursive strategies it constitutes (Naji, 2009). Gender subjectivities are thus regulated and maintained via both discursive practices and bodily demeanours (Christian-Smith, 1992). Teachers must therefore observe how things are; how their bodies produce discursive performatives that constitute. Then, they must imagine how things might be different; how their performativity may be altered to constitute students differently. Turner (1988) calls this performative reflexivity.

Ingrey (2012) adds that the process of subjectivation not only occurs between subjects through their performatives but also in physical spaces. Ingrey dubs toilets, as spaces of subjugation that produce gender conformity and discomfort for those whom do not conform. It is here that our physical bodies are kept under panoptic surveillance and any deviation from the norm reigns questions of our sexuality and identity. In order to create safer spaces some schools have opted for gender-neutral toilets although this decision has not been made mandatory. Youdell and Armstrong (2011) have observed similar cases of affective geographies where students have engaged in a kind of game of thrones over a sofa seat in the classroom. Although this spatial gendered subjectivation is beyond the scope of this paper it nevertheless serves as a reminder of the diverse ways in which students are constituted into rigid gender binaries.

Subjectivation is engrained in the institutional structure and regulation of schools. In her analysis of neoliberal educational reform Youdell (2004a) explains that students are differentiated and sorted based on their perceived ability to achieve. Youdell frames this subjection by utilising the medical term educational triage. There are three levels of educational triage: bureaucratic, institutional and classroom. The triage consists of safe, suitable for treatment and dead; whereby students are achieving benchmarks, have potential to achieve them or are deemed no hopers. Resources are directed away from these 'dead' cases and so students are constituted or constrained by marketplace measures. This process

becomes a self-fulfilling prophecy (Rosenthal & Jacobson, 1968); students fulfil predictions of their perceived abilities due to imposed disabling school structures and continual subjectivation. This process of subjectivation requires more than teachers understanding the theory behind subject constitution because this particular subjectivation is part of the institutional practice and can therefore not be eliminated without drastic school restructuring. Whilst Youdell reminds us that there are no limits of subjectivation – this paper will focus primarily on the daily, micro performative politics teachers engage in that constitute students.

### **The ethical paradox**

Schools operate as a microcosm for gender construction and use subjectivation as a tool to socialise students. Students are subjectivated so that they fit strict gender binaries and in doing their gender *properly* they function as a *correct* member of society. Ultimately the problem is that “teachers’ subjectivate these students as particular [subjects]” (Youdell, 2006a, p. 524). Minutiae differences in teacher behaviour can create gender segregations such as reprimanding a girl for calling out and allowing a boy to engage in the same behaviour without consequence. This action subjectivates girls as passive listeners and boys as active speakers. Youdell (2006a) suggests that by understanding the subject, subjectivation and performative politics schools can use this as a tool for thinking about how we can constitute students differently; in ways that do not produce educational inequality.

It is possible to say that teachers could utilise subjectivation to counteract previous subjectivations, which have constituted individuals within strict gender binaries. To suggest that teachers utilise subjectivation to counteract subjectivation however is not only asking teachers to master performative reflexivity (Turner, 1988) but to purposely constitute students (although in more ethical ways). Although this kind of identity manipulation is proposed to counteract subjectivations that produce inequality it nevertheless poses an ethical paradox; a paradox that should be considered when suggesting that teachers utilise performatives to achieve ethical experience.

Although this paradox has not been overtly discussed the literature has not avoided problematising ethical experience. As stated previously, the subject cannot ensure the constitutive force of discursive practices (Saltmarsh & Youdell, 2004). Misfire can occur on behalf of the constrainer or deflected by the subject him/herself. Yet simultaneously “the subject acts, but she/he acts within/at the limits of subjection” (Youdell, 2006a, p.517). These

limits are the habitus we inhabit or the rules and styles of culture. Subjectivation is therefore a restriction in production (Butler, 1997) and enacted via performative politics (Butler, 1993). Ethics involves the enactment of principles (Cooks, 2007) through performative productions and constraints. It is here that individual agency and freedom is problematised (Youdell, 2006a). As individuals are always subjects (Althusser, 1971) a person cannot be born nothing and develop their identity free from societal constraints (Berzonsky, Ciecuch, Duriez & Soenens, 2011). Thus there is no true ethical experience in the sense that subjects do not have complete free will in their identity construction.

Leask (2012) argues that post-Foucauldian literature concerning interpretations of agency and freedom has rendered the subject powerless; failing to acknowledge one's ability to circumnavigate subjectivations and engage in active resistance. This recent publication has perhaps left Butler, Youdell and Davies untouched whom repeatedly reiterate power as bidirectional, resistance as inevitable and optimism for educational intervention. Individuals collect the subject positionings that represent them as an individual and resist the positionings they do not want (Ferne et al., 1993). Examples of organised resistance in High Schools have been provided by Youdell and Armstrong (2011) and situated individual resistance has been observed by Davies (2003) in young pre-schoolers.

Conceptions of resistance however should always be realistic. Whilst resistance is always possible it is possible within the limits of subjection and not guaranteed. A requirement of agency is emotional and social regulation. Thus controlling subjugation is dependent upon the development of these skills and by extension dependent upon age and experience. It can be suggested then that teachers have a higher duty of care for younger students in their identity construction. Teachers must therefore simultaneously engage in performative reflexivity (Turner, 1988) whilst students develop social and emotional competence as they negotiate various identity roles in social situations (Ferne et al., 1993). It is perhaps for practical reasons advisable to adopt more realistic notions of power and resistance because although it is not impossible, negotiating the complexities of identity constitution is difficult and development dependent. So whilst one's identity is not determined a subject does not have total free will to resist subjections.

Many recommendations have been made to provide children with ethical experience. Butler (2005) suggests suspending the desire to know the other. She explains that if we suspend our

desire to reach complete coherency in knowing the other we can allow more ethical self and other relations. This notion problematises ethical experience; how can one subjectivate another ethically if we cannot truly know the other in making subjectivation decisions? (Buonamano, 2010). Youdell (2012) suggests that teachers can let the other live through their pedagogical practices. This involves being aware of how oneself as a teacher may be subjectivating students in ways that produce inequality. Being aware of pedagogical strategies that constitute students in particular ways allows teachers to manipulate their pedagogical approaches to promote identity freedom (Teague, 2015).

Part of letting the other live involves not expecting to understand or classify the other. By not asking for explanation you allow the other to exist in the school space without being excluded. Part of this process involves a removal of labels. Rasmussen and Harwood (2003) provide a series of recommendations including vigilance of labels intended to describe or stream students and actively engaging students in contestation or rearticulation of labels. The removal of labels however is problematic. Teachers are forced to standardise and are held accountable when standardisation is not achieved. Labelling is the process by which teachers receive funding and account for deviations from rigid statutory standards imposed by the government. EALD (English as an Additional Language or Dialect) is a label given to students which is tied to the designation of funding and if removed would be problematic. However it is exactly these labels that serve as an injurious discourse that constitutes. Whilst the literature has not address this technical barrier there has been a general consensus against labelling students.

In achieving ethical experience Butler coins the term ethical reflexivity (Davies, 2006). This process involves teachers remaining vulnerable during normative practices with students – producing a kind of mutual vulnerability. Teague (2015) calls this ‘relationality’. Teague (2015) argues that “[s]ituating relationality at the foreground of performative politics in the classroom might allow for a more ethical encounter between student and teacher” (p. 4). Relationality involves teachers actively engaging in performative politics to unsettle the ‘teacher’ subjectivity. For example, a student receives a grade they are disappointed with. The teacher tells a (genuine) story about failing or receiving a poor grade and how they felt in that moment. Here, the teacher disrupts traditional power relations between teacher and student, shows vulnerability and successfully engages in relationality. Yet just as teachers constitute students... students constitute teachers. As stated earlier, citations are not enough to liberate



oneself from subjection. Teachers have been subjectivated in particular ways and this plays a part in how students interact with teachers. Teague argues that relationality can disrupt potentially harmful subjectivation. Disrupting this subjectivity allows students to trust, aids behaviour management and fosters honest communication. Additionally, it makes students think before they subjectivate another in a particular way because their recognisability of subjects have been previously been challenged.

For some teachers relationality may be uncomfortable. It should be stated that relationality does not equate to friendship. Rather, it should “momentarily [cut] through the way in which we are rigidly constituted, in hierarchical arrangement, as a teacher and student within a schooling institution where policy and practice correlate student defiance with disobedience that needs disciplining. This encounter is one that holds the potential for a more meaningful relationship to form between self/other and teacher/student” (Teague, 2015, p. 10). Relationality is thus a mutual vulnerability that disrupts constitutive engagements and allows for ethical experiences.

Jon Heller (1996) states that “power is not itself evil; power is simply the capacity to modify the actions of others. What counts, therefore, is how power is used: is it used to increase the freedom of others, or to capture them in relations of domination?” (p. 103-104). Although it is impossible to provide total ethical experience for subjects it is possible to provide an experience that is ethical. It is not enough to provide an equal experience – an equal experience will not deconstruct rampant societal sexism that constitutes individuals in unequal ways. Simply telling boys and girls they are equal has little effect on their gendered identities (Davies, 1990). In order to counteract the constant gender shaping in which men and women will be subjected to in their lifetime it is necessary for teachers to subjectivate students in ways that counteract stereotypes. This produces an ethical paradox because in aiming to give students an ethical experience teachers must engage in unethical practice (although this process is more ethical than current gendered subjectivations). As an extension of this ethical paradox: It may seem unethical to allow for an ethical experience of gender when dominant discourses do not willingly accept gender deviations (Ferne et al., 1993) which could lead to social unacceptance.

Human subjects are often conflicted – what a teacher might believe may go against what they think is the ethical or right thing to believe. Regardless, teachers need to know their own

selves, their own prejudice and beliefs before they engage in any kind of ethical performative politics (Atkinson, 2004). Foucault (1982) states that one should not discover what one is but to refuse what one is and imagine what one could be. However, one must at least discover what one is in order to think of how one wishes to be (Deacon & Parker, 1995). So, teachers' normative beliefs of gender must be examined as well as their beliefs of identity construction. Only after this can teachers grasp the potential to be technicians of behaviour; to engage in institutional manufacture that socialises subjects (Leask, 2012). Teachers are therefore agents "capable of voluntary and intentional counter-practices" (Leask, 2012, p. 67) that resist stereotypical gendered subjectivations.

Changing the gendered subjectivations in schools requires teachers to engage in performative reflexivity by utilising performatives to alter who they are and who students may become in the classroom (Teague, 2015). Before teachers can receive training in performative reflexivity they must examine their own beliefs of gender and understand the processes of identity construction. When individuals understand how subjects are made they are better able to resist particular forms of subjectivation. Furthermore in becoming more aware of gendered subjectivities teachers can provide children with a range of recognisable gender discourses. Scattering the classroom with non-sexist curricula, equity programs and feminist tales is not enough to interrupt dominant gender binaries (Davies & Banks, 1992). Children and teachers must understand how they are interpellated and the possibility of alternative discourses that allow one to construct their identity more freely.

## **Conclusion**

Whilst it may be impossible to consign nothingness as there are attributes humans are and have to be; teachers must reject pre-ordained destinies and allow students to explore identity possibilities. Ultimately, teachers play an active role in "positing an essentialised self" (Rasmussen & Harwood, 2003, p. 26). An example of positing an essentialised self has been the governmental 'add men and stir' response to the 'what about the boys?' movement in a call for same sex role models in schools (Kilby & Olivieri, 2008). As a result, male teachers have been found to engage in hegemonic masculine performative politics to overemphasise their masculinity and counteract the feminine stigma that permeates the teaching profession (Skelton, 2003). Furthermore, theoretical recommendations have not been applied with pre-service teachers receiving little to no gender education. This inconsistency between

governmental, institutional and theoretical responses has not eased the dismantlement of gendered educational inequalities.

Understanding the processes of subjectivation via performatives highlights the complexity of identity construction in schools. Youdell (2006b) reminds us that due to this complexity there cannot be a pedagogical checklist – only localised contextual awareness raising. Davies (2003) recommends that teachers encourage children to understand the differences between physical males and females and the variety of masculine and feminine positions possible in identity construction. This requires teachers to engage in discourse analysis and a discussion of equitable pedagogies. Teachers should be aware that the third feminist wave continues to deconstruct male and female binaries that consistently produce inequality. Boys will not be boys because the subject is; they will be boys because the subject is constructed that way and if teachers believe the former they will accept hegemonic masculine behaviour as determined. “As long as gender remains the primary defining feature of each person and as long as maleness and femaleness are constructed as opposites, the requirements for being successfully male or female potentially override the logic of equality” (Davies, 1989, p. 14). It is necessary then for teachers to engage in thoughtful performative politics that produce ethical pedagogies and ethical experiences – even if these constitutive practices are paradoxical.

## **Methodology**

There has been significant debate concerning epistemologies of poststructuralist qualitative research and yet the necessity of a methodology remains. It is perhaps in the absence of a better alternative (St. Pierre, 1997) that the methodology is represented here as a clean, linear process despite the unsystematic reality of qualitative research. Thus the following methodology details the purpose, data collation processes and limitations of this study. In a sense, detailing the methodological procedures of this one-year project provides the reader with a façade of the research process. It is when we enter the behind the scenes of the research epistemology that we are able to problematise methodology and explore the motivations, inspirations and ways of thinking that truly shape the research process.

### **Purpose**

This project aimed to provide insight into the ways in which pre-service teachers do gender and the possible roles teachers, schools and institutions play in enabling ethical or unethical pedagogies that constitute students as particular gendered subjects. The main concern of this study was to highlight whether or not teacher training enabled opportunities for pre-service teachers to practice and implement ethical pedagogies; pedagogies that allow for more ethical gender relations between teachers and students. Thus the following aims were postulated:

1. To explore pre-service teacher's perceptions, beliefs and attitudes of gender and identity formation.
2. To explore the role of teachers, schools and institutions in implementing ethical and unethical pedagogies.
3. To consider whether or not pre-service teacher education adequately prepares teachers to implement ethical pedagogies that let the other live.

### **Data Collation Processes**

Two focus groups were created to explore the above aims; the first involved discussing gendered terminology and concepts whereas the second involved posing hypothetical classroom scenarios. There was one primary researcher and a research assistant and both focus groups were recorded with audio-visual devices for later analysis and transcription. The pre-service teachers participated in the hypothetical scenario focus group with the primary researcher; a younger female with a background in primary school teaching. They then participated in the second focus group discussing gendered discourses with the research

assistant; an older male researcher. It was hoped that by having both a male and female facilitator any observer paradox or hesitation to speak about gendered discourses with a member of the opposite sex would be balanced.

The focus groups were semi-structured with guiding questions that could be asked in any order to support the natural flow of conversation. The questions were purposely worded broadly or presented as topics to allow for the researcher to adapt the questions to their own colloquialisms and probe where necessary. Thus, each focus group followed its own path – exploring differing gendered discourses. The focus group sessions lasted between 1-1.5 hours with no strict time imposed. This flexibility allowed for the discovery of discourses that perhaps in a structured interview might have gone uncovered. The questions were not always gender related to allow for natural discussion and provide opportunities for participants to express their teaching philosophy and identity. Participants were encouraged to act out their responses to the scenarios if they felt comfortable but most participants remained seated; instead using tone and facial expressions to convey themselves. The focus group questions have been attached in Appendix A.

Before beginning data collection, ethics approval was obtained successfully from Macquarie University Human Research Ethics Committee on the 19th of May 2015. A copy of the ethical approval has been attached in Appendix B. Furthermore, consent was obtained from each participant prior to the commencement of the focus groups. A blank copy of the consent form has been attached in Appendix C. During the recruitment phase and again before commencing the participants were reminded that their participation was voluntary and they may at any time withdraw without penalty. The participants were each given pseudonyms to maintain confidentiality. Furthermore, the data collected via audio-video devices remained on a password protected computer with access only granted for research purposes.

The difficulty of recruiting pre-service teachers was an unanticipated obstacle. Originally this study aimed to recruit enough participants to fulfil the following group structure: an all-male, all-female and mixed sex group (with approximately four participants in each). Recruiting male pre-service teachers was difficult due to the small population size. This was an anticipated challenge as there were 2.1 female teachers for every male teacher in 2002 in Australia (ABS, 2013). Furthermore, the data collection process fell within the Semester 1 examination period whereby participants were preoccupied with their studies and nearing

holidays. Then, due to some unforeseen circumstances a number of participants could not attend with some cancelling moments before the focus groups commenced. Due to these circumstances the final three groups consisted of: two females, three females and three males in three separate focus groups. There were two primary school and five secondary school pre-service teachers mixed between the three focus groups. The participants' age ranged from 21 – 44 with the majority in their early twenties. Each pre-service teacher was in either their third or fourth year of undergraduate teaching studies at university. It should be noted that the small scale participation in this study contributed to the depth of the research in this paper.

### **Limitations**

As this project was a concentrated one-year study for the Masters of Research program there were some limitations that were unavoidable due to time constraints. Once ethics was obtained there was limited time to recruit participants which altered the focus group structure. As a result there was no mixed-gender group and although one participant was 44 years old the majority of participants were in their early twenties which limited the scope of the study. It was noted that each participant had in some way or another engaged in gendered discourses prior to the focus groups. Some participants overtly identified as members of communities such as LGBT and others had various personal experiences and interests in gendered discourses. It could be suggested that due to voluntary participation the participants were not representative of the wider pre-service teacher cohort (although this was not an aim of the study).

Furthermore, the stories shared in this study were told through the participants' own subjectivities. For future research it could be worthwhile conducting an ethnographic study shadowing these participants in teaching roles pending their graduation. Although the hypothetical scenarios did allow for some analysis concerning the role of teachers, schools and institutions a school ethnography might enable a closer observation of how ethical and unethical pedagogies are utilised in schools. It should be noted here that Early Childhood, Primary and Secondary school students are the silent subjects of this study. Their agency in resisting subjectivation in schools is beyond the scope of this study considering the focus on the role of teachers.

### **Research Epistemology**

Acts of representation and interpretation involves utilising particular epistemologies and therefore particular methodologies. So, methodology cannot be separated from epistemology (St. Pierre, 2006). The aims of this research are not quantifiable nor able to be neatly packaged into an experiment; it is a complex and messy deconstruction of fleeting events requiring particular ways of thinking. A philosophical poststructuralist feminist lens was used to deconstruct and problematise the various gendered discourses that arose in this study. This lens enabled the questioning and problematising (St. Pierre, 1997) of various meanings and perspectives that operate within teaching contexts. Poststructuralist methodologies do not seek truths (Davies, 2003). This study does not aim to make invalid claims of ownership over reliability, validity and generalisability because no research is objective and no knowledge is exclusive. Thus the empirical data gathered from the focus group discussions should not be viewed as facts nor fiction but as contextual discursive moments in alignment with postmodern thinking.

This thesis allows for the telling of stories – a qualitative process involving “the systematic collection, organisation, and interpretation of textual material” (Malterud, 2001, p. 483). Qualitative research endeavours to investigate complex phenomena in a complex environment (Erickson & Gutierrez, 2002, Chapple & Tegers, 1998) whereby the variables of qualitative research are immense (Berliner, 2002). It seeks to understand everyday knowledge through the perspectives of participants; operating within the notion that reality is socially constructed (Travers, 2001) and uncovering multiple realities rather than one objective reality (Guest, Namey & Mitchell, 2013). Aguinaldo (2004) questions whether anything is truly objective and it is precisely this questioning of truths that postmodernists engage in (St. Pierre, 2006). Obsessing over systematicity, linearity, accuracy, objectivity, sorting and categorising insults the complex reality of life (St. Pierre, 2013). Educational research should not be expected to produce “generalizable, unambiguous, and immediately applicable solutions to complex educational problems” (Freeman, de Marrais, Preissle, Roulston & St. Pierre, 2007, p. 30). Eliminating subjectivity to achieve an objective knowledge misconstrues the nature of knowledge and falsely assumes that there is one truth or one objective reality (Freeman, et al., 2007). This thesis therefore aims to listen to people in contexts and this requires an unavoidable connection between the researcher and the participants.

The interpretive paradigm which consumes this study “stresses the dynamic, constructed and evolving nature of social reality” (Devine & Heath, 1999 as cited by Travers, 2001, p. 12).

We are active agents in interpreting and producing our own knowledge and realities – rather than accepting, by transmission, facts concerning the world around us (Piaget, 1972). Berliner (2002) provides several examples of previous research nullified due to a change in social, cultural and intellectual environments, such as the genetic findings which supported Nazism; research now seen as worthless in both biology and anthropology. Thus knowledge is not static with only one objective reality as we understand the world through our construct of multiple realities. Positivism and postmodern philosophies of science clash because absolutes such as always and never used in positivism are the anathema of postmodernism.

Positivism has spread this assumption that randomised experiments are the only methodology that produces reliable evidence. Chamberlain (1999) describes this “‘methodolatry’ – [as] a privileging of methods above all other research considerations” (as cited by Aguinaldo, 2004, p. 133). This kind of methodological straightjacket (Aguinaldo, 2004) champions rigid criteria that restricts research creativity. Berliner (2002) argues that real scientists do not confuse science with methodology and Dey and Netwich (2006) warn that homogenising is a harmful process. Scientific research is about principles – not method (Eisenhart & Towne, 2003). Ultimately, experimental methodology does not hold monopoly on relevant, reliable research.

An important process of postmodernist work is accepting that there is no such thing as a neutral observer. So, in order to validate one’s research in a field that cannot escape subjectivities many researchers have taken to disclosing their reflexivity. Reflexivity requires looking at one’s research in the mirror to ascertain contexts of knowledge; whereby preconceptions and metapositions are considered. The premise of reflexivity is that by identifying self-bias we somehow excuse our own subjectivity – arguing that subjectivity only occurs when it is ignored. Pillow (2003) questions the usefulness of this common qualitative practice: Does one disclose their reflexivity to: Confess? Establish research authority? To announce oneself? Or draw attention to subjectivity? Furthermore, reflexivity demands a knowing of the self and other and so enables unethical constitutions of the subject. Ultimately Pillow (2003) problematises reflexivity and asks whether or not this practice produces better research.

Contrary to abandoning reflexivity, Pillow (2003) instead encourages a shift from a comfortable reflexivity to the uncomfortable. This notion of an uncomfortable reflexivity



allows one to think about the relationship between the self and other; the researcher and researched. Pillow explains that an uncomfortable reflexivity utilises reciprocity. “One example is a focus upon developing reciprocity with research subjects – hearing, listening, and equalizing the research relationship – doing research “with” instead of “on.” In this way, reflexivity is also used to deconstruct the author’s authority in the research and/or writing process” (Pillow, 2003, p. 179). This notion is not dissimilar to Teague’s (2015) notion of relationality which aims to disrupt traditional power relations to produce more ethical constitutions of the subject. Both researchers in this study utilised reciprocity and relationality in hopes of disrupting the traditional power relations between the researchers and researched.

Upon viewing the recordings of the pre-service teachers their ease and comfort became apparent both in their physical demeanour and in the stories they told. The quotes utilised throughout this thesis reflects the participants’ ease as they share glimpses of their thoughts, beliefs and experiences. The purposeful sex structuring of the primary researcher and research assistant to counteract the observer paradox seemed somewhat unnecessary after purposefully disrupting power relations. By providing accounts of unethical pedagogies and injurious constitutions utilised in their own lives the researchers shifted from comfortable to uncomfortable reflexivity– allowing for more authentic and ethical exchanges between the researchers and the participants.

## **Conclusion**

The above methodology aimed to clarify the purpose of this research project, the data collation process, limitations of the study and the research epistemology. In order to achieve the aims of this project a poststructuralist feminist lens was utilised. A rationale for this epistemological framework has been discussed. The methodological procedures for this study were messy and by no means were unproblematic. There were many internal struggles faced; particularly the relation between researcher and researched. The process of research always involves varying degrees of judgement (Huberman & Miles, 2002) yet there is an impossibility of knowing the other. What somewhat settled this cognitive conflict was the utilisation of poststructuralist tools such as Pillow’s (2003) reciprocity and Teague’s (2015) relationality to allow for more ethical relations between the self and other. It is hoped that the utilisation of this poststructuralist research epistemology has captured the stories and lives of the participants.

## **Chapter One: Pre-service teachers doing gender**

In an attempt to engage with the way in which participants do gender this chapter explores: their conceptualisations, constitutions and cognitive conflicts. As the participants navigate their way through such topics as identity, transgender and feminism we catch glimpses of an uncomfortable disequilibrium. Each participant shared a willingness to engage, rationalise and understand their role as a teacher within gendered contexts despite a presence of an uncertainty in grappling with contested terms and loaded topics. What these participants have done is to confirm that pre-service teachers are struggling to connect gendered discourses with their role as a teacher. However, they optimistically remain in disequilibrium if this uncertainty creates a space for them to deconstruct gender and collectively discuss ethical pedagogy.

The following discussion follows pre-service teacher's exploration of their teacher identities. Exploring the ways in which one engages in doing gender provides the foundations necessary for thinking about the pedagogical potential of our performatives; because teachers 'doing gender' is the process of enacting performatives that constitute their students. Although disequilibrium is troubling – seeking more ethical ways for gendered identity construction is worth troubling ourselves over. The willingness of pre-service teachers to engage with troubling gendered discourses highlights the potential for the utilisation of pedagogical performatives in classrooms.

The following will provide a theoretical commentary on the experiences shared by the participants of this study. First, this chapter will explore some difficulties and discomforts the participants experienced whilst grappling with gender. This discomfort will be framed as a necessary requirement for letting the other live. Second, this chapter delves into the ways in which teachers might unknowingly engage in performatives that injuriously constitute. This chapter then explores the complexities of subjecthood by utilising Deleuze's notion of the fold to think about a particular participant's struggle in grappling with gender. Then, utilising Foucault's notion of docile bodies this chapter delves into thinking about how one becomes a

teacher. Finally, missed opportunities for challenging injurious constitutive practices are discussed which is followed by examples of pedagogical responses from participants. This chapter highlights that when the participants do gender they are struggling to assert the confident subjectivity that is necessary for implementing ethical pedagogies.

### **A discomfort**

Whilst debate is certainly present throughout cross-disciplinary literature concerning the origins of gender it seems this contestation exists outside gender theory specifically. Within educational theory there is recognition of the existence of biological differences; although in the dominant discourse these differences are framed within the broader context of social constructivism (Duchesne, McMaugh, Bochner & Krause, 2013). Certainly, 21<sup>st</sup> century gender theorists have been less concerned with biological determinism, focusing primarily on the social construction of gender and its implications (Lucas, 2015).

The notions participants hold concerning gender origins are important because their understanding of identity formation informs their agency as a teacher and by extension their practice. If teachers view gender as innate they may develop low-agency or helplessness in utilising performatives to provide ethical experiences for their students. Additionally, if teachers rely solely on socially constructed definitions of gender they may overlook innate differences and hold unrealistic expectations of girls and boys. For example a teacher may overlook muscular development during adolescence and expect similar physical strength performances from boys and girls. It is important that teachers recognise both biological and socially constructed definitions of gender but focus primarily on its implications rather than unnecessary origin debates; as the body is both physical and a site of social practice (Turner, 1996).

When asked directly, each participant described *sex* as biological compared to the more fluid social construction of *gender*. However, upon engaging in more unstructured discussions there were some hesitations expressed. Thomas grappled with the origins of gender: "...is that you need to be of a certain, you know, brain makeup to be an engineer to start off with, or is that a cultural thing?" and continued stating that "there is a basis in fact in the way that stereotypes are formed, where females are teachers, males are engineers and whether that's a societal construct or otherwise". Throughout the discussions Thomas shifted between innate suggestions and progressive social constructions highlighting the difficulty of negotiating

both meanings. Mia on the other hand spoke with certainty when expressing her understanding of gender as a social construction: “a structure of identity that is psychological, and not necessarily tied to the way that you look, although it can be expressed in the way that you look”. By describing gender construction as: “projected on them”, “inescapable” and “allocated” Mia demonstrated understanding of the ways in which subjects are constituted and the difficulties in resisting gendered subjectifications.

Many participants however, struggled to articulate their understanding of gender utilising the words “confusion” and “complexity”. Michelle aptly stated that she is expected to “unravel” these complex notions with her students whilst simultaneously grappling with them herself. The following excerpt from Katie demonstrates an uncomfortable and hesitant unpacking of gender. This does not necessarily illustrate a lack of comprehension per se but rather the difficulty of unpacking a contested and potentially injurious concept:

For a long time I... when people said, gender, I was always, like, okay, there's male and female. That's the way I usually saw it. And then later on I was, like, oh, okay, when they ask for sex, that's what they're asking, as in, like, that's female, and that's... there's male, there. Gender is more, as you said, but a bit more, like, different. Yes, like it's not really defined as, I think, a difference with the... like, the males and the females, there's more of a, like, how they feel, as well, and that's the sort of thing that I don't... but it is identity, but it doesn't have... it's not as clearly defined, in some ways.

These conversations demonstrate that pre-service teachers need opportunities to reflect upon and openly discuss their understandings of gender. If the role of institutional training is to prepare pre-service teachers for the various roles they undertake in schools then they must engage in thinking gendered discourses. Ultimately it would be preferable for pre-service teachers to feel confident rather than confused when speaking about the construction of gender. This confidence leads to agency and this agency leads to the implementation of thoughtful ethical pedagogies that challenge rather than produce injurious gendered constitutions.

## **Disequilibrium**

The difficulty of unpacking contested and potentially injurious labels was a reoccurring theme throughout the focus groups. Most participants experienced what will be referred to here as a disequilibrium. Put simply, disequilibrium is a “cognitive imbalance resulting from

inconsistency between what is known and expected, and something strange and unexpected” (Duchesne, et al., 2013, p. 73). The following exchanges demonstrate just how uncomfortable it is to remain in disequilibrium. It could be argued that disequilibrium is a necessary requirement for Butler’s notion to suspend the desire to know the other. When we suspend the desire to know the other we let them live and thus allow for ethical experience. However, in order to suspend the desire to know the other we must accept a state of unknown. Whereby we may not understand the other or seek to do so and thus remain in disequilibrium – however uncomfortable.

When discussing the processes of identity construction including transgender, Naomi expresses support but frames this support within her self-professed lack of comprehension:

I saw a YouTube clipping of a transgender boy, girl, I think they were born a girl and identifies as a man, as a boy, and this was from like six or seven years old straight away had already jumped on the bandwagon of this is what I am. And it’s just important to just say I don’t get that, I don’t feel that. I have no idea how that is happening to you at all, like I can’t even comprehend it... like as long as you’re happy.

Michelle agrees and questions how teachers can provide for the needs of students whom operate outside their notion or schema of identity:

Like I have no idea like how do you support them because I cannot... I physically cannot comprehend what they’re dealing with. I can be sympathetic and I can obviously support them, but at the core of it I can’t... I don’t know how they’re feeling because I’ve never felt it. As you’re saying, I’ve never consciously debated whether I was male or female. And that’s one of the biggest things like how to approach it, yes, and how to foster that discussion and because obviously being a teacher you’re in that kind of position to guide and all that stuff, so if I’m struggling how am I meant to help a 14 year old kid, right?

Here, Michelle and Naomi express apprehension concerning their response pedagogies to gendered situations they feel they do not understand. Whilst their disequilibrium may be helpful in the sense that they can be guided to accept a state of unknown – allowing for more ethical relations with their students... their disequilibrium is also troubling them. This state of unknown leads them to believe that they cannot cater for their students’ gendered needs. Without instruction concerning the usefulness of disequilibrium in suspending the desire to know the other these teachers might seek to reach equilibrium even if reaching equilibrium results in the implementation of unethical pedagogies.

For example, Naomi then suggests: “Like maybe trying to find someone who is gay and they’re like older and they know what’s going on...”. This strategy is based upon a role model agenda that assumes certain subjects have distinct qualities to offer (Gill, 2004). When the Australian government released the report *Boys: Getting it right* (2002) they utilised the role model agenda by essentialising notions of masculinity and arguing that “the role modelling and teaching by males whose relationship and commitment to boys is genuine is the most important factor” (p. 161). It can be expected then, that pre-service teachers are struggling when their own government promotes unethical pedagogies and dismisses gender theorists with statements such as: “[e]ven if this is true it places too much emphasis on gender theory” (p. 160).

### **Unconscious Reinforcement**

Despite expressing progressive and sophisticated understandings of gender each participant unconsciously engaged in constituting students as particular subjects. This unconsciousness illustrates just how difficult it is not only to resist constituting others but for others to resist such constitutions. One such example of unconscious reinforcement is the use of injurious labelling. When we label others we subjectivate and in so doing we inscribe the subject with a particular set of meanings attached to that label (Derrida, 1988). Labelling is just one way in which a subject can constitute another but it is effective and simplifies the fluid reality of identity (Ferne et al., 1993). These potentially injurious performatives are often momentary, fleeting and easily unnoticed (Youdell, 2004b) as they are embedded in everyday categorisations of social life. It is when injurious labels become embedded that we engage in injurious constitutions somewhat unknowingly. Discursive meaning is constantly shifting so one must be vigilant. It is not to say that one should never label but rather to always question the use of our labels and consider whether or not it can be used to injuriously constitute – to bring the unconscious into the conscious.

Although most participants stated that they engaged in behaviours that may reinscribe gender stereotypes in the classroom they also expressed that these acts were conducted on auto-pilot. This perhaps highlights the core of the problem – that pre-service teachers do not receive instruction that brings their performatives into their conscious thought. The daily stresses placed on teachers and constant division of their attention requires them to act quickly – sometimes at the expense of thoughtful pedagogical practice. Mia explains that: “...there is a lot of like *unconscious reinforcement* of the way that boys should behave and the way that

girls should behave or are expected to behave... and that is really tricky to address because you don't realise you're doing it a lot of the time". Katie agrees and explains that teachers often engage in practices that define who students are "without really realising".

Our performatives, conscious or unconscious – are powerful. In a brief moment one can subjectivate another and in that moment they restrict the subject; limiting their resistance within the space of their own subjection. One participant, Alex, used the labels "good ones" and "bad ones" when describing her students. She then described her female Year 2 students as attention seeking: "they will make up a problem just to talk to you and get some sympathy... whereas guys not so much". Another participant, Michelle, framed her students within the 'boys will be boys' discourse: "[b]ut obviously because, you know, boys have no volume control..." thus justifying an undesirable classroom behaviour in boys as an accepted societal norm. Although Alex and Michelle did not consciously use performatives to subjectivate their students... their unconscious constitutive practices are still injurious.

When one draws attention to the use of unconscious performatives the effects can be devastating. Michelle paints a harrowing picture of an event that occurred on her teaching practicum as a pre-service teacher. When Michelle addressed her class as 'guys': a common colloquial term used to address a group of mixed gendered people... her supervising teacher asked her not to use the term and opt instead for gender neutral language. In this moment her supervising teacher enforced fairness and at first glance this fairness might appear as an act of social justice. Yet this kind of fairness policing has limitations (Gill & Starr, 2001) in an unfair society that requires equity in order to achieve equality. Without critically thinking before applying the fairness blanket solution the effects can be devastating:

Sometimes it feels like I just don't want to touch it because I feel like whatever I do is going to be wrong. Like I don't want to label them, but I don't want to not support them, but I don't want to offend them, but I don't want to like marginalise them and say like, you're on your own. So, it's such a difficult thing. Just, yeah, it's that fear of like saying something wrong or like when she... when my uni supervisor pulled me up on using the term 'guys', I was like horrified. I was like if I've been like making the girls in my class feel like they're... you know, and you're like, oh my god. And then I know it's such a, you know, subconscious thing that I was doing and it was like. So it's just that sort of fear of ruining a child.

Later, Michelle used the term 'guys' colloquially in the focus group conversation and quickly realised; she laughed and then corrected her language. Her use of 'guys' even after feeling "horrified" of the potential injurious effects demonstrates just how embedded and

unconscious some performatives may be. Whilst the term ‘guys’ may have referred to ‘men’ it could be argued that the discursive meaning of this term has evolved beyond this narrow definition. The term could be placed under *sous rature* – perhaps it is in the absence of a colloquial yet friendly mixed gender address that we opt for ‘guys’. Nevertheless, the above quote is heartbreaking – it demonstrates that pre-service teachers are aware of the power of performatives and the potentially devastating effects but perhaps unaware of how to utilise performatives in ethical ways. Furthermore we see here the pain Michelle experienced when her attention was drawn to this seemingly harmless unconscious act. Her pain is the result of a reaction to gendered inequalities in schools that is based on fairness policing rather than on thoughtful consideration of labels.

If the aim then is to encourage teachers to utilise performatives in ethical ways one challenge is to bring the unconscious into the conscious. This involves questioning one’s habitus to alter socialised normalities that dictate behaviours. Pre-service teachers need opportunities to engage in conversations about gendered discourses. Whereby teachable moments may arise concerning the use of performatives in schools. If we aim to educate teachers on the pedagogical potential of their own performatives we must engage in discourses with them because it is teachers whom make change happen (Connell, 1996).

### **The Fold**

Misconceptions and negative connotations surrounding feminism amongst the general public and media are widespread. Consequently, recommendations have been made for feminist scholars to expand their work across multiple spaces such as Facebook and Twitter (McLean & Maalsen, 2013). Certainly it seems that contemporary citations of feminism outside gender theory are plagued by associations with man-hating – an observation noted by Emma Watson in her UN ‘He For She’ speech. Despite attempts to dismantle such misconceptions the term feminism has been tainted; a theme present throughout the focus group conversations.

Most participants associated feminism with equal rights; some participants specifically mentioned equal rights for women exclusively. There were no acknowledgements of feminist movements for men such as advocacy against male genital mutilation. Across all focus groups there was a general consensus that the term feminism carried negative connotations. Christopher noted that feminism “comes with a lot of baggage” and Mia provided a sophisticated explanation of why:



In order to try and make a push for equal rights, you have to recognise that there are systems of power in place that people don't really want to recognise, and so when you're addressing, like, institutional privilege, it's, like, people get really defensive and scared that feminists are angry, and that they're trying to change things in a way that's going to be negative for some people, because it means taking away some of their privilege.

There were varying levels of confidence between the participants, concerning the purposes and meanings of feminism. The most uncertainty however arose in the all-male focus group. A notion raised by Thomas perhaps was the most concerning of all – that feminism was a club where women are the gatekeepers.

I've known a few interpretations of that for that argument of can men be feminists. I can't remember, there was a comedian that made fun of it. They believed that a man being called feminist is almost like a title being bestowed upon them, it's not something that they can identify themselves.

Thomas continues by questioning the requirements of *membership*:

...What does it mean to be feminist? Do I believe in, you know, equal rights for women? Yes. Is there, you know, is... You can throw in a couple of other questions. Do I objectify women? Yes. What does that make me? I'm just being real, this is what it is. You know, does that mean I'm no longer in the club? Is that, what is this...? And I don't think I can answer that. Only someone who is within that...

Here we may employ Deleuze's concept of The Fold to think about how Thomas grapples with essentialised views of feminism and his own subjectivity. The idea of The Fold can be used to think about the becoming of a subject; whereby the process of folding (much like the folds in a heaped curtain) is the abstract representation of becoming. This representation allows Deleuze to portray subjecthood as temporary and in constant state of flux – folding and unfolding (Berman, 2012). Colebrook (2002) suggests that Deleuze refers to the inside folds as subjective representations of reality whereas the outside folds refer to the actual external world. The outside folds thus refer to our finite bodies which are co-dependent on infinite subjectivities.

In the above quotations from Thomas we see that his subjecthood is folding and unfolding as he attempts to reconcile multiple representations of himself as a straight, male, Sri Lankan feminist. The research assistant whom conducted this focus group offered some suggestions:

You probably have impressions that have been made, been with you from early contact. Your earliest connection with women, like your mother or your aunties or

your grandmother or something, and you know, you're not going to toss out all those views and rebuild them a life. Some stuff I don't think we can, I don't think it's possible to think right back to the womb and then try to rebuild it out to the present day, it's just... Well, that would be the rest of my life. Even though I know that there's a number of bits that I have worked really hard on, challenging myself. And maybe that's a part of it, too, you know your willingness to actually reconsider where you stand.

It is here that the research assistant engages in relationality in an attempt to reconcile Thomas' inside (subjective) folds with his outside (object) folds. The researcher also prioritises agency by suggesting that one can question and problematise instances in their lives that have reinforced gender binaries. If male pre-service teachers perceive feminism as a (female) club – we risk new generations of boys distancing themselves from a movement that benefits gender equality. In thinking about subjecthood as infinite folds we recognise identity as fluid. This recognition provides the subject with agency (a requirement for change). Finally, in representing the subject through *The Fold* we provide a platform for performatives – a tool that can be utilised to fold and unfold ourselves.

### **Docile bodies – from spectacle to surveillance**

When Foucault (1977) detailed an instance of capital punishment in the 1700s he demonstrated how bodies are subjected to systems of power. He utilised the body of a soldier to explain how subjects are subjected to discipline that teaches their body to be docile. This is not to say that docile bodies are powerless as soldiers are given power through their subjection. Furthermore, power is not necessarily negative and certainly Foucault never alluded to this – for in power is the possibility for change. What Foucault did allude to however was that the body is an anchoring point for the manifestation of power. In thinking about how the participants of this study do gender we must consider how the bodies of teachers are rendered docile by systems of power. “One has got rid of the peasant and given him the air of a soldier” (Foucault, 1977, p. 135). What does one's body look like when it is given the *air* of a teacher?

The systems of power that used discipline to create docile bodies in the 1700s were public and overt spectacles. Today, the systems used are much more subtle, hidden and socially embedded. This shifting of subjection from public spectacles to private surveillance makes unethical policing of bodies more difficult to challenge. Compounding this difficulty is the

notion that the self acts as its own judge, jury and executioner when it operates outside normality (Foucault, 1977).

In the following excerpt Thomas disciplines himself to become a normative male subject and relatable teacher. He engages in a kind of self-policing that involves altering his subject:

I find that in school [...] I actually then felt the compulsion to start following rugby league because the kids are following rugby league so close and whether that's an opportunistic attempt at connection, you know, that... you could definitely interpret it that way.

The willingness of Thomas to sacrifice his time to appear as a normative male (sport enthusiast) teacher reveals how socially embedded systems of power utilise the subject to uphold gendered normalities. Schools are thus sites for surveillance and discipline; producing docile bodies.

These socially embedded systems are so powerful that despite stating that she wanted to challenge “the way students expect women to look”, Mia similarly engaged in a policing of her body to *become* a ‘female teacher’. Mia does not remove her body hair and explains that although she does want to use her body as a way to challenge gender norms in the classroom – she has not “worn any clothing that would reveal this to anybody”. In this instance Mia decided to do gender the way others expect her to. Bodily restrictions are so prevalent in schools that Mia wants to wait until she is in a “comfortable position” before engaging in performative politics.

Not only do others engage in surveillance but they act... they police. Our bodies are under constant scrutiny if they operate outside perceived boundaries. Mia tells us how her Mother offered to provide finances for hair removal and actively encouraged her to remove her body hair. This policing can potentially be injurious as it restricts ways of becoming. Finally, Mia realised: “what the fuck am I doing? I’m burning the hair off my legs!” and in this moment she resisted and chose decided to do gender the way she wanted. This resistance could serve as an example for Mia’s future students to role model how to successfully resist unwanted subjectivations from others. Unfortunately, it is this policing of teacher’s bodies that acts as a barrier; blocking Mia from implementing ethical pedagogies that widen the possibilities of existence for students.

## Missed opportunities

Upon the release of the Australian curriculum subsequent documents were released to support the transition for teachers. One such publication entitled ‘Enacting Australian Curriculum. Making connections for quality learning’ strives for teachers to “[build] connectedness to students’ lives and the world through engaging and meaningful learning contexts” (Nayler, 2014, p. 4). Pedagogy is framed similarly in the NSW Quality Teaching Framework (2003) whereby one of three dimensions of pedagogy is significance. Significance highlights pedagogy that is meaningful, contextual and “draws clear connections with students’ prior knowledge and identities” (NSW DET, 2008, p. 10).

It is often unforeseeable when a teachable moment will arise (Possner, 2012). These moments are fleeting and if unattended to they become a missed opportunity. Throughout the focus groups there were instances of pre-service teachers turning a blind eye to injurious gendered constitutions. It is not often that curriculum allows for significance and yet pre-service teachers ignored these moments for various reasons. Thomas explains that in one of his classes a student called another student “faggot”. Thomas expresses regret when recounting his reaction to this injurious labelling:

All I did at the time was, I just went, hey, what did you say? And he was like, oh nothing Sir. And, I’m like... and then, I had that moment of, okay, am I going to go into a spiel about this, or am I going to continue with the lesson? And, I think at the time, I chose to just go on with the lesson, and you know, I think about that moment, and I’m thinking, was that a missed opportunity?

Upon reflection Thomas questions his decision to ignore the injurious label. However when Michelle experienced a similar classroom incident she instead argued that silence has a performative force. “I was doing a lesson on the Feminist Movement between the wars and someone made a like, a ‘get back in the kitchen’ joke”. Michelle ignored the response and argued that:

I find in high school there’s a, sometimes almost not acknowledging it can be more effective. And sometimes I’ll say, I’m like, I’m not even going to validate that by commenting on it. Like, I’m just not. And sometimes that, they, because they realise what they’ve said is offensive, and they sort of shrink back in themselves a bit, and they’re like, oh.

Although silences can be powerful as a performative they can also reassert injurious constitutions. If students hear and see the silence of teachers these instances can be condoned.

Whilst nannying, Mia stated that when the children engaged in gendered policing (such as saying pink is for girls) she would challenge these statements because otherwise the children would “push it further”. Similar to the way in which Mia self-policed her own body in the previous section... here she is also aware of the social consequences of her actions. Mia likes to find opportunities to challenge gendered ways of being with the children she nannies but she explains the limitations:

When it's not your children it's really tricky because if their parent thinks that you're doing something inappropriate by talking to them about homosexuality then that can be problematic, but I think that it's really important that they understand what that is from a young age because representation is really important and if, you know, you're young and you feel like you're gay and you don't understand what that is and all you understand is that it's not right and it's not normal then that can be really damaging. So I like taking opportunities to, sort of, be, like...

Mia engages in an active and conscious constitution of subjects as a kind of social justice warrior. It is important to remember here that whilst teachers may seize teachable moments in the classroom and engage in performatives that may constitute this should always be done in the most ethical way possible; in ways that let the other live. For the aim is not to counteract injurious performatives with injurious performatives but to engage in performatives that allow the other to exist. This is easier said than done as teachers cannot be provided with a procedural checklist to implement ethical pedagogies; as each teachable moment is contextual. However, in providing training for pre-service teachers concerning performatives and subjectivation with examples of ethical pedagogies we can hope to ease its implementation. Ultimately pre-service teacher education should enable teachers to engage in thoughtful, intentional performatives that produce ethical experiences rather than unconscious, unintentional unethical pedagogies.

### **What do you mean by that?**

In order to challenge the inscription of educational inequality in schools teachers must engage in counteractive subjectivations. Problematically, it is a fine line between using performatives to challenge injurious constitutions and engaging in ethical violence. Unethical pedagogies involve assuming to know the other and engaging in injurious constitutions. Teague (2015) outlines perhaps the most important element required to provide ethical experience; relationality. Relationality essentially is the act of being relatable and requires teachers to remain vulnerable to disrupt the traditional teacher-student power role. It requires offering

oneself up in a sense. Relationality is easier said than done and all too often we unconsciously revert to auto-pilot whereby we challenge a student rather than listen (Youdell, 2011b). It was not until reading Teague's (2015) explanation of the limits of knowability that it became apparent as to how easily teachers (myself included) can engage in unethical and injurious constitutions that deny the freedom of existence to others. Resisting the desire to know the other to allow for more ethical constitutions is difficult and requires constant pedagogical awareness. It is often in the plight for social justice that we unconsciously engage in ethical violence. In the following examples we see how the simple question 'what do you mean by that?' assumes knowability of the other and promotes unethical pedagogy.

The first example provided by the research assistant in one of the focus groups demonstrates how damaging assuming to know the other can be. He describes a colleague who was approached in the street by a man speaking Mandarin saying "You're Chinese!". When the women explained how she was offended by this to her friends they were perplexed; telling her to "get over it" because she was in fact, Chinese. The woman was offended because she was interpellated (subjectivated) through a public hailing (labelling). In that moment the man on the street assumed to know her. He momentarily interrupted her freedom of existence.

When posed with hypothetical scenarios including gendered bullying and labelling by students the most common response was for pre-service teachers to say:

Michelle: What does that mean?

Naomi: What do you mean by that? Just get them to question their own thinking.

Matthew: I'd confront and say, what do you mean by that?

Mia: Ask questions instead of telling them first off what's right or wrong.

This question places pressure on the subject to aptly and quickly explain themselves with an *acceptable* answer that aligns with the questioners' ways of being. Although another participant, Katie argues that it is better to ask why than to confront the child it could be argued that asking why – is confronting. In this moment the teacher-student relationship is maintained. The teacher is the all-powerful all-knowing subject whom provides social justice by challenging the *known* student and momentarily removes their agency. In this moment there is no relationality to cut through the power and produce a genuine teachable moment. It should be noted that this is not an argument for eliminating teacher power. The act of education requires teachers to at times maintain power if only for productivity. However, in

moments of student vulnerability, let the student live by remaining vulnerable with them... be relatable... be human.

It is not questioning itself that assumes to know the other but questions that hold presumptions. They are not genuine questions such as ‘how did that make you feel?’ but rather aggressive and rhetorical. Mia provides some examples of this line of questioning that she might employ in classroom settings:

Do you not eat watermelon because pink is a girl’s colour? Do you like strawberry ice cream? Look at your fingernails. Are you a girl because you’ve got pink on your body? What about your lips? You’ve got pink lips. Are you a girl?

Mia has not disrupted the teacher-student relationship by offering up her own vulnerability. Whilst her intentions were merely to challenge gendered stereotypes, in this moment she has engaged (unknowingly) in unethical pedagogy. This was a reoccurring theme throughout the focus groups. Another participant, Alex, stated that it is a good idea to “get them early as in primary school and challenge them”. It seems pre-service teachers are aware of their potential to use performatives in classrooms but unaware of how to engage with ethical, rather than unethical pedagogies. So, it is in the absence of relationality that this line of questioning fails its purpose and it is in the absence of pre-service teacher training that these participants engage in unethical pedagogies.

## **Conclusion**

The pre-service teachers in this study have allowed us to engage with their thinking about gender. These discussions have provided a platform for the participants to think about their identities and pedagogy and imagine what they might become in the classroom. It is evident that these pre-service teachers are willing to reconsider pedagogies in order to challenge gendered educational inequalities. They are aware of the power of performatives. This willingness and awareness demonstrates the potential in performatives that can be used to provide more ethical experiences for children.

These pre-service teachers seemed to struggle to assert a confident teacher subjectivity and in doing so they lost the agency required to challenge unethical pedagogies and confidently implement ethical ones. Importantly, it was often through disequilibrium and unconscious reinforcement that they engaged in unethical pedagogies to begin with. The participants demonstrated an immense pressure to conform to gendered expectations in becoming a

teacher and at times refrained from doing their gender freely. Most importantly the pre-service teacher participants were volunteers. They were the only participants that responded out of hundreds of students in an arduous recruiting process. These participants self-identified as interested in gendered inequalities in schools and we discovered that they have questions and they have struggles. We must then think what kinds of questions and struggles we would uncover if all pre-service teachers engaged in conversations about gender and schooling.



## **Chapter Two: Gender constitution in schools**

When students enter school they are immediately subjectivated; differentiated based on their perceived abilities. Youdell (2004a) argues that the processes of constitution are embedded in schools, spanning across three levels; bureaucratic, institutional and classrooms. Here, Youdell reminds us that subjectivation has no limits (as she delves into the deeper, embedded subjectivations in education). Although this study focuses on constitutions enacted in the classroom by teachers... the following discussions highlight that constitutive practices are embedded – stemming from wider bureaucratic and institutional subjectivations. In this chapter we consider how schools might do gender by constituting their students in gendered ways as we catch glimpses of the everyday struggles of negotiating through ethical and unethical pedagogies.

This chapter will first contextualise gender constitution by situating teacher subjectivations of students within the broader role of schools as sites for production. Then, examples of pre-service teachers negotiating between ethical and unethical pedagogies will be explored. It is hoped that this chapter will illustrate the complex roles and widening expectations placed upon teachers. Furthermore, how this responsibility places pressure on teachers to provide ethical experiences that are not reflective of wider societal gender inequalities. This chapter demonstrates that some schools, problematically, are struggling to implement ethical pedagogies.

### **Schools as fields for production**

Whilst exploring identity, the participants delved into thinking about the role of teachers and more broadly the role of schools. Matthew described school as a ‘tool’ “used by society to prepare new members to become of benefit”. This perception of schooling certainly aligns with Bourdieu’s (1983) field theory; whereby the subject enters the field (school) with their own habitus (schema) and acts within the limits of doxa (rules for the field). Like any other field, schools are spaces for production. It is impossible for subjects to be nothing; free from all constraints and constitutions. Considering the school as a space for production requires one to consider the role of a teacher. Certainly the role of a teacher has been widely debated and the extent of their expected responsibility has grown. The question is perhaps where this responsibility begins and ends – how do we let the other live inside a field of production?

Using Bronfenbrenner's (2009) ecological systems theory we can begin to think about how a subject operates across multiple fields such as within friendships or a community which problematises the role of a teacher. Thomas and Matthew share their thinking about the holistic child and how their responsibility as a teacher extends beyond the subject's ability to operate in school. Christopher explains his thinking: "I think that schools have, actually, a great opportunity to offer students that well-rounded education... I think there's a great responsibility on teachers to have that influence on students". This allows teachers to think about the subject within a wider context and outside schooling alone. Furthermore, it allows teachers to see how they, and the school are active agents in constituting their students and how this impacts wider society; highlighting the holistic interconnectedness of identity displayed in Bronfenbrenner's model.

Schools as fields for production raises some important questions. Above, the participants expressed that schools had a duty to socialise students. Perhaps the question is... for students to successfully engage in and contribute to society must they acquire a set of schema that is reflective of current habitus? Is the duty of schools to socialise their students so they "fit in"? Or is it to provide ethical experiences that let them live? There is perhaps a required balance between responsibilities: to socialise the other whilst letting the other live. This is tricky... and it is here that teachers often move between ethical and unethical pedagogies as they negotiate their various roles and responsibilities.

### **Ethical pedagogies**

When Teague (2015) wrote an account of 'The half past 10 sandwich' we were provided with a detailed example of a constitutive ethical pedagogy that allowed the other to live. Dillon (6) had been diagnosed as diabetic and was required to eat at regular times to maintain blood sugar levels. Half past 10 was the time designated for Dillon to have his sandwich. In this moment however, Dillon refused to eat his sandwich. Rather than engaging in relationality to solve the problem of the sandwich refusal (a potential medical emergency) the teachers and teacher's aides constituted Dillon as a naughty child. They decided in that moment that they knew Dillon and responded by telling him to just eat the sandwich. It was not until Dillon physically resisted (running and sobbing through the playground) that Teague (2015) engaged in performative relationality that gave Dillon the space to exist (p. 404-405):

Teague: [Gently, looking at Dillon who is still sobbing] My goodness, that was fast running. You must be feeling very upset to run so fast out of the classroom like that. [Dillon continues to cry.] You are upset ... [Teague rubs his back, gradually he calms down] ... Will you come inside with me?

When they are back in the classroom they sit down at the table together.

Teague: Are you feeling angry?

Dillon: I was in RM maths and I was confused because I was trying to log out and I couldn't remember the letters and the numbers, and Mrs Warner shouted at me and I was just confused because I couldn't know how to spell scuba. [Begins to cry again]

Teague: That does sound confusing. [Teague has no idea what he is talking about as there is no need to spell anything when logging out of the RM maths programme.]

Dillon: I didn't know what to do ...

Teague: I think I wouldn't have known what to do either.

Dillon: I hate everybody when they get cross.

Teague: I remember I sometimes used to feel like that too, when I was six. [Dillon looks up at Teague, as if reassessing her. She nods.] I used to get so cross I would to kick the walls in my bedroom sometimes.

Dillon: I kick and I punch.

They sit for a moment in silence.

Teague: Do you think you might eat your sandwich now? [Dillon nods his head.]

In sifting through pre-service teachers' experiences on practicum placements there were instances of schools engaging in ethical pedagogies although perhaps not as detailed as Teague's account considering they were retellings in focus groups rather than field notes from ethnographies. Whilst on exchange in England, Christopher described his memories of a "progressive" school where the boys grew their hair long and the students wore clothes of their own choosing. Christopher stated that because schools can "cement" gender identity that he would like to work in a similar school whereby student agency and freedom take priority. Similarly, Matthew spoke of a practicum experience where the school was "very supportive" of a student currently undergoing a gender transition:

They had a whole staff meeting, and they'd been doing development programmes with teachers... they were teaching the teachers about three levels of what to do if a student was calling names to the transgender student... I think that makes a real difference, because it is very hard to deal with something in real time...

Matthew mentions the notion of auto-pilot; acknowledging the difficulty of responding instantly without prior thought to experiences that may be unexpected or new. The majority of participants stressed the importance of preparation; talking, listening and thinking about gendered situations prior to their occurrence. This particular school used in-service

professional development to encourage ethical pedagogies. However, in-service professional development is not universal across public and private schools. Every state and territory in Australia has different professional development hourly requirements ranging from 20-100 hours per year depending on your teaching status. Furthermore, there are various activities that qualify as professional development. Although this sporadic professional development does not ensure all teachers are given opportunities to think about the integration of ethical pedagogies we see in these examples that despite various obstacles schools continue to think about how they might provide for the needs of their students.

### **Unethical pedagogies**

The following pedagogies were part of everyday occurrences that have a wider context perhaps unknown to us due to the nature of focus group data collection. It should be noted that the teachers engaging in these pedagogies were operating within a space for production (schools) that at times requires them to constitute their students in unethical ways. These unethical pedagogies may therefore be the result of embedded schooling practices rather than a reflection of the teachers themselves. The following instances ranged from covert to more overt gendered constitutions. Some were intentional and others were not. Often these gendered constitutions were unconscious and embedded either within the teacher's subjecthood or within the *modus operandi* of the school.

At one school, Katie noted that despite employing two assistant principals, one male and one female, students were only sent to the male assistant principal for discipline. It could be suggested here that the male AP is constituted as tough and powerful in this disciplinary role. This discursive thread could then produce an opposing binary imposed on the female AP as weak and powerless. This arrangement may have been an agreement between the two assistant principals or perhaps this arrangement was not intentional or agreed upon. Again, there is a lack of context provided here due to the nature of focus group data collection. Whilst this gendered constitution may be covert and perhaps unintentional it nevertheless has a performative force. Diken (2011) explains that resisting subjection involves physically staging this emancipation. It is not enough therefore to say one is not weak and powerless – it must be performed physically. So in order to resist this subjection the female AP could perhaps co-discipline students with the male AP.

In comparison, Michelle spoke of an overt, intentional gendered constitution:

My year ten class was predominantly male and he [supervising teacher] was like, look, it's all boy, in fact pretty much all boys so we can't do group work because it will just get out of hand and we won't be able to control it...

Here, boys are subjected as naughty, unruly characters which reinforces the 'boys will be boys' discourse. Without the opportunity to participate in group work, any future participation in group work will be new and exciting... potentially resulting in the boys engaging in the naughty and unruly behaviours predicted by Michelle's supervising teacher. So by denying the boys the opportunity to learn how to participate effectively in groups the teacher has produced a self-fulfilling prophecy; a golem effect (Rosenthal & Jacobson, 1968).

Interestingly, Michelle asked the class to engage in group work despite specifically being told not to. Michelle expressed concern about the boys' social development and prioritised these concerns over potential lost rapport with her supervisor or even a lower grade for her practicum placement. Practicum students can certainly be an asset to a school considering they have recently trained in the latest research and pedagogies. Perhaps it is through these moments of resistance that pre-service teachers can implement ethical pedagogies that challenge other teacher's constitutions. Even if her supervising teacher did not agree, Michelle viewed her attempt to engage in ethical pedagogy as worthwhile:

When I would do group work he would be like, how do you think it went? And I would be like, oh I think it was good. And he'd be like, okay. And I was like, what do you think? And he'll be like, I think it needs to be a bit more structured. And I feel like structured was his code word for not so group work. ... like you can see him at the back and I got that disapproving look... But I feel like... I would like to think that ultimately they [students] appreciated it, you know, and got something from it.

Although Michelle engaged in resistance, not all participants were willing to do so. As Mia stated in the previous chapter, she wanted to wait for a "comfortable position" (Full time employment) before appearing as a kind of social justice warrior. Similarly, Thomas expressed discomfort in retelling his students' complaints about their regular teacher; that their teacher monotonously handed out worksheets so he could mark work at the back of the class or sleep. Although Mia and Thomas disagreed with pedagogies observed on their teaching placements they remained in an uncomfortable silence; a silence that represented the struggle between the desires for social justice and securing employment.

Silence can be injurious and it seems that both teachers and pre-service teachers engage in silences that reinforce injurious gendered constitutions. When Mia asked about a transgender student at her school she was met with silence: “the teachers either [knew] less about gender than I do or they [wouldn’t] talk to me about it”. Similarly, when discussing injurious labels such as “fag” or “gay” Matthew stated that he had been in classrooms “where students have made [similar] comments...and teachers just let it slide over”. Simply ignoring labels does not disrupt its performative force – it strengthens it. In the same sense, silencing conversations concerning a transgender student re-inscribes transgender as a taboo subject. Teachers need opportunities to openly discuss gendered topics that allow them to think about how they can produce more ethical self and other relations.

One strategy that allows for more ethical self and other relations involves actively challenging and removing labels (Youdell, 2012). Naomi observed that boys were often labelled as ‘ADHD’ more often than girls on her teaching placements. She argued that teachers differentiated their responses according to gender: “when it’s like a male and female they kind of put different excuses for different behaviours. They go, oh that boy can’t sit still, maybe it’s ADHD”. This label carries with it a discursive thread of subsequent injurious meanings. Furthermore it justifies instead of challenges disruptive classroom behaviours. Unfortunately, labelling students under various disability categories is an embedded institutional pedagogy attached to school funding and classroom resources. Nevertheless this continual citation ensures these labels are recognisable and thus establishes their performative force.

Challenging unethical pedagogies involves more than words; as physical spaces are used to subjectivate. The school space itself can be used as an affective geography (Ingrey, 2012; Youdell & Armstrong, 2011) that constitutes students as gendered subjects. Physical spaces can be used to segregate and reinforce gender binaries. For example, after inquiring why the ‘home’ rooms (where students had roll call) were sex segregated in a co-educational school, Michelle was told it was so that the girls could be delivered “alcohol and rape” talks that the males did not receive. When Michelle attempted to challenge this phenomenon that reinforces victim blaming mentalities her (male) supervisor justified the segregation further due to “administration purposes”. Michelle and Naomi added that they too, had to attend a ‘rape talk’ designed for women where an “ex-cop [came] and [spoke] to [them] about how to avoid getting raped”. The way in which spaces are used to create gender segregations in schools is an example of the embedded nature of gendered constitutions. As we have discovered thus far

there are various difficulties in challenging embedded unethical pedagogies. Especially when these pedagogies have become routine – repeated through decades without question.

As a result of pre-service teachers and qualified teachers engaging in the above examples of unethical pedagogies... their students endure subjectivations that tell them how to do their gender. These subjectivations reinforce strict gender binaries, stereotypes and segregation that socialises boys and girls in preparation for society. In moments where children and adolescents are developing both physically and mentally, during the process of their becoming, they are constituted... restricting the possibilities of their existence. Pre-service teachers are receiving conflicting, inconsistent and frankly confusing information from their institutional training, supervising teachers on practicum placements and Australian governmental policies. It is not surprising then that these focus groups were dominated by examples of unethical pedagogies that restrict ways of being.

## **Conclusion**

Despite recommendations for the utilisation of poststructuralist tools (such as performative politics) to provide ethical experiences (Youdell, 2006a) schools continue to use similar pedagogies used over ten years ago; pedagogies that enable the constitution of students as particular gendered subjects. When the participants provided examples of pedagogies they might use to counteract gendered subjectivations they often reverted to pedagogies that Davies (2003) argued was not enough to disrupt school inequalities. Examples such as using feminist pop-culture references or wearing a pink shirt to school as a male.

In thinking about how schools constitute students as gendered subjects the participants' revealed inconsistent pedagogies that are not representative of theoretical recommendations made in feminist-educational literature over the past fifteen years. Revealing therefore that some schools are struggling to implement effective ethical pedagogies. Teachers are perfectly capable of intentional and ethical pedagogies (Leask, 2012). It is not the inability of teachers but rather the various embedded everyday constitutions of students as particular subjects that counteracts the implementation of ethical pedagogies. Youdell (2006b) reminds us that the utilisation of these tools cannot be simplified for teachers into a pedagogical checklist. Rather, it requires localised contextual awareness raising; a strategy that is difficult and time consuming to implement.

## **Chapter Three: Pre-service teacher training**

Upon posing hypothetical classroom scenarios to the pre-service teachers there were a variety of concerns raised in regards to their perceived ability to cater to the gendered needs of their students. The following chapter aims to engage with these concerns in the hopes of initiating recommendations that support pre-service teachers in their desire to implement ethical pedagogies. The general consensus throughout the focus groups was a feeling of inadequate preparation. Pre-service teachers were eager to discuss gender collectively amongst their cohort with the support of an experienced tutor. Evidently there is an opportunity to explore how the utilisation of performative politics might aid the implementation of ethical pedagogies in schools. For when pre-service teachers are educated in the pedagogical potential of their performatives they are given the agency necessary for implementing ethical performatives.

This chapter will first highlight how pre-service teachers seem to display learned helplessness as a result of their training and schooling practicum placements. This section will explore how these pre-service teachers have been constituted as a helpless teacher and perhaps accepted rather than resisted this constitution – deflecting responsibility and decreasing agency. Next, this chapter will delve into how pre-service teachers felt about their pre-service teacher training and whether or not they felt adequately prepared for challenging gendered inequalities and implementing ethical pedagogies. It is hoped that this chapter will paint a picture of pre-service teacher training and the potential for introducing education on the power of their performatives.

### **Learned helplessness**

The explanations that an individual attributes to their successes and failures determines their subsequent motivation for future events (Weiner, 1974). These causes operate within a locus of control whereby the individual may attribute an event to an internal (ability, effort) or external (luck, task difficulty, other people) factor. Importantly, these factors may be controllable or uncontrollable, stable or unstable. Thus if an individual were to attribute failures for example to stable factors (such as ability) which is uncontrollable, they may gradually develop a state of learned helplessness. In a sense the development of learned helplessness is essentially the result of accepting ‘helplessness’ subjectivations rather than resisting them. The state of learned helplessness is a feeling of inefficacy whereby “nothing I



do matters” (Weiner, 1974, p. 100). Learned helplessness therefore reduces individual agency, responsibility and motivation for future events.

When asked about the influences on identity, each focus group highlighted the role of parents, media, extended family and friends. Once the participants had thoroughly discussed what they perceived to be the primary influences on the formation of identity they were then asked if teachers had any influence. It was only then that each participant acknowledged that teachers have some influence on shaping identities. The participants each framed their influence as a teacher within a larger context of ultimate non-influence; highlighting a lack of agency and the potential for the development of learned helplessness.

In various conversations concerning gendered social justice the participants engaged in a defeatist response to initiating change; justifying their low agency with embedded institutional obstacles. For example, Thomas stresses that in High School “you only see them maybe an hour a day...you know, how much influence do you really have, I guess?”. Alex adds further that there are limitations as a casual teacher due to the inconsistency of working days: “what exactly are you going to do in one day?”. Furthermore, Katie questions “am I going to make that much of a difference?” due to external factors (parents) that diminish her influence as a teacher. Here the pre-service teachers’ attribute failures (inability to challenge educational inequalities) to external, stable and uncontrollable factors. Their pattern of attributions explains their lack of agency and could potentially result in learned helplessness which would inhibit the ability to challenge unethical pedagogies in schools.

It could be suggested that the current institutional climate prioritises economic and accountability imperatives (Hargreaves, 2005) which foster feelings of fear and inadequacy thus diminishing teacher agency. Much like the United Kingdom and United States of America... Australia has engaged in neoliberal decentralisation combined with centralised control via standardisation, accountability and surveillance. Teachers and schools are under immense pressure whereby their students undergo high stakes testing that is then quantified and published online in the form of league tables. These league tables are designed to promote parental choice based upon narrow MySchool data. Problematically, neoliberal decentralisation creates a façade of freedom by enhancing parental choice, but by encouraging a market based education the inevitable occurs; the rich go flock to the schools with the most

resources and the poor are left with the rest. So, in the aim to achieve a free market we are limiting children's choices creating a paradox of freedom (Teese, 2013).

If teachers attribute failures to external, stable and uncontrollable factors they free themselves from this accountability; enacting a kind of self-protection mechanism. So, in order to enhance teachers' agency perhaps we must consider the role of embedded institutional paradigms. Finland for example, decentralised educational institutions in the 1990s (NCEE, 2014); empowering teachers to utilise their expertise in decision making processes. It is therefore necessary to consider how accountability, surveillance and high stakes testing impact teachers' agency and thus their ability to actively challenge educational inequalities. Institutional responses to gender inequality have ignored recommendations made in feminist literature and instead argued that more male teachers and politically correct language improves gender equality. This phenomenon was observed during Michelle's practicum when she was asked to refrain from using the term 'guys'. These responses shift the focus away from ethical pedagogies and instead blame the inadequacy of teachers as the reason for classroom gender inequality. Instead of feeling empowered Michelle concluded: "whatever I do is going to be wrong". It seems then that after three to four years of training pre-service teachers lack the agency required to challenge unethical pedagogies and steer dangerously close to developing learned helplessness.

### **Under-preparation and trepidation**

To some extent one could argue that feeling underprepared is a normal part of transitioning from pre-service teacher to teacher. There are skills that cannot be taught directly but rather must be learnt through practice-based experiences. Although the participants acknowledged the limitations of teacher training, they proposed that changes could be made to ease their feelings of trepidation. Currently, the university in this study offers one third-year elective unit: 'Gender and Education'. However the aim of this unit is to explore the impacts of gender issues on schools rather than how teachers might combat these issues. There is no mandatory gender education in both primary and secondary undergraduate courses. Although, gender does inevitably arise in various units there is no specific training or education provided universally. When asked if the participants felt that their four years of university education prepared them in regards to gender there was a resounding "No" from all participants. Furthermore, each participant expressed concerns about some self-professed gaps in their knowledge concerning gender. The following excerpts demonstrate that pre-service teachers

are eager to discuss gender and require opportunities to think about pedagogies that can be used to produce more ethical self and other relations.

After posing a hypothetical scenario whereby a female student who plays football with the boys at lunch-time is labelled a “slut” by a group of girls, all three male participants displayed hesitation and were unsure how to effectively respond. Thomas questioned:

How do you change hearts and minds on a topic like that one? The other thing is I have no frame of reference... I mean, is it that they just assume that, because they are athletic, or if it's a physically brutal sport, for example, does that... automatically they're like, oh, they're lesbians or whatever. Is that the switch that they're making? Is that the immediate trigger, or is it that they... they want to play just as well as them, but they're jealous? I don't know, I'm just, I've no idea, I've no frame of reference, so that's what I, yes, that's a problem, that one. That's a good one actually, yes.

Thomas assumes that in order to effectively respond he needs to understand or know the other. He runs through various possible reasons as to why girls would label another girl a “slut”. Similarly, whilst discussing transgender students Naomi states that “you can't pretend that you know how to deal with it” which she viewed as problematic – expressing that to know is to understand and understanding is somehow a precursor to helping. Although these participants were struggling with the desire to categorise and understand this struggle perhaps demonstrates the necessity of educating pre-service teachers about suspending the desire to know the other to enable more ethical pedagogies. Both Thomas and Naomi are attempting to reach an ethical pedagogy that they feel comfortable with but decide that in order to do this they must *know* the other. It is here that pre-service teacher education could provide instruction on the difference between relationality *with* the other and knowability *of* the other. This pre-service teacher training could ease the implementation of ethical pedagogies that, considering the above responses from Thomas and Naomi, would help both teachers and students.

A lack of meaningful gendered instruction provided during pre-service teacher training is concerning – but more concerning is a total absence. Thomas stated that he “can't recall anyone ever mentioning gender as a factor in education” and Matthew agreed. Mia said that she had “independently thought about these things [gender] a lot... but nobody's said anything about it”. It is important to acknowledge that pre-service teachers have questions about gender and how to implement effective pedagogies – questions that are going

unanswered in the current undergraduate training program. Thomas reflects on the implications of this gap in undergraduate training:

The gender stuff, yes, definitely, not a lot of focus, and I've got more, a lot of questions on that, like in terms of, and that may just be coming down to, you know, posing scenarios and getting people's feedback or their experience, and how they've dealt with it, and then assessing whether that's the appropriate thing to do. It would be scenario specific, but even just getting ideas on that, and just getting more discussion on that, even if it's not preaching hard theory, even just talking about scenarios like transgender situations. Nobody has mentioned or uttered those words in the entire time I've been here [university]. And whereas that is you know, that could be a potential, you may get a child who is transgender, what do you do?

Towards the end of the focus group discussions the participants made some suggestions to improve their ability to provide ethical pedagogies and challenge injurious gendered constitutions. Some suggestions included making a gender unit compulsory or having a compulsory module on gender in another unit (Mia). Additionally, Alex suggested emphasising gender concerns within the Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership standards. The main cause for concern however was the lack of support provided in implementing theory. Naomi argued that during pre-service teacher education "...you don't really learn how to *implement* it. You just learn *about* it [emphasis added]". In one focus group the participants engaged in a conversation about replicating this study as a way to educate pre-service teachers about ethical pedagogies:

Matthew: I think that makes a real difference [posing hypothetical scenarios] because it is very hard to deal with something in real time... I think just getting to practice it within an environment like this, it really makes a difference.

Thomas: Even in tutorials or like, if there's somewhere where, even if it's just an open forum or something, where we can you know... just to band together, get some more experienced teachers in, have them throw some questions out and getting us to even think about it, and then giving them their response as to how they dealt with it. Just to get us thinking about it, it would be great.

Christopher: I just feel that a lot of the tutors aren't directly given instruction from the lecturers on what they have to cover in tutorial periods, so most of the time you can tell that they're just making it up as they go. You've found that as well?

Matthew: Always

Christopher: It's been not very productive, for a two hour tute, you know?

Finally, many of the pre-service teachers felt an *in loco parentis* responsibility for their students; a responsibility that heightened their stress when perceiving a lack of knowledge or ability in providing for the gendered needs of their students. Mia suggests that whilst pre-

service teacher education may emphasise professionalism these recommendations must be made within consideration of the *in loco parentis* nature of teaching:

Well, I mean, at this university I've been told that you can't be friends with the students and I think that... to an extent that that's true. Like, you can't be their friend like you have your friends but that doesn't mean that you can't be friendly with them and it doesn't mean that you can't make yourself available to them in ways that they might need.

Making oneself available to one's students is a necessary requirement for what Teague (2015) calls relationality; whereby teachers intentionally engage in normative practices that produces a mutual vulnerability. Teague (2015) argues that relationality is essential for providing ethical experiences because it disrupts the traditional, hierarchical power relation between teacher and student and allows for more ethical relations.

## **Conclusion**

Ultimately when pre-service teachers near their completion of a four year undergraduate teaching degree we expect and hope that they will have agency and confidence as a result of thorough preparation. In posing hypothetical gendered scenarios the participants expressed learned helplessness, trepidation and ill-preparation. Worryingly, there was a general consensus from all participants that their pre-service teacher training either did not provide any gender education and if at all it was not adequate. They expressed a desire to discuss gendered discourses and hypothetical scenarios with an experienced tutor so that effective pedagogies could be modelled prior to their implementation in the field. Although each participant was eager and willing to engage in gendered discourses their self-professed lack of pedagogical awareness is troublesome. If we expect teachers to provide ethical experiences for their students then they must be provided with opportunities to collectively discuss gender and realise the pedagogical potential of their performatives.

## Conclusion

In sharing their experiences both of pre-service teacher training and school practicums the pre-service teachers in this study have provided glimpses into the struggles they face when thinking and acting upon gendered educational inequalities. It is hoped that this study has done justice to the participants who not only sacrificed their time but engaged with potentially sensitive and injurious gendered discourses. Their stories revealed more than their perceptions, beliefs and attitudes; it revealed their eagerness, willingness, struggles and pains when thinking about gendered constitutions in schools. If meaningful educational change is to occur then pre-service teachers must be involved in the process – it is hoped that this study allowed their voices to be heard.

In the literature review of this study it became apparent that there was somewhat of an ethical paradox. This is not the first time that attention has been drawn to the paradoxical nature of subjectivity; Carr (1999) argued that one is both a subject and object at the same time (highlighting the contradictory nature of experience). In this thesis, the ethical paradox was presented as follows: it seems unethical for teachers to engage in intentional performatives that manipulate relations between student and teacher. Yet, if these performatives produce ethical pedagogies then they serve to disrupt injurious constitutions thus enabling students to exist outside assumed knowability. So, if institutions implement localised awareness raising as Youdell suggested (2006b) teachers can potentially reduce unethical constitutions making this the *more* ethical choice. Ultimately, engaging in intentional performatives that let the other live is more ethical than leaving injurious constitutions unchallenged. It is for this reason that this ethical paradox can perhaps be reconciled and is perhaps something to be reconciled in pre-service teacher education.

This thesis did not aim to answer all the questions that arise when concerning oneself with these, at times troubling, philosophical notions. Rather, it aimed to highlight the usefulness of integrating these tools within pre-service teacher training. Furthermore, it was not the aim of this study to state that these pre-service teachers are representative. Rather, that these discussions highlight the importance of discussing gender openly in pre-service teacher education. Although each pre-service teacher will face unique obstacles in implementing ethical pedagogies in classrooms, when armed with an understanding of the power of their performatives... gendered inequalities in schools can be challenged. This study found that

generally pre-service teachers were apprehensive and lacking agency which impeded upon their ability to grapple with gendered discourses and implement ethical pedagogies. In some instances, the participants in this study momentarily interrupted traditional power relations between teacher and student; providing the relationality required for ethical experience. Others however were met with various roadblocks: lack of agency, a desire to know the other, school surveillance, embedded administrative constitutions... Yet the biggest roadblock of all was the lack of education they received on gender.

What is evident from the analysis of these pre-service teacher discussions is that they require support in creating ethical experiences that allow their students to operate within multiple possibilities of existence. As such the following recommendations have been developed. It is recommended that institutions providing pre-service teacher education develop a compulsory undergraduate gender unit or allocate time in an already existing compulsory unit for gender education. As teachers are often unaware of prejudices they hold or act on (Berekashvili, 2012) it may be useful to provide opportunities for pre-service teachers to explore their own beliefs, attitudes and perceptions of gender. Pre-service teachers thus need opportunities to make changes within themselves (Evans, 1988) – a suggestion not dissimilar to the statement made in Chapter One by the research assistant of this study whom spoke of teachers' willingness to reconsider where they stand. This requires teaching and learning *with* pre-service teachers rather than *at* them. A recommended format would be for pre-service teachers to discuss gendered discourses in small groups with an experienced tutor. Furthermore, that within these small groups, specific hypothetical classroom scenarios are posed and discussed. Then, education on the subject, performatives, subjectivation, relationality and ethical experience could be provided. Lastly pre-service teachers need opportunities to role play scenarios that could potentially involve injurious constitutions and be guided towards ethical pedagogies that let their students live. This involves explicit and demonstrative education on the power of their performatives.

This study has found that there are opportunities to improve pre-service teacher training which has implications for gender in education. It was not the purpose of this thesis to provide a checklist of ethical and unethical pedagogies or provide blanket solutions. There are no quick fixes to messy and complicated gendered inequalities in schools. If anything it is hoped that this paper gave a voice to these pre-service teachers and provided reasonable recommendations based on their concerns. It is hoped that upon implementation these

recommendations will improve teacher agency in challenging students' gendered positionings as well as their own. Ultimately this thesis aimed to serve not only pre-service teachers but the silent subjects of this study – children. It is perhaps wise then to end on a quote that encapsulates the true purpose of this study; that raising awareness of constitutive practices gives children the freedom to become and the freedom to be.

Children need to be given access to a discourse that frees them from the burden of liberal humanist obligations of coming to know a fixed reality in which they have a unified and rationally coherent identity separate and distinct from the social world. They can gain this freedom through an acknowledgement of the ways in which each form of discursive practice constitutes them. (Davies, 2003, p. 167).



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# Appendix

## Appendix A: Semi-structured Focus Group Questions

This project aimed to provide insight into the ways in which pre-service teachers do gender and the possible roles teachers, schools and institutions play in enabling ethical or unethical pedagogies that constitute students as particular gendered subjects. The main concern of this study was to highlight whether or not teacher training enabled opportunities for pre-service teachers to practice and implement ethical pedagogies; pedagogies that allow for more ethical gender relations between teachers and students. Thus the following aims were postulated:

1. To explore pre-service teacher's perceptions, beliefs and attitudes of gender and identity formation.
2. To explore the role of teachers, schools and institutions in implementing ethical and unethical pedagogies.
3. To consider whether or not pre-service teacher education adequately prepares teachers to implement ethical pedagogies that let the other live.

### Focus Group One: Questions

Topic 1: Meaning of gender

Topic 2: Meaning of Feminism and a Feminist

Topic 3: How do you think a person becomes who they are? How is identity formed?

Topic 4: Do teachers have a role in influencing children's identities?

Topic 5: How does one become male or female?

Topic 6: Do teachers influence a student's gender?

### Focus Group Two: Hypothetical Scenarios

Scenario 1: First day of teaching Kindergarten/Year 7 at a new school.

Scenario 2: A friend asks you what kind of teacher you are.

Scenario 3: A student has called out in your lesson whilst you are trying to teach mathematics... He says "Mr/Miss! Yesterday I went to the park with my brother and..." etc.

Scenario 4: You are explaining how to clean up the classroom after a painting lesson and Jane is chatting to Sarah sitting next to her. You can tell they are not listening to your instruction.

Scenario 5: In a gymnastics lesson one of your students says that he thinks gymnastics is "gay".

Scenario 6: A student in your class says that pink is a girls' colour.

Scenario 7: A girl in your class is being bullied because she plays football with the boys at lunch-time and is labelled "slut" by other girls.

Scenario 8: A student in your school/classroom is transgender.

Discussion: Do you think that your studies at University have prepared you for possible gender situations that might arise?

## Appendix B: Ethics Approval

Office of the Deputy Vice-Chancellor  
(Research)

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19 May 2015

Dr David Saltmarsh  
School of Education  
Faculty of Human Sciences  
Macquarie University  
NSW 2109

Dear Dr Saltmarsh

**Reference No:** 5201500287

**Title:** *Gendered beliefs and the role of teachers*

Thank you for submitting the above application for ethical and scientific review. Your application was considered by the Macquarie University Human Research Ethics Committee (HREC (Human Sciences & Humanities)) at its meeting on 24 April 2015 at which further information was requested to be reviewed by the HREC (Human Sciences and Humanities) Executive.

The requested information was received with correspondence on 8 May 2015.

The HREC (Human Sciences and Humanities) Executive considered your responses out of Session.

I am pleased to advise that ethical and scientific approval has been granted for this project to be conducted at:

- Macquarie University

This research meets the requirements set out in the National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Human Research (2007 – Updated March 2014) (the National Statement).

This letter constitutes ethical and scientific approval only.

### Standard Conditions of Approval:

1. Continuing compliance with the requirements of the National Statement, which is available at the following website:  
<http://www.nhmrc.gov.au/book/national-statement-ethical-conduct-human-research>
2. This approval is valid for five (5) years, subject to the submission of annual reports. Please submit

your reports on the anniversary of the approval for this protocol.

3. All adverse events, including events which might affect the continued ethical and scientific acceptability of the project, must be reported to the HREC within 72 hours.

4. Proposed changes to the protocol must be submitted to the Committee for approval before implementation.

It is the responsibility of the Chief investigator to retain a copy of all documentation related to this project and to forward a copy of this approval letter to all personnel listed on the project.

Should you have any queries regarding your project, please contact the Ethics Secretariat on 9850 4194 or by email [ethics.secretariat@mq.edu.au](mailto:ethics.secretariat@mq.edu.au)

The HREC (Human Sciences and Humanities) Terms of Reference and Standard Operating Procedures are available from the Research Office website at:

[http://www.research.mq.edu.au/for/researchers/how\\_to\\_obtain\\_ethics\\_approval/human\\_research\\_ethics](http://www.research.mq.edu.au/for/researchers/how_to_obtain_ethics_approval/human_research_ethics)

The HREC (Human Sciences and Humanities) wishes you every success in your research.

Yours sincerely



**Dr Karolyn White**

Director, Research Ethics & Integrity,

Chair, Human Research Ethics Committee (Human Sciences and Humanities)

This HREC is constituted and operates in accordance with the National Health and Medical Research Council's (NHMRC) *National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Human Research* (2007) and the *CPMP/ICH Note for Guidance on Good Clinical Practice*.

**Details of this approval are as follows:**

**Approval Date:** 19 May 2015

The following documentation has been reviewed and approved by the HREC (Human Sciences & Humanities):

Documents Reviewed	Version no.	Date
Macquarie University Ethics Application Form	2.3	July 2013
Correspondance from Miss Aimee Parr responding to the issues raised by the HREC (Human Sciences and Humanities)		Received 8/05/2015
MQ Participant Information and Consent Form (PICF)		Received 8/05/2015
Expression of Interest Form		Received 19/03/2015
Recruitment transcript		Received 19/03/2015

## Appendix C: Participant Consent Form



Department of Education  
Faculty of Human Sciences  
MACQUARIE UNIVERSITY NSW 2109  
Phone: +61 (02) 9850 8798

Email: [david.saltmarsh@mq.edu.au](mailto:david.saltmarsh@mq.edu.au)

Chief Investigator's / Supervisor's Name: David Saltmarsh

Chief Investigator's / Supervisor's Title: Senior Lecturer

### Participant Information and Consent Form

Name of Project: Gendered beliefs and the role of teachers.

You are invited to participate in a study of gender in education. The purpose of the study is to investigate the gendered attitudes and beliefs pre-service teachers' hold and how you understand the processes by which a gendered identity might be formed.

The study is being conducted by Aimee Parr to meet the requirements of the Masters of Research degree under the supervision of Dr David Saltmarsh, Macquarie University, Department of Education ([david.saltmarsh@mq.edu.au](mailto:david.saltmarsh@mq.edu.au)) and Dr Tobia Fattore, Macquarie University, Department of Sociology.

If you decide to participate, you will be asked to participate in two 1 to 1.5 hour long focus group discussions with three other Macquarie University students, who are also completing their teaching degrees. The focus groups will be conducted by Parr and Saltmarsh, and held on two separate occasions within 2-4 weeks of each other. The interviewers will pose a series of questions or hypothetical scenarios for discussion concerning gender. These interviews will be audio and video-recorded and will only be accessible by the researchers. If you decide to participate you will be consenting to audio and video recording. This research is an opportunity to engage in professional discussions about gender in education and share your thoughts, beliefs and perceptions. Upon completion of your participation you will be provided with a list of resources for your professional development concerning gender in education.

Any information or personal details gathered in the course of the study are confidential, except as required by law. No individual will be identified in any publication of the results. Data collected from the interviews will be used in the thesis however all names will be changed for anonymity. A one-page summary of the results can be made available to you on request by e-mailing [aimee.parr@mq.edu.au](mailto:aimee.parr@mq.edu.au)

Participation in this study is entirely voluntary: you are not obliged to participate and if you decide to participate, you are free to withdraw at any time without having to give a reason and without consequence.

I, \_\_\_\_\_ have read (*or, where appropriate, have had read to me*) and understand the information above and any questions I have asked have been answered to my satisfaction. I agree to participate in this research, knowing that I can withdraw from further participation in the research at any time without consequence. I have been given a copy of this form to keep.

Participant's Name: \_\_\_\_\_  
(Block letters)

Participant's Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Investigator's Name: \_\_\_\_\_  
(Block letters)

Investigator's Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

The ethical aspects of this study have been approved by the Macquarie University Human Research Ethics Committee. If you have any complaints or reservations about any ethical aspect of your participation in this research, you may contact the Committee through the Director, Research Ethics (telephone (02) 9850 7854; email [ethics@mq.edu.au](mailto:ethics@mq.edu.au)). Any complaint you make will be treated in confidence and investigated, and you will be informed of the outcome.

**(INVESTIGATOR'S [OR PARTICIPANT'S] COPY)**