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ABSTRACT

Both Women's Studies courses and the mainstreaming of Women's Studies material within the regular disciplines are essential pedagogical strategies for making curriculum responsive to the gendered content of schools, but it is also important to formulate a gender-fair model of education. After explaining the need for and benefits of gender-fair education, this paper presents criteria for gender-fair epistemology, curriculum, and pedagogy through examining and critiquing five learning models and presenting examples of feminist pedagogy appropriate to the gender-fair classroom. The objectives of gender-fair education are defined as seeking to enable students to develop a critical perspective toward all knowledge, and to empower all students to become equal and active participants in this critical educational process. The five pedagogical models critiqued are: (1) "Talking Head" pedagogy, which seeks to reproduce the common wisdom of established knowledge; (2) "Humanistic Education," in which learners and teachers interact to produce knowledge; (3) "Critical Pedagogy," in which teachers and learners produce knowledge through a collective examination of their socio-economic situations; (4) "Early Feminist Pedagogy," which emphasizes the collective production of knowledge, focusing on gender and sexism as universals; and (5) "Critical Humanism," which combines the thinking of humanists, critical pedagogues, and feminist educators, and centers the problems of race, social class, ethnicity, and sexual orientation. (Author/PAA)

GENDER FAIRNESS IN THE CLASSROOM

THEORY AND PRAXIS

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GENDER FAIRNESS IN THE CLASSROOM: THEORY AND PRAXIS

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ABSTRACT

This paper argues that while both Women's Studies courses and the mainstreaming of Women's Studies material within the regular disciplines are essential pedagogical strategies for making curriculum responsive to the gendered context of schools, it is also important to formulate a gender-fair model of education. After explaining the need for and benefits of gender-fair education, the paper then presents some criteria for gender-fair epistemology, curriculum and pedagogy through examining and critiquing five learning models as well as examples of feminist pedagogy which conform to the preferred model and are most appropriate to the gender-fair classroom.

Women's Studies has been taught in Canadian colleges and universities for over 20 years. Initially, it was introduced as a result of politically inspired critiques of higher education which was described as biased in favour of the white euro-male ruling class. In two decades, Women's Studies has developed in both breadth and depth, raising epistemolcgical questions regarding the assumptions and framework of most of the established disciplines. There has been a burgeoning of research in Women's Studies itself, and a body of theoretical and applied research has been developed regarding feminist pedagogy and praxis (Nemiroff, 1989).

Many early Women's Studies classes were taught by and focused on the experience and writing of white euro-middle-class heterosexual women. However, since many women teaching in Women's Studies programmes were also politically active feminists, there has been a dialectical development of ideology between the feminist movement itself and academic feminists involved in Women's Studies. For example, in time, numerous identifiable groups of women questioned the focus of a primarily white middle class women's movement, claiming that it rendered them and their concerns invisible, and insisting that their issues and priorities were often totally different. Women of colour, aboriginal women, lesbians of all races, immigrant women, refugee women, the employed and unemployed poor, disabled women...all formed their own organizations and demanded their say in the directions feminist activism would take. In the same way, many Women's Studies

programmes have come to the realization that they must address the issues and experiences of and give voice to the many groups of women who had been originally marginalized within feminist groups as well as the rest of society. While many early Women's Studies teachers corrected their biases, the work of current second generation faculty not only consolidates, elaborates upon, and critiques the theoretical premises on which many Women's Studies programmes were founded, but also represents many women previously rendered invisible in Women's Studies curriculum.

As more women take on appointments shared by Women's Studies programmes and traditional disciplines, the question which frequently arises is whether or not Women's Studies should become "mainstreamed" or become a discipline in itself. The concerns underlying this discussion are that while Women's Studies has grown enormously as a meta-discipline over twenty years, it has had negligible effect on the entrenched disciplines (Nemiroff, 1991; Spender, 1981; Tomm, 1989).

The proponents of "mainstreaming" suggest that it is simply not sufficient for women's experiences, concerns and works to be "ghettoized" in Women's Studies courses, because women remain invisible in the discourse of the regular disciplines. Malestream professors send curious students off to Women's Studies programmes, continuing with business as usual in their own disciplines. On the other hand, some Women's Studies teachers argue that there is so much to be investigated about women gua women that the focus of such study is likely to become blurred when women are simply added

to regular curriculum. Such critics claim this "add women and stir approach" often leads to tokenism and no real epistemological change. The premises remain the same, the old biases prevail, and convenient examples regarding women are simply added to the canon.

It is our contention that both mainstreaming and the continuation of Women's Studies are not only essential, but mutually informing. While there is no doubt that Women's Studies reaches many people, it must also be said that most of them are self-selected and that the subject matter in Women's Studies courses often arouses defensiveness and resistance in even the most committed students. References to gender would be less provocative if gender were taken into account in all disciplines. Furthermore, the application of Women's Studies contents and pedagogy to mainstream education would transform it into a more balanced offering.

In fact, the response of students in the last decade demonstrates with great clarity that such a transformation is required. Teachers of Women's Studies report increasing unwillingness among their young women students to identify themselves with feminist issues. Early in the decade, researchers such as Barbara Hillyer Davis (1981) and Renate Duelli-Klein (1981) documented the reluctance of "traditional" women students to question their life commitment to live in subordination. More recently, Susanne Bohmer (1989) has dealt with various forms of resistance by privileged young people who find it uncomfortable and even painful to recognize oppression. Kathleen Turkel (1986) has

identified the problem which young women experience in seeing themselves as part of a collectivity, and she attributes some of their opposition to Women's Studies material as part of this totally individualistic interpretation of their destiny.

Young women are often resistant to systemic accounts of oppression because they feel disempowered by them. Frequently they will counter general examples by referring to their own experience or that of friends. In our current ethos, which supports and rewards individualism, young people often feel that they can "win" only through individual initiative and competitiveness. Furthermore, women have not made significant academic strides in some programmes of study leading to excellent employment opportunities. For example, in Engineering faculties, women comprised only 12.2% of the undergraduates, 11.1% of the Master's students and 5.4% of the doctoral students in 1987 (Statistics Canada, 1990). Women in Canada are still concentrated in non-unionized service industries and in lower-paying occupations than men. They account for 72% of part-time workers in Canada, and in 1987 their earnings were 66% that of men, up from 60% in 1971. Even such "objective" evidence does not always influence young women to make a systemic analysis of their situation <u>qua</u> women. It is more acceptable to them to believe the "merit dream" that if they do well, they will advance in the labour force. They do not welcome accounts of the "glass ceiling" offered by women who have entered that mysterious sector of political and/or financial power.

Indeed, we must recognize that the institutions of our society

have shown remarkable resistance to the excellent and burgeoning research in the area of Women's Studies. Despite extensive study, for instance, of the speech patterns of men and women and their effects on the politics of the classroom (Spender, 1980; Hall and Sandler, 1982), classroom dynamics appear to remain unchanged, with men still claiming two thirds of the talk time, initiating topics for discussion, and interrupting when women are speaking (Williams, 1990). Teacher education and professional development programs continue to reflect patriarchal obsessions with competition. hierarchy and individualism, and make no space for the input of feminist research (Robertson, 1989). In terms of curriculum, one of the fastest developing programme areas in North American education in the last decade is not Women's Studies, but Liberal Arts, with 385 identifiable variations across the United States. Though it is true that some of these programs are more multicultural and flexible than others (Farkas, 1991), the focus of most Liberal Arts Programs continues to be the uncritical study of the malestream tradition, and women's issues are given little if any consideration (Davis, 1991).

Such is the resistance to feminist material in the mainstream classroom that students protest the feminist teacher's "bias", while accepting without question the proclamations of masculinist research (Turkel, 1986). The violent reactions of males to matters such as women's roles, homosexuality, and visible minorities of all kinds dominate the classroom, redirect the curriculum, and silence the gentler more accepting voices of women (Berg et al, 1990;

Bleich, 1990). When challenged for their attitudes, these males argue their right to free speech and opinion (Bleich, 1990). All of the issues of equality which Women's Studies has championed in the last twenty years - issues not only of gender but of race, ethnicity, sexual orientation, social class and ableness - are brought to violent closure in this oppressive atmosphere. Female teachers report experiencing real fear of some of their male students (Davis, Nemiroff, Poisson, 1991). Female students report increasing incidents of sexual harassment, intimidation and assault by their male peers and sexual partners (Davis, Nemiroff, Poisson, 1990). Consistently these male students avoid Women's Studies courses wherever they can, and Men's Studies courses are not available to them.

Given these lacunae, do such men ever consider the effect of gender on their lives? The silence about gender and its negative effect is well exemplified by the academic history of Marc Lepine, the young murderer of 14 women at Montreal's Ecole Polytechnique in 1989. This young man passed through two colleges (CEGEPs), and his friends remember his numerous misogynistic remarks which they interpreted as jokes. It is not only possible, but probable, that a large majority of male and female post-secondary students can complete their education without ever having to address issues pertaining to gender equality.

The transformational educational paradigm which we propose for the current situation in the malestream academy is one which we call Gender-Fair Education. The overall objective of Gender-Fair

Education is to broaden all students' awareness of gender-related issues in their own lives and in the world around them. The specific objectives of such an education are, first, to enable students to develop a critical perspective towards all knowledge and the ideologies which inform its construction. They must interrogate what has been defined as knowledge to ensure that it has taken not only gender differentiation into account, but differences of race, social class, ethnicity and sexual orientation. A second specific objective is to empower all students to become equal and active participants in this critical educational process, using it as a model for their active and equal participation in the society at large. Gender-Fair Education has, therefore, objectives which relate both to the contents and to the pedagogy of any given course.

An essential part of the process of considering the reworking of one's discipline on the basis of gender-fairness is the reconsideration of its epistemological assumptions. What is essential to the discipline and why? This process of reconsideration involves examining those skills necessary for the teacher's own "licensing" or validation by the patriarchal academy. It also involves a re-examination of those works and the organization of knowledge which comprise the "canon" of the discipline. Some questions to be be addressed are: Why have these concepts and works become the sine qua non of the discipline? In whose interests and by which criteria has agreement been reached on the essence or basis of a particular discipline? Whose aesthetic

sensibility defines this discipline? Do the concepts and content of this discipline reflect the experiences and values of both sexes?

When this process has been scrupulously followed, teachers can proceed to possit for themselves and their students a gender-fair approach to a discipline. They will consider which tools and skills are necessary for this approach, which concepts are useful, where new conceptualization must proceed, and what choices of subject and text are most appropriate to the gender-fair reconstruction of their disciplines.

Since the selection of appropriate cou se material is most important for gender-fair courses, the criteria on which selection is made is the key to this process. Teachers must ensure either that the readings and/or other media chosen for a course are explicit in their references to gender, or that if they are not...for example in cases where universality is argued for gender-based assumptions...the teachers themselves must draw the students' attention to implicit gender-based assumptions either of a sexist or sex-blind nature.

While the gender of an author does not always guarantee one point of view or another, it is important for gender-fair teachers to include authors of both sexes (preferably indicating a variety of views related to differing experiences of class, ethnicity, race and sexual orientation) on the reading list. Although it could be argued that a feminist man is a better guide than a non-feminist woman, there is a growing literature by females on females, females on males, males on males, and males on females and both on the

relations between the sexes. The gender of the writer is important, however, in providing as wide a range of role models and viewpoints as possible for an increasingly heterogeneous student population. Teachers should make every effort to have an equal number of works by women and men on their courses.

Subject matter is extremely important, and it is essential to find subjects and readings within them which are applicable to both sexes. Before choosing readings, teachers should examine the texts to see who is included, who is excluded, and who is invisible. In works containing statistical analyses, teachers should be certain that the statistics take gender into account. If they do not and there are other indispensable aspects to these works, teachers should draw the students' attention to the limitations of the statistical analyses (Armstrong, 1987; Eichler, 1987).

Many teachers will argue that they must transfer to their students ideas and readings which are sexist in nature because they are indeed part of that discipline. They argue that they would indeed be remiss if they did not expose students to texts, ideas and skills traditionally used within the discipline. One solution to this problem is to teach the students this material in a critical manner, facilitating their understanding of the limitations and problems inherent in an epistemology which argues its validity on the basis of "universal application," but which is in fact gender-based, gender-blind, and/or overtly misogynistic.

With respect to pedagogy, it must be recognized that traditional instructional paradigms are open to the same kind of

critique as the knowledge which they impart. Traditionally, educators have been expected to rank students hierarchically within a framework which emphasizes competition and performance, not collaboration and process (Sapon-Shevin and Schniedewind, 1991). Furthermore, the structure of the classroom rewards with greater encouragement and opportunities for learning those students aggressive enough to participate in large mixed group interactions mediated by the teacher (Spender, 1980). Moreover, there has been an emphasis on rational approaches to learning, often with the exclusion of personal and intuitive modes of thought. In all of these ways, the prevailing educational ideology drives the selection of pedagogical practice, enforces the reproduction of those social and educational behaviours congruent with it, and disadvantages the individual development of all students (Weiler, 1988).

A further feature of this narrow set of educational practices is that it hampers learning in four important ways. First, it excludes from the production of knowledge a large number of students, marginalized due to race, class, ethnicity, gender and sexual orientation. Such exclusion not only reproduces in the classroom the marginalizing determinants of our society, but ensures that the only acceptable knowledge is that which, in the name of universality, has served to maintain the intellectual monopoly of a small and privileged group of people (Weiler, 1988). It is thus an anti-intellectual pedagogy, in the broadest sense of the term.

A second way in which this pedagogy hampers learning is its specific discrimination against women. First of all, the psychological (Chodorow, 1978; Dinnerstein, 1976), moral (Gilligan, 1982) and cognitive (Belenky et al, 1986) development of young women in our society tends to foster traits quite different from those fostered in the males for which this education appears to have been designed. Women's early socialization has in fact left them ill-equipped to fulfill these behavioural objectives of competitiveness, aggressiveness, and abstract rational thought. Indeed, the validation of these behaviours has not only been operational in excluding women, but in maintaining a narrow and exclusive concept of knowledge (Keller, 1985). As well, the political reality of the relation between the sexes and the way in which both male and female teachers respond to and nurture male speech patterns in mixed groups often leave the females to sink into silence (Rich, 1979).

A third way in which traditional pedagogy hampers learning is the way in which it misleads male students into believing they are equal participants in and beneficiaries of the production of mainstream knowledge when, in fact, their race, class, ethnicity or sexual orientation may exclude them from equal participation in our society (Kaufman, 1987). In this sense these males may be as victimized as women by an apparently inclusionary pedagogy. They are thus ill-prepared for the issues they have to face in their school and working lives.

Fourthly and finally, the narrow set of human characteristics

called into play by these educational practices maintains the traditional separation of males from the full range of their affective and relational lives (Kaufman, 1987).

In developing gender-fair pedagogy, it is important to consider various pedagogical models which have been developed to date. All pedagogy is based on assumptions regarding the learner, the teacher and the production of knowledge. Learner, teacher and knowledge may be separately defined in numerous ways, and their interaction is usually determined by these epistemological questions: Does the educator "pass on" a static form of knowledge to the student who will <u>reproduce</u> it in a processs of accreditation, or is the teaching-learning process a dynamically shared experience of <u>producing</u> knowledge?

In order to address these questions, we have schematized five different models for the process of teaching, learning and producing knowledge in Figures 1-5, following. All five models are schematized in four concentric circles, in the centre of which rests the learner's (and sometimes the teacher's) "self" with its personal and biological history and familial relationships within an environment which influences the person's growth in specific conscious and unconscious ways. The second circle comprises various factors which influence the <u>way</u> a particular society and culture situate learners as to class, race, ethnicity and ableness, and the social construction of sexuality and gender. The individual, with his or her specific history and personal mediation of the world, often at the mercy of unconscious and unexamined but powerful

feelings, comes into contact with numerous socio-economic and cultural definitions of his/her situation. These definitions always situate the individual within the existent power structure and are maintained by a system of rewards, punishments and/or forces which mediate both the production and quality of knowledge. Beyond specific definitions and social values accorded to various factors in people's lives are the ideological rationales for those definitions. These form the third circle and are usually implicitly rather than explicitly acknowledged in the articulation of knowledge in academic texts or in the class room.

Learners work within a complicated structure comprising their basic needs, the checks on those needs imposed by the their situation-in-the-world, mediated by powerful and often invisible ideologies. The teachers' situations are almost identical except that in this situation teachers are institutionally invested with considerable power over learners.

Traditional malestream pedagogy, indicated here in Figure 1 as "talking head" pedagogy, ignores the "selves" of both learners and teachers, their social situations, and the prevailing ideological construction informing the learning environment. The purpose of their interaction is to reproduce the common wisdom of established knowledge embedded within the disciplines. "Universal" truths are supposed to transcend the realities of learners' and teachers' experiences of class, gender, ethnicity, race and sexual orientation. Since knowledge is supposed to be value free, learners and teachers are involved in a reproductive loop, where

Five Learning Models:

Dark areas are invisible to others sharing the process and are ignored in the production or reproduction of knowledge.

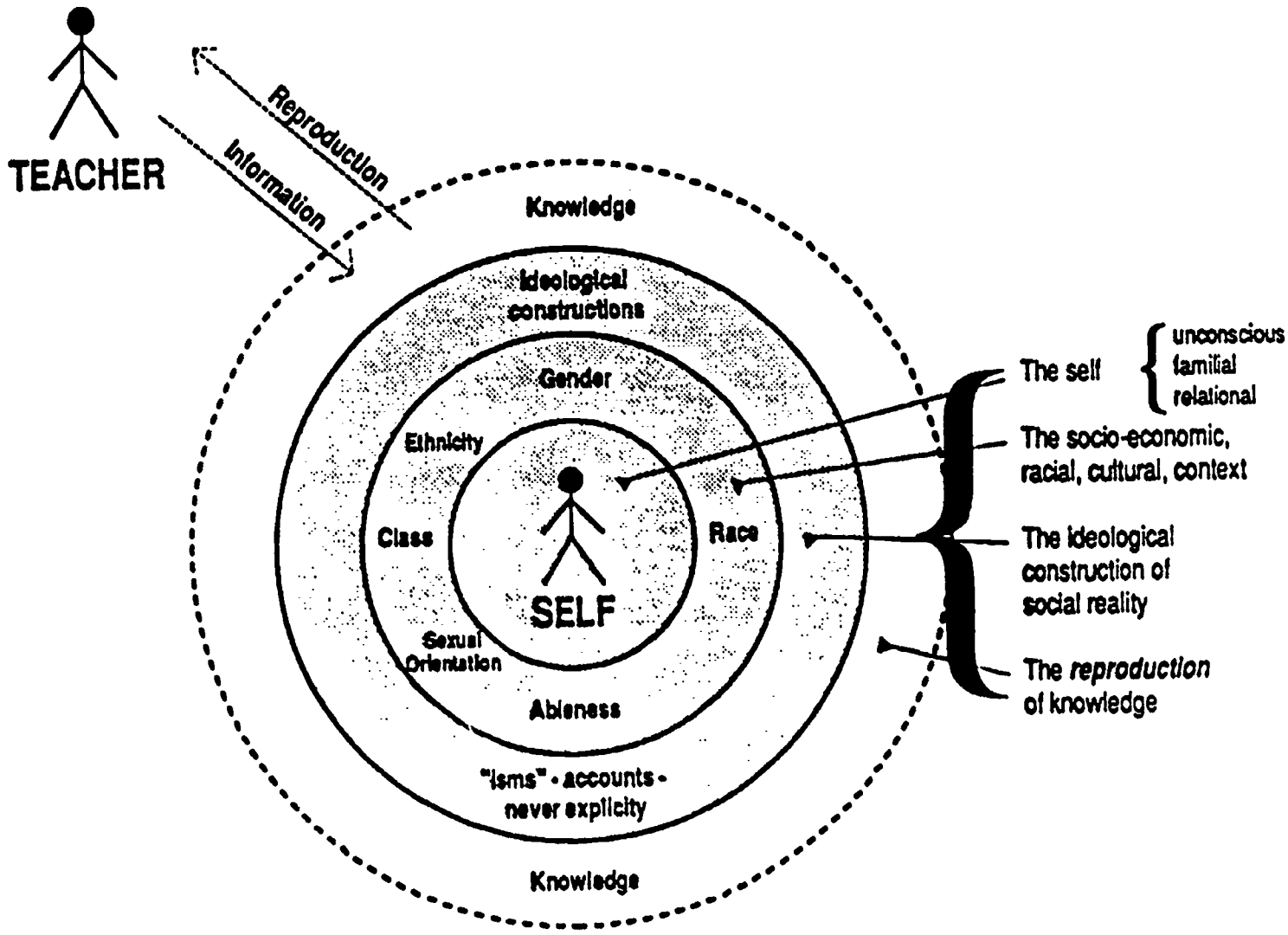


Figure 1: Learning Model - "Talking Heads Pedagogy"

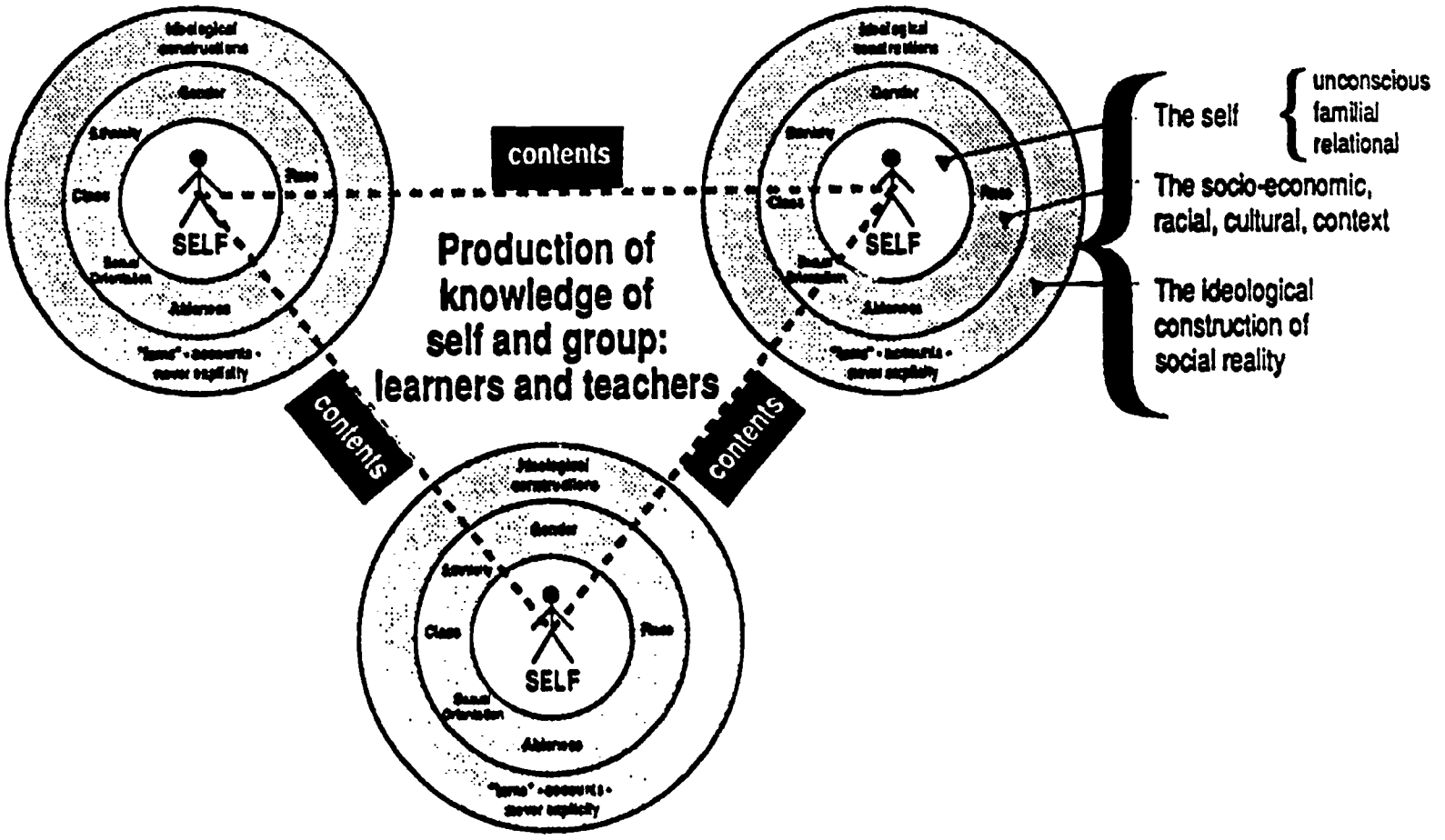
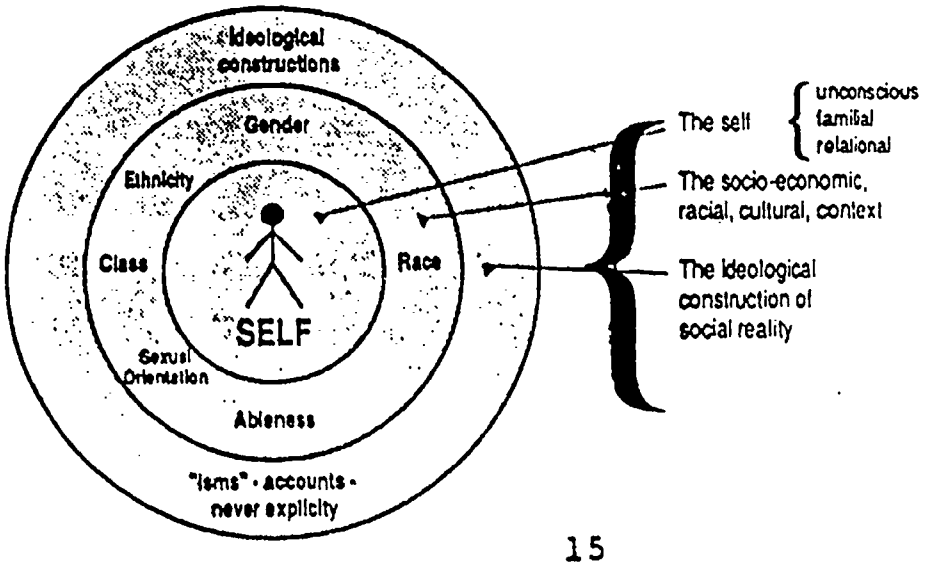


Figure 2: Learning Model - Humanistic Education



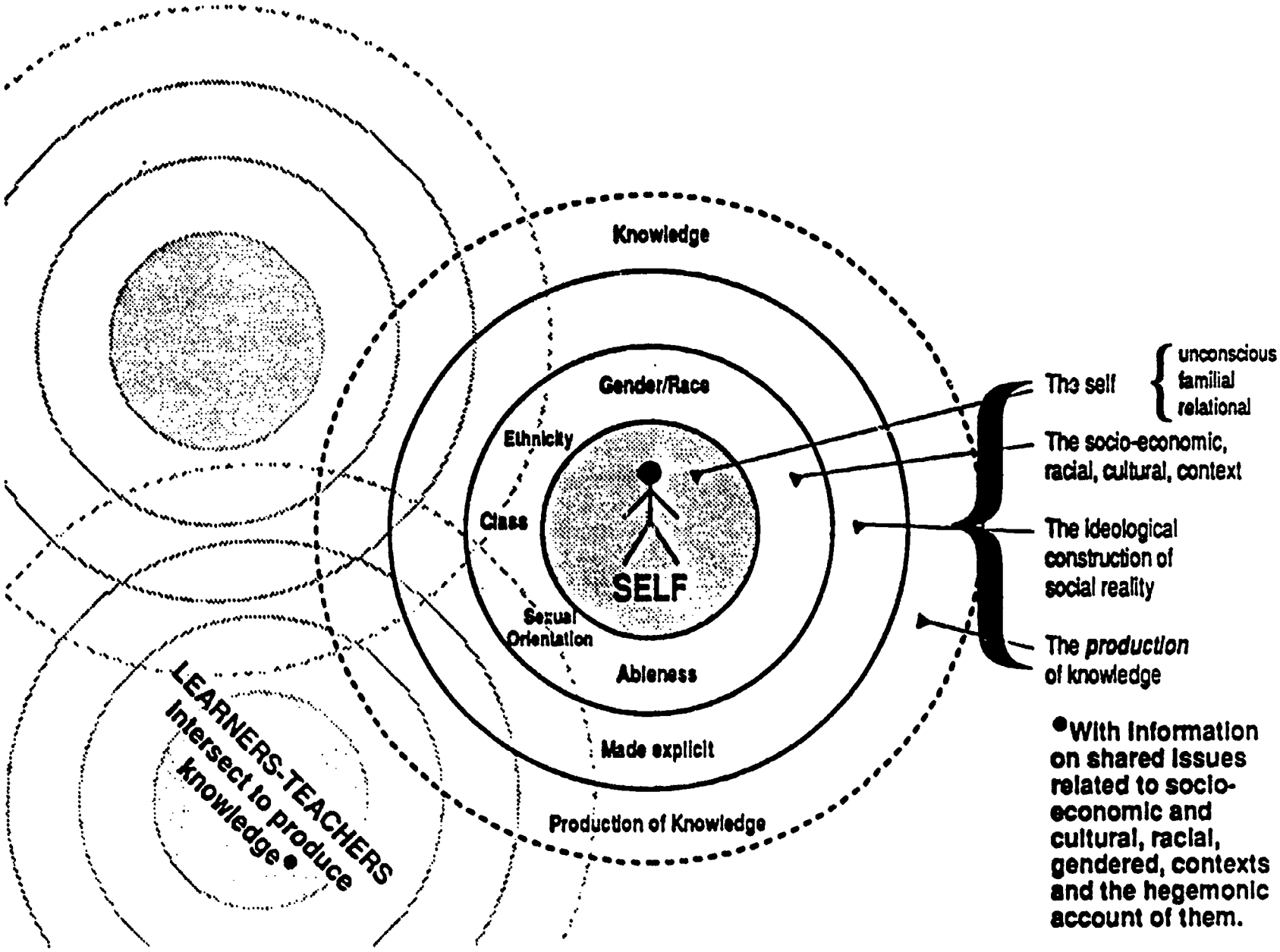


Figure 3: Learning Model - Critical Pedagogy

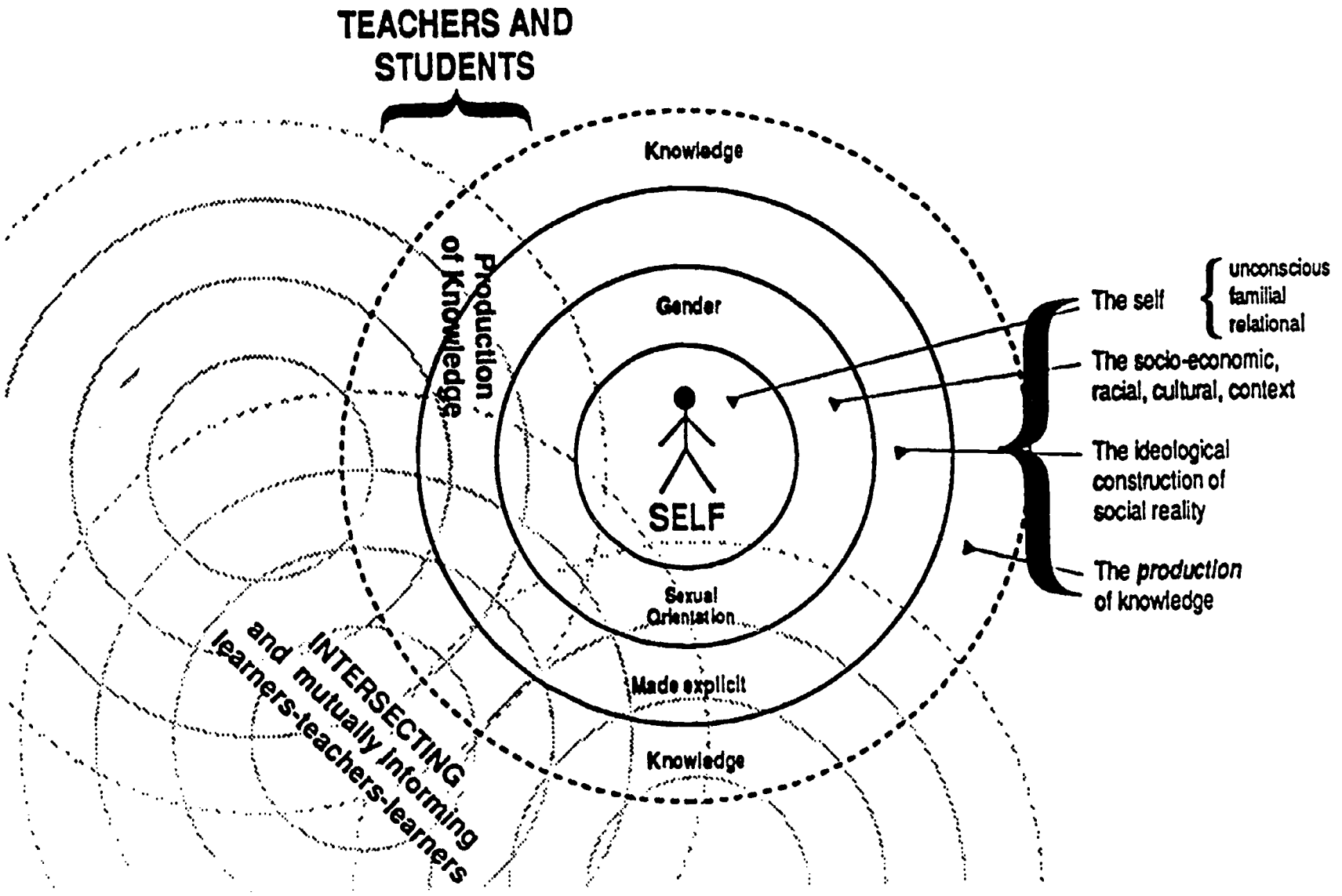


Figure 4: Learning Model - Early Feminist Pedagogy

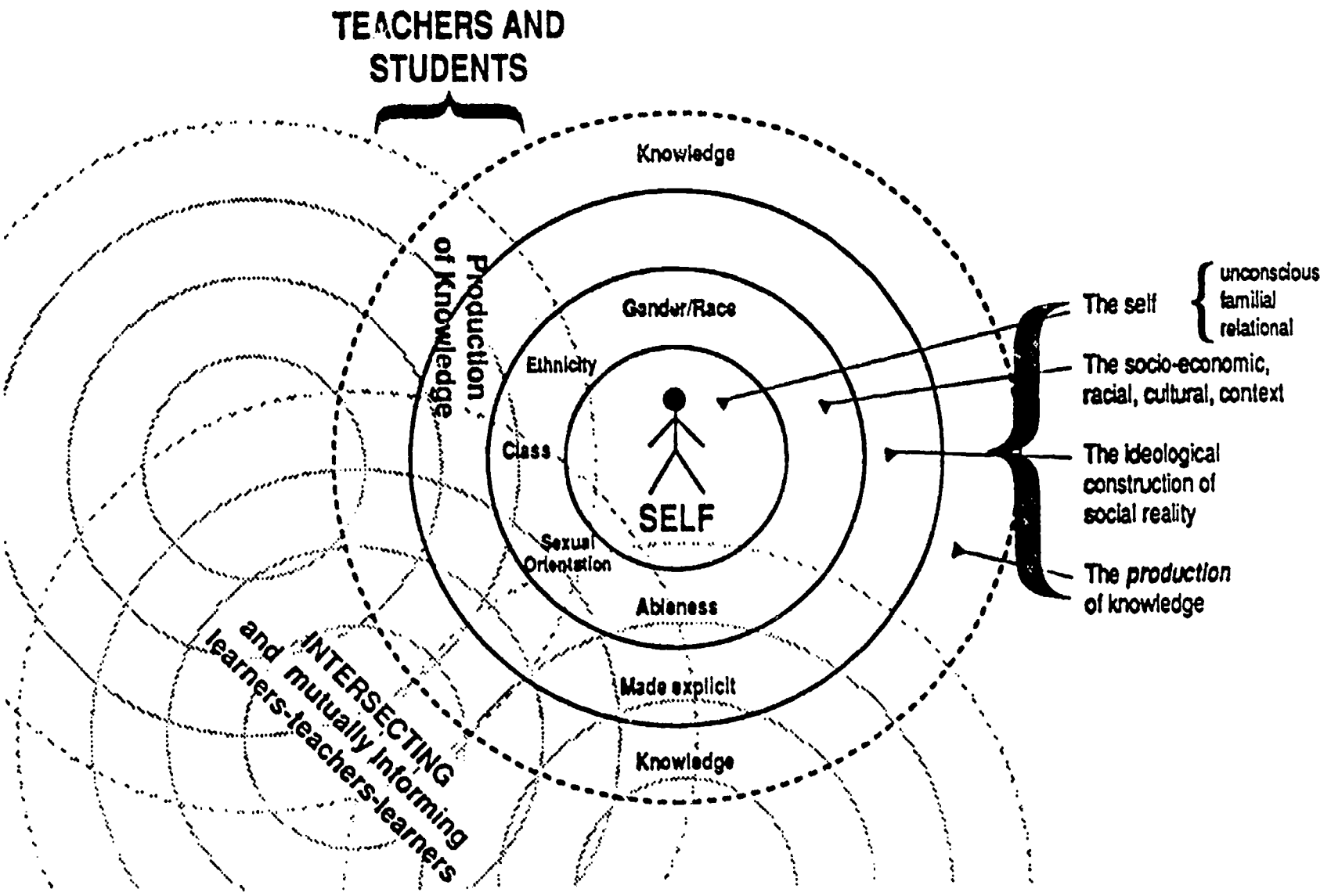


Figure 5: Learning Model - The Pedagogy of Critical Humanism

information is given by the teachers to be processed and returned as accurately as possible by the learners.

Humanistic Education (Figure 2) has contributed to our consideration, because it emphasizes the centrality of the feelings of teachers and learners in the educational process (Maslow, 1966, 1968; Rogers, 1969, 1983; Moustakas 1968, 1972). Here learners and teachers are expected to intersect and overlap freely self-to-self-to-self with one another. Through pooling their feelings and working through regular disciplines on a self-to-subject basis, humanistic learners should produce a collective knowledge based on this process. However, the limitation of humanistic education is that it decontextualizes the participants by ignoring the power of externally applied values and cultural practices and various socio-economic determinants in the formation of the "self" of each learner. Gender, ethnicity, race, class and sexual orientation cannot be ignored in the production of knowledge.

Critical Pedagogy (Figure 3) focuses on all levels of the learners' and teachers' experience other than their specific feelings and the personal context in which emotions and values are developed. Although theoreticians advocate that learners and teachers join to produce knowledge through a collective examination of their socio-economic situations, they do not address the idiosyncratic range of human feelings which connect learners to subject matter (Aronowitz and Giroux, 1985; Freire, 1985; Giroux, 1983). Ironically, this pedagogy of empowerment does not help people to free themselves from emotional factors which impede their

progress towards individual and collective empowerment.

Early Feminist Pedagogy (Figure 4) addressed the self and emphasized the collective production of knowledge. However, as mentioned before, it focused basically on gender and sexism as "universals" and only later began to include considerations of class, ethnicity and race into its deliberations.

Later Feminist Pedagogy has benefitted from earlier versions of itself and the praxis of Humanistic and Critical Pedagogies. It is almost indiscernable from Critical Humanism (Figure 5) except that it focuses on women and how they are affected by various factors in their lives. Here the multiple levels of learners' issues are addressed and shared, according to their articulated needs. Teachers and students intersect as individual "selves", as participants in certain social situations, as critics of the ideological assumptions which determine the hegemonic construction of reality, and as producers of knowledge. Through a dialectical and dialogical process in which no one is accorded total authority, all participants are learners collaboratively working to produce knowledge. Processes consistent with this model should create an ever-widening and subtly shaded production of individual and collective knowledge. Through this process, the isolation of oppression is broken down and learners experience the benefits of collective inquiry in a concrete manner which can then encourage them to move from a disempowering individualistic account of the world to a more viable and empowering one which has been collectively formulated. It is our contention that the most highly

evolved example of Critical Humanism which can be applied to the elaboration of Gender-Fair education is to be found in the development of Feminist Pedagogy.

Though the strategies of this feminist pedagogy were explored first in the context of Women's Studies classrooms, recent research in the field has shown them to be applicable to a wide range of learning situations (Davis, Steiger, Tennenhouse, 1990), including both male and female students.

One of the primary steps of the feminist pedagogue has been described as establishing "an atmosphere of mutual respect, trust, and community in the classroom" (Bunch and Pollack, 1983, 262). Feminist pedagogy explicitly acknowledges the dialectical relationship between the self and the material, between the reader and the text, between the learner and the learned. This acknowledgement has legitimized personal experience for intellectual inquiry and has opened the way for women to begin to develop their own hitherto largely undeveloped relationship to traditional subject areas (Culley and Portugues, 1985). This acknowledgment also calls in question some of the hierarchical presuppositions of the traditional classroom and encourages teachers to reveal their own personal connections to both the content and the process of the course. Finally, this acknowledgement encourages students to form mutual support systems for problem solving and study, both inside and outside the classroom.

Clearly, then, Feminist Pedagogy calls for a fluid and

continually renegotiated classroom structure in which teachers and learners participate equally, thc gh often with differing roles and changing degrees of expertise. In its insistence upon the centrality of affect, Feminist Pedagogy resembles Humanistic Pedagogy; in its confrontation with and challenge to the reproduction of traditional knowledge, it resembles Critical Pedagogy. The uniqueness of Feminist Pedagogy lies in the space which it insists upon for the voicing of difference with respect to epistemological and ideological concerns.

Insisting upon the creation of this space for women's voices has led feminist teachers to explore classroom strategies in a way which privileges for the first time some of women's ways of knowing. Recognizing the politics of the classroom and the way in which voices of difference are often so effectively silenced within it (Rich, 1979), the Feminist Pedagogy which begins to interest us the most is that which has called on the research into the relationship between language and learning for learners of all ages (Britton, 1972) even in disiciplines like mathematics (Baruk, 1985). These educators point out how those who do not participate in Burke's "conversation of mankind" (1973, 110) are very much disadvantaged, and suggest ways in which written language can be used to give all students access to the knowledge building of the classroom (Fulwiler, 1980; Shor, 1987). The use of writing in the learning process thus becomes a central strategy for the feminist classroom, and can act as the starting point for the exploration of new and unfamiliair forms of knowledge (Davis, Steiger,

Tenennhouse, 1990). The act of articulation in language also enables students to integrate learned material into their own thought processes, a process unique to every individual but of particular difficulty for women encountering mainstream thought in complex cognitive areas; if they can be helped to see affective connections, or at least to express their discomfiture in journal responses, for instance, they are better able to learn.

This feminist pedagogy is basically learner-centred and learner-active. Habits of inferiority and passivity, of looking to the teacher for the answer are deliberately challenged and broken. Insofar as the subject matter allows, the application of feminist pedagogy democratizes the classroom and builds a real sense of a learning community. Following a writing-to-learn activity, for instance, collaborative partnerships or triads can be set up in which students work together toward a common goal which can then be shared with the larger group. These dyads or triads allow students to function in a non-competitive environment and in an environment in which self-assertiveness is not a sine qua non. Such learning units legitimize the collaborative and constructive qualities which characterize female learners and allow them to profit from these characteristics rather than experience them as disadvantages (Bunch and Pollack, 1983).

Clearly, then, we look to feminist pedagogy here insofar as it emphasizes those aspects of psychological, moral and cognitive development which masculinist ideology has defined as non-male, appropriate not to the public but the private sphere, and therefore

inappropriate for education. We argue that a Gender-Fair Education must re-introduce these aspects of development not only to allow females access to the educational process, but to allow males access to the development of full personhood, through the development of their relational and affective lives, since their inability to do so within the traditional paradigm continues to reproduce the stereotypes which reinforce oppression. Since it is also clear that a large part of the male population has been marginalized and excluded from active participation in the educational process because of race, class, ethnicity and sexual orientation, Gender-Fair Education is a model of inclusiveness which allows all students equal opportunity for educational development.

Though Feminist Pedagogy has certainly tried to problematize race, social class, ethnicity and sexual orientation, its primary focus has necessarily been on the global issues of equality for women, and other issues of difference have sometimes been less effectively dealt with. It is evident that masculinity has not been sufficiently problematized to captivate a large number of male learners and to bring about transformative educational experiences for them.

The paradigm of Critical Humanism (Figure 5) is the final model to which we refer, inasmuch as it combines the thinking of Humanists, Critical Pedagogues, and Feminist educators [Nemiroff, 1991]. Our concept of Gender-Fair Education can be applied to any learning situation. It is based on close study of what transpires

in classrooms and on the transformations possible within the constraints of large mainstream institutions as well as smaller alternative ones or adult education programmes.

We see teachers in all kinds of educational situations being able to create strategies that lead students to engage personally and directly with course material. This engagement must take place in ways which ensure that all students are both discovering and liberating their own potential as well as thinking critically about their society. Our schematization (Figure 5) traces the dialectical process of creating knowledge through the collective examination of the participants' personal experiences, the socio-economic and cultural determinants of their particular and shared situations, and the dominant ideologies which attempt to define them. In this dialogical process, teachers and students share in the production of knowledge, as the circles of their individual exploration intersect and overlap through the implementation of pedagogical strategies such as self-disclosure, writing-to-learn, and partnership activities.

A pedagogy based on awareness of this cross referential process stimulates learners and teachers critically to question themselves, their immediate surroundings, the social construction of knowledge, and to produce a knowledge which both validates and is validating of their expertise. As Freire writes, "One of the most important points in conscientization is to provoke recognition of the world, not as a `given' world, but as a world dynamically `in the making'" (Friere, 1985, 19).

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