Heart, Head and Hands:
Inter-Cultural, Experiential and Applied Gender Learning in a Peace Studies Department
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"Gender Day" is an obligatory annual learning event for all first-year undergraduate and Masters students in the Department of Peace Studies (University of Bradford, England), designed as a foundational experience for a multicultural student body to develop gender analytical skills. The curriculum uses three carefully sequenced elements. The first session, based on peer-facilitated small-group discussion of participants' lived knowledge of gender norms, engages the "heart" - emotion and personal experience. The second, a lecture on academic concepts around sex, gender and sexuality and their inter-relationship, engages the "head". The third, a workshop demonstrating the practical techniques of applying gender analysis to a policy or intellectual problem in politics, international relations, and peace/conflict studies, engages their "hands". This article analyzes why and how Gender Day was devised and argues that its positive gender-mainstreaming impact on students and the Department results from the pedagogical philosophy underpinning its three, integrated elements and the opportunity offered by a heterogeneous student cohort.

BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT

Gender Day was developed as a core component of the required class "Introduction to Peace Studies" at a time when gender had been vanishing from our curriculum.[1] An optional MA module, Gender, Conflict and Development, had lapsed and a departmental decision to mainstream gender perspectives into all classes instead had not been implemented. Where gender was addressed, it was in a specific lecture by the class instructor, the norm in politics and international relations (IR) departments (Foster et al. 2013; Cassese, Bos, and Duncan 2012, 240; Evans and Amery, forthcoming).[2] Consequently, students kept receiving the same superficial introduction to gender, without being enabled to apply gender analysis to the topic in hand. Students also held a range of received ideas about gender, which they understood as a descriptive category rather than an analytic construct (cf. Cassese, Bos, and Duncan 2012, 238). They conflated it with associated, but distinctive, ideas such as feminism, leading to heated and yet unproductive debates.

In 2007, our MA students took the initiative to organize two staff-student forums on how to improve our teaching on gender. One used her dissertation to examine

the Department's intellectual and institutional culture (Cann 2007). Peace Studies has been male-dominated, like most other politics/IR departments, since its foundation in 1973. The first female (and feminist) lecturer was appointed in 1976 by a Head who was unsympathetic to both women academics and gender issues. She remained the only woman for 15 years, even after his departure. Although by 2007 women comprised one third of all faculty, some still saw traces of sexism in the Department (Cann 2007, 45). Studies of gender and academia demonstrate how the institutional histories and cultures of male-dominated departments can marginalize certain voices and intellectual contributions (Mershon and Walsh 2014). To borrow from feminist political economy, women academics find themselves regarded as inferior bearers of knowledge whilst feminist academics are often regarded as bearers of inferior knowledge (Philips and Taylor 1980). Gender-related teaching was not valued, both because it was advocated by female colleagues and because some colleagues were unfamiliar with the concept, which they associated primarily with women and their oppression (Cann 2007). Intellectual engagement with gender seemed to reflect both personal and political identity, and disciplinary affiliation and preference (ibid.). The sub-disciplines of politics, IR, conflict resolution and international development have been "gendered" to differing degrees. In some classes on conventional IR and security studies (e.g. peacekeeping and war) instructors had included no material on gender, either "unconvinced" of its relevance, or ignorant of the literature. The challenge, then, was to mainstream gender across the peace studies curriculum by establishing it as a "threshold concept", that is transformational (fundamentally changes how students view the discipline), irreversible in terms of learning, and integrative, by connecting apparently disparate parts of the field (Meyer and Land 2006).

CURRICULUM DESIGN

The idea of a foundational Gender Day emerged from the staff-student forums, and I took forward its design, with the backing of colleagues who had participated. I had noticed that undergraduates, who come from around the UK and beyond, attracted by Peace Studies' distinctively inter-disciplinary and applied approach to politics and IR, could not fully absorb abstract explanations of gender analysis when these failed to connect to personal experience. Our MA cohort consists predominantly of non-British students. Many could not define gender, which they also had reduced to "women's issues", even when they had held some practical responsibility in the field for "gender programming" for peace and development organizations. The often religious worldview that impels many to study peace and conflict is also imbued with rigid and unquestioned notions of gender roles in an imagined good society. Hence Gender Day was designed with three integrated components that would engage students emotionally, intellectually and practically.

Beyond an outline of the Gender Day's importance and general structure in the course handbook, no details are given and students are discouraged from

reading in advance in order to maximise the authenticity of their responses and the impact of the "reveal". Until 2013, Gender Day was taught mid-way through the first semester, on a single day from 9.30 to 4.30pm for an "immersion" effect. However, since 2014, for timetabling reasons, it has been split into two afternoons, a week apart (see Appendix). Despite my fear that Gender Day would lose some of its intensity, this is less exhausting to organize, and allows students to read and reflect on general gender issues after the first session, and to prepare for the following week's workshop. Material is supplied online on core theory and concepts including, men and masculinity, cross-cultural perspectives on gender relations, sexuality and sexual identity, and on the workshop themes.

I also opted for vertical learning, teaching together students from different levels. This was pragmatic but also acknowledges that an 18-year-old's *lived* knowledge of gender was just as valid as that of someone further on in their studies and career. Finally, multiple break-out sessions resulted in horizontal peer learning, which diffuses ownership of Gender Day through the department. The group discussion facilitators are volunteers, and include my colleagues, MA students with some gender-related academic or professional background, and students who have completed Gender Day. They work in pairs, following training (see Appendix).

INTRODUCTION TO THE DAY

As the lead instructor on Gender Day, I start the first afternoon preparing the whole cohort for the ensuing group discussion session. I outline the principles of inter-cultural dialogue,[3] and highlight our department's diversity in terms of student nationality, ethnicity, religion and social background, as a remarkable learning opportunity.[4] As gender roles and relations tend to become naturalized, the first session is designed to offer students a structured encounter with differing cultural perspectives. This enables them to experience estrangement, see how other people live, and become an "anthropologist of the self" and a conscious and critical interpreter of gender norms. To encourage candour, I remind students of the principle of "unconditional positive regard" developed by the humanistic psychologist Carl Rogers, key in Peace Studies' approaches to inter-personal relations. Participants must assume that, whatever opinions their peers expresses, they are open-minded and willing to hear other life experiences and viewpoints. I urge them to listen, explore and engage in empathy and dialogue, instead of arguing, judging, or closing down, even if this is uncomfortable. For example, gay students may hear openly homophobic views, given the cultural or religious backgrounds of many of our students who may never have knowingly met an LGBTI individual before. Peace Studies students, motivated to work in applied conflict fields, recognize readily that the skills of dialogue, radical disagreement, and emotional reflexivity are valuable core learning, as indeed they should be in many disciplines.

"Heart": Making gender personal

The group discussion, "heart", session is the pedagogical cornerstone, as it aims to get students to understand gender relations on three nested levels: lived gendered experience, lived gendered expectations and observed gendered expectations (in other societies). Participants proceed to break-out rooms, in groups of 15-20, mixed by sex, ethnic or national background, and level of study. After an icebreaker, they embark on Activity A (see Appendix), which addresses lived gendered experience. In pairs, they respond spontaneously to a set of prompt statements (see Appendix), borrowed from a transgender organization (Gendered Intelligence) consulted in the design phase. Phrased in the first person, these statements encourage students to speak about their *own* experiences, the gendered social expectations they felt growing up, and how they conformed to, or resisted, them. They prompt lively and often personal conversations, that continue long after the class, about sexual/physical characteristics, socialized gendered behaviors, gendered performance through dress and presentation of one's body, and the gendered expression of emotion. Speaking with someone from a different background that they likely do not know actually facilitates candour. "Personal resonance" (Sjoberg 2007, 336), "everyday experience" (Foster et al. 2013, 579), and the sharing of life narratives (Combellick-Bidney 2015) activate deeper inductive learning, and connection to an emotional level opens up students to later theoretical and applied understanding of gender analysis.

The participants' responses uncover cross-cultural, and intra-cultural, differences around gender norms, as groups expand and complicate these statements to see them as contingent and political. "I could become pregnant" (see sample expansion in the Appendix) can lead from initial reactions that pregnancy is a *physical* function, exclusive to women, to recognition of parenting as a diverse *social* one that includes men. Moreover, it is regulated by state and social institutions (medical, religious, legal, familial) and their gender regimes. Discussion about women's *individual* reproductive choice can turn to wider *social* pressures and values, and *macro-political* contexts of reproduction such as pro- or anti-natalist nationalist state policies. Similarly, "I can grow a beard" connects men's bodies to politically contested visions of society. One Middle Eastern student revealed he had to go home clean-shaven, as a beard now signified "terrorist" to his country's security forces, whilst another felt obliged to grow one to avoid the attentions of radical Islamists. These connections exemplify the feminist insight that "the personal is political" and vice versa, and are explored further in the following lecture session.

The next two exercises explore lived gendered *expectations*. Activity B (see method in Appendix) asks new pairs of students to identify dominant social norms for men and women in their own society in order to interrogate dominant gender-binary thinking. Students debate the social consequences of non-conformity to these norms, opening up ideas about hegemonic and subaltern local versions of masculinity and femininity. Activity C asks students to consider

the (re)production of gendered social norms, as they discuss *how* they learn about these through the gender regimes of social institutions.

"Head": Gender theory

The next session, an hour-long lecture, engages the "head" by providing a conceptual vocabulary for their experiential insights. I distinguish between men and women as social categories, male and female as a set of biological markers, and masculine and feminine socialized behaviours and discourses and argue that is the prior existence of the former that compels people to discipline their bodies (including sexuality) and behaviour. This enables students to both question essentialist ideas that biological bodies cause gendered behaviour and make sense of problems in the IR field, for example, how and why sexual violence is used in conflict. I cite anthropological examples from societies with non-binary or fluid gender roles -- Bugi Muslims (Indonesia), *hijras* (India), "sworn virgins" (Albania), and *bacha posh* (Afghanistan) -- to demonstrate that gender relations are plural and located in time and space. I also show how gender acts discursively and abstractly, attaching to *objects* (such as weapons) and to *institutions* and *practices* (political, military, educational).

Students often ask whether "gender" is a Western construction and imposition on other societies, yet they have just seen that gender norms and relations are universally present, but not universally the same. Acquiring a "gender lens" as an analytical tool is a precursor to later normative discussions about substantive equality issues. Gender Day therefore attempts to connect these two elements consciously and critically.

"Hands": Applied workshops

In order to apply practically and intellectually their newly acquired gender lens, for the final session participants select a workshop. These workshops, which all involve small group work and applied tasks, are given by staff, doctoral and post-doctoral researchers in Peace Studies and sister departments, former students, and guest instructors from other universities or NGOs. Topics (list in Appendix) range widely from mainstream IR and politics concerns (inter-and intra-state conflict, military and security threats, representation), to the more discursive, symbolic and sociological aspects of political culture and violence. This session is the final stage in "making sense" of gender analysis, and students choose workshops for a variety of reasons: to understand gender analysis in a field they already know, to challenge their preconceptions; to acquire a professional expertise; or to help them engage academically with the issue.

OUTCOMES

The validity of the pedagogy employed during the Day is best evaluated in terms of its impact on students, evidenced in the 800 student 1,500-word reflective reports written by seven cohorts between 2008 and 2015. These require students to consider their personal reaction to the Day, and conduct academic research on some gender-related interest prompted by any aspect of the Day. They confirm that the "heart" session engages them emotionally, validates personally acquired knowledge as a starting point for further enquiry,[5] and the inter-cultural exchange enables them to see their own experiences as relative and situated. It also gives permission – particularly to men - to break taboos around speaking about gender issues. Making Gender Day obligatory prevents opting out by men and those who think they already "know" about gender or that it is irrelevant to their discipline (Ackerly and Mügge 2016). In terms of emotional responses, students speak of feeling "scared", "sceptical", "intrigued", "apprehensive", or "uninterested" before the Day. Some - both from Western secular societies and more culturally conservative or religious backgrounds – admit they feared that it would be a tool for "advocating feminism" and even "homosexual demands", yet report that the Day was "eye-opening", "enjoyable", "challenging", "fascinating", "transformational" and a highlight of their entire program.[6] It shatters their preconceptions, and often affects them on a deeply personal as well as intellectual level.

In terms of the "deep structure" of the Department's gender culture, the picture is mixed. Gender Day has helped to mainstream gender analysis into the peace studies curriculum organically and incrementally through student *demand*. Now, in other classes students question when gender analysis is absent or uninformed. Nearly all faculty have added more gender-related readings and assessments to their syllabi, and a third more students, including men, now take the optional MA class, revived in 2008. The research component of the reflective report sparks interest for future dissertation topics. However, the coordination of Gender Day still relies on me and one colleague. Therefore, the next stage is to ensure that the Department collectively owns the expertise with which to maintain gender analysis as a foundational element and threshold concept in our teaching of politics and IR. In terms of replicability, the effective three-part pedagogy of "heart, head and hands" should be transferable even to groups that are far more homogeneous. However, in the absence of direct inter-cultural encounter, supplementary tools would need to be devised to enable students to develop a gender lens for both their own lives and those of others as the first building block towards effective, political gender analysis.

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[1] A module of this name is taught to both the first year undergraduates and our Masters students. The content of the two modules is somewhat

different and appropriate to the level of study. Gender Day is the one element that is identical and that they have in common.

[2] They tally only these "weeks on gender", and specialized, optional, modules in "elite" politics/IR departments, not foundational teaching on gender.

[3] The cohort is normally roughly 50/50 male and female, and there are slightly more Masters students than undergraduates.

[4] In the 2015 cohort of 120 students, there were 27 East Asian, 20 African, seven from Asia and the Middle East. Some 14 were British nationals or residents, with mixed heritage (typically from Africa and Pakistan, whether recent or second-generation immigrants or settled asylum-seekers).

[5] It follows the epistemological principles developed by Paulo Freire (1970) that assume that we all hold immense amounts of knowledge about our own lives, but often lack the space, permission or tools/language by which to express that knowledge.

[6] I use the anonymous Evaluation sheet to get feedback on their perceptions of the effectiveness of different components of the Day, and the facilitation of their group or workshop. They are aware that this is entirely separate from their reflection on their own learning in the reports.

APPENDIX FOR PS SYMPOSIUM

AN INSTRUCTOR'S GUIDE TO RUNNING GENDER DAY

Preparation and Logistics

One month in advance:
- Put out a call for facilitators for the group discussion session
- Confirm workshop leaders and topics, and collate any required or indicative readings to post online

One week in advance:
- Collate the names of all participating students (with their sex, country of origin/nationality and study level) on an Excel spreadsheet
- Allocate them to discussion groups in a way that achieves a proportionate balance of those three factors
- Email students the Excel list (with only their names on it, in alphabetical order) so that they can see which discussion group they are in
- Train the volunteer facilitators and prepare their folders

On the day of the first half of Gender Day
- Print out alphabetised lists of all students with their allocated discussion group. Post a copy on the lecture room door for latecomers
- Label all breakout rooms with the discussion group number
- Set up rooms with tables moved back and chairs in a circle
- Make all the online readings available for the end of the first session

After the first session
- The Gender Day leader takes all the slips indicating students' workshop preferences, and enters these into an Excel spreadsheet. Where possible students are allocated to their first choice of workshop. Numbers may vary depending on the workshop giver's stated preference and nature of the activity.
- Students are emailed an alphabetized list stating the workshop to which they have been allocated

On the day of the second half of Gender Day
- Print out alphabetized lists of all students with their allocated/chosen workshop. Post a copy on the lecture room door for latecomers
- Label all workshop rooms with the title of the workshop
- Set up rooms as workshop giver prefers, but often with tables in a horseshoe or in small clusters to encourage group work
- Email workshop givers a list of participants (also listing sex, nationality/origin and level of study)

Training of facilitators for the group discussion session

Those who have volunteered to be group discussion facilitators are trained by the Gender Day leader in a three-hour session in the week preceding the first afternoon of Gender Day. We cover:
- the timetable of the whole event
- the principles of inter-cultural dialogue
- facilitation skills
- the structure of the session (a lesson plan) – see below
- working together as a pair

Each facilitator pair gets a folder containing:
- an attendance list for their session and full alphabetical list of all participants (in case someone has joined the wrong group)
- a list of all groups, rooms, facilitators and their cellphone numbers
- tips and guidelines for good facilitation and dialogue
- the lesson plan
- 20 copies of the 'Prompt' statements
- a pack of sticky notes
- whiteboard markers
- paper on which to note queries or issues that arise

Workshop preparation

The Gender Day leader discusses the workshop title and description (4-5 sentences) with the leader, sometimes developing with them a teaching plan that builds in sufficient interactive activity, such as small group or paired tasks, that alternates with whole group discussion and information giving by the workshop giver. Any required pre-readings are posted online in advance, plus any other further reading. The powerpoint of the session, where available, can be posted online in advance or immediately following the session.

TIMETABLE

First afternoon:

TIME	ACTIVITY
1.15 - 1.30	**LECTURE THEATRE: BRIEFING** Students arrive and are handed a sheet listing the workshops they can choose for the following week. They rank three in order of preference, and hand the slip back. They can double-check on a list which discussion group they are in
1.30 - 1.50	Gender Day leader: • explains the programme of the two half days • introduces the principles of dialogue, especially in an inter-cultural context
1.50	Students are then sent by group, with the group discussion facilitators, to their breakout rooms
2.00 – 3.50	**BREAKOUT ROOMS: DISCUSSION GROUPS** Icebreaker and group agreement on their ground rules for dialogue Facilitated paired, small-group, and whole group discussion on personal lived and learned experience of gender roles and social expectations (see session outline below) Return to the lecture theatre
4.00 – 4.20 4.20 - 4.50 4.50- 5.00	**LECTURE THEATRE: Q AND A, AND LECTURE** Gender Day leaders asks for feedback from the group discussion, and responds to any questions and queries. Power-point based lecture (with plenty of images and examples) on • Gender theory and terminology • How gender analysis is relevant to the key fields of peace studies (politics, international relations, development, conflict resolution) A reminder that general readings are posted online, along with specific readings for the following week's workshop

TIME	ACTIVITY
1.15 - 1.30	LECTURE THEATRE: BRIEFING Students arrive and can double-check a sheet listing the workshop to which they are allocated
1.30 - 1.50	Gender Day leader: • Answers any questions arising from student reflection or reading in relation to the previous week's session • Outlines the expectations for the reflective writing assignment (what they learnt, the questions it raised for them, how gender relates to their field of study, further research into a specific topic of interest from any part of the Day)
1.50	Students are then sent by group to their workshop
2.00 – 4.00	BREAKOUT ROOMS: WORKSHOPS Students take part in the workshop they have chosen END

10 mins	Welcome and icebreaker activities Group generates and agrees ground rules for open and respectful dialogue – these are written on the whiteboard or flipchart and remain posted throughout
15-20 minutes	<u>Activity A</u> Students are asked to get into pairs and to select as a discussion partner someone as apparent different from themselves as possible. Each pair receives a sheet with the 'prompt' statements and questions (see below) and discusses them. Facilitators move around listening to the conversations, asking questions, picking up themes
20-30 minutes	Whole group discussion Facilitators ask which statements students found most interesting and why. Often one statement will prompt very varied discussion and these response can be recorded on the white board and used expansively to explore
5-10 minutes	Short break
10 minutes	<u>Activity B</u> Participants get into pairs again, but this time with a different person, but again someone who is 'dissimilar' from them, and are given a sticky note pad and a question sheet On the whiteboard/flipchart the facilitators draw a Venn diagram of two overlapping circles. One side is labelled M (for expected masculine attributes) and F (for feminine role expectations) Participant pairs discuss the following question 'What are the key social expectation of men/women in my society/where I grew-up?' Students write gendered role expectations for each sex on sticky notes which they place on one side or other – or in the middle – of the diagram Follow-up questions (on the other side of the sheet) for them to discuss • How is/was this for YOU? Do you fit these gender roles and stereotypes? If they don't fit you, who do they fit? • In your family/society – what kinds of masculinity/femininity are highly socially valued, and which are not? • What are the social consequences of staying within/straying outside the dominant gender roles with which you grew up? For you personally? For the wider society?
15	Facilitators then lead discussion as to the similarities – and

minutes	differences – in what participants have posted – and their responses to the follow-up questions.
10 minutes	Activity C (time permitting) In group of four students they discuss the following How did you learn what it means, socially, to be a man/woman? Which were the key institutions in transmitting gender rules?
15 minutes	Facilitators then lead a whole group discussion on this topic

Prompt statements for Activity A

Discuss these statements in your pair.
What you think they mean?
Would you like to do any of these things?
Have you experienced social pressure to do/not do these things?

I can grow a beard when I want to
I have a deep voice
I often listen to other people's problems
When I'm in a new place, I have a good sense of direction
I could get pregnant
I tend to worry about my body (weight, shape and so on)
I usually keep my hair really short
I paint my nails and use makeup
I play football
I am taller than 5' 6" (1.65m)
I know how to sew and cook
I have more oestrogen in my body than testosterone
I tend to cry from time to time
I have a tendency to get into fights with people
I tend to be open about how I'm feeling
I see myself as a logical rational person, rather than an emotional one
I enjoy talking about my personal life to my friends
I am physically strong
I never wear skirts

A sample expansion of a prompt statement

I could get pregnant…..
> … but I don't want children
> … because I don't have access to contraception
> … if I was fertile
> … if my husband was fertile
> … if I am sexually assaulted
> … and not be able to decide about continuing the pregnancy
> … but my husband/family will only be happy if it is a boy
> … but will be ostracied if I am not married/the father is from a different ethnic group/caste/class or the pregnancy is the result of rape
> … but I would lose my job or be expected to give up my work
> … but not all women can and they are looked down on
> … but mothering is not just about pregnancy
> … but this also involves the father of my child
> … but I would prefer to adopt children
> … but parenting is a social function, that both men and women can carry out

Second Afternoon: Gender-related workshops offered between 2008 and 2015

Role-play of a ceasefire negotiation
Gender, landmines and demining
Gender, gendercide and sexual violence in conflict
Transgender/queer theory and International Relations
Gender and post-conflict reconstruction
Representation of women in political violence and terrorism
Masculinity and violent nationalism
Honour, gender roles, and social/political violence
The peace process and political transitions in West Africa
UN Security Council Resolution 1325 on women, peace and security
Political representation and gender quotas in post-conflict and post-transitional settings
Women in public office in Bangladesh and Africa
Gender and community conflict over water resources
Understanding state-sponsored homophobic violence, especially in Sub-Saharan Africa
Land and food security in Sub-Saharan Africa (Uganda)
Gender, land and sexuality
Living with HIV/AIDS in Tanzania
Gender mainstreaming and specialists in multilateral development organizations
How to conduct a gender audit
Becoming a man: nature, nurture and raising boys
Men researching men
Men, masculinity and health
Reproducing violence: Pathways to manhood in Medellín's periphery
Sociological perspectives on masculinity
Multiculturalism and forced marriage
Gender and the criminal justice system
Gender roles in the Second World War
Gender representation in social media
Images of violent conflict
Gender awareness in mediation practice
New patterns of marriage and cohabitation
Gendered work, care and welfare policy in the Middle East and North Africa
The emergence of public and private spheres in early modern Britain
Gender archetypes in myths and fairy tales

Student Evaluation Form

This is handed in with their written assignment (the reflective report) and is completely anonymous.

Level of Study (BA) or (MA) …………………………………………………….

Your sex/gender identity…………………………………………………………

Your cultural background/country of origin……………………………….

Your age……………………………………………………………………………

Anything else you want to add about yourself?....................................

Please read the following questions and circle your answers

1 = do not agree at all…………5 = agree very strongly

The facilitated morning discussion group helped my understanding of gender

1   2   3   4   5

Comments…………………………………………………………………………

The lecture and Q and A session helped my understanding of gender

1   2   3   4   5

Comments………………………………………………………………………….

The workshop I attended helped my understanding of gender

1   2   3   4   5

Comments………………………………………………………………………….

The online materials that were provide helped to deepen my understanding of gender

1   2   3   4   5

Comments………………………………………………………………………….

Any other comments you would like to make?