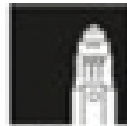


BALEAP Conference, Warwick April 2023
Yolanda Cerda

FEMINISM AND EAP



UNIVERSITY OF LEEDS

*Not gender difference, but 'the
difference gender makes'*

(Cameron 1992)



- Introduction
- Part one - Defining feminism
- Part two - Feminism as a lens for:
 - EAP as social practice - community of practice / work
 - EAP as field - epistemologies and knowledge bases
 - EAP and feminist academic practices / pedagogical approaches
- Example of FCDA on EAP – approaches in the classrooms?

Thoughts

Too much to say

PLAN

Defining feminism

- Feminism as an idea: this relates to the belief that women are people – **philosophical / ontological**
- Feminism as a collective movement which seeks to end sexism, exploitation and discrimination - **political**
- Feminism as 'an intellectual framework: what the philosopher Nancy Hartsock described as a mode of analysis... a way of asking questions and searching for answers' - **critical**

(Cameron 2019, p.2)

Questions

What do I mean by feminism / feminists?

Is feminism still relevant?

What is the relationship between feminism and language?



Assumptions?

We all know what feminism is

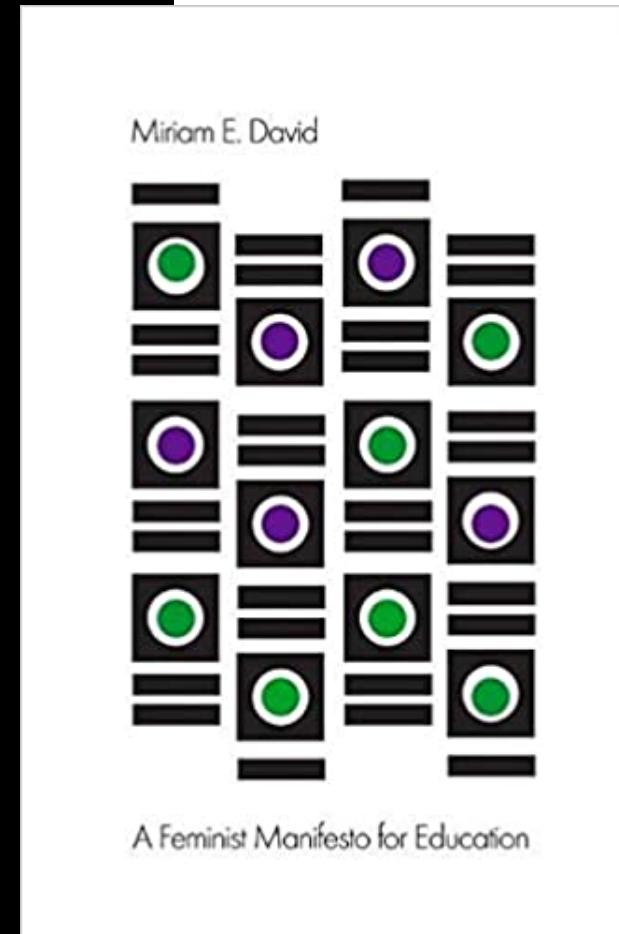
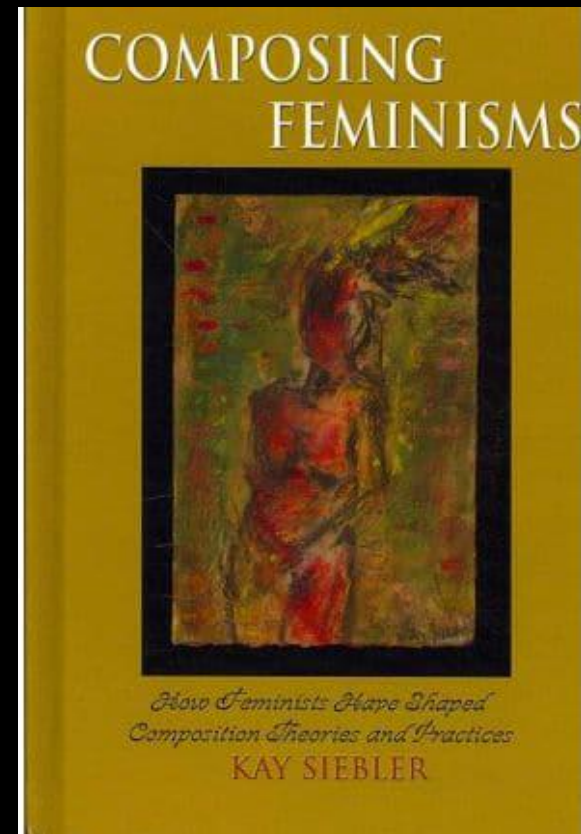
Feminism is about and for women

Feminism is something one 'identifies' with or not

Feminism in education and composition studies...

Feminism has had an impact on various fields related to EAP / language education such as education, sociology, composition studies and rhetoric

But obscure in EAP

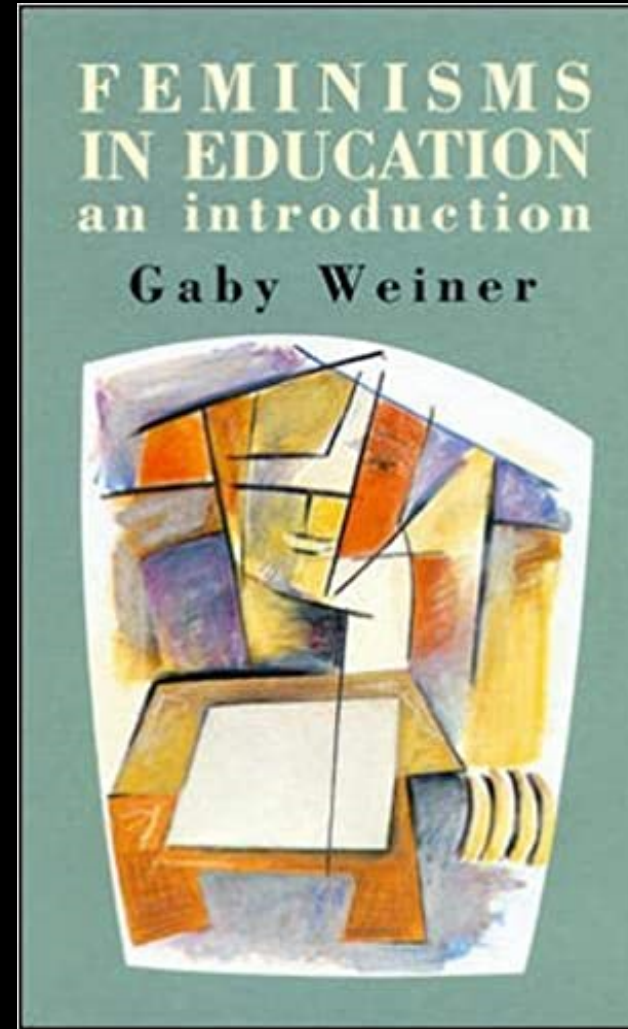


Defining feminism

‘an equality discourse’

‘an analytical framework for unpacking the micro-political – that is how power is exercised at local levels [...] how oppression works, is experienced and where resistances might be possible...’

-As well as *political*, and *critical* dimensions – in HE = praxis oriented ‘concerned with more ethical forms of personal and professional practice’



Thoughts

I like these definitions because they seem interpretatively rich

Liked the approach to feminism and its relation to curriculum and pedagogies in this book– a bit dated though?

Feminism was on the up in the 90s...

Defining feminism

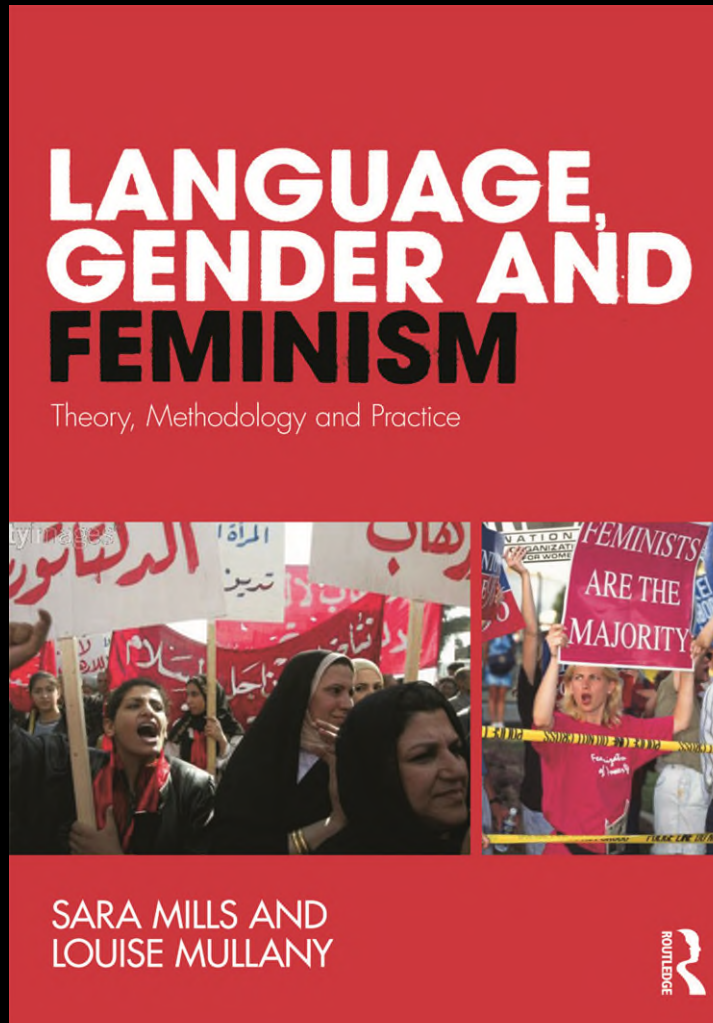
‘there are many different types of feminism in circulation...’

Two unifying factors:

‘1. It is a political movement which focuses on investigating gender [...]

2. It is a movement which has the overall emancipatory aim of redressing gender inequalities’

Mills and Mullany 2011, p.2



Thoughts

Worried about how inclusive including visual images of book covers is

Could address this by describing the book cover

Feminisms

academic feminist **radical feminist**

cultural feminist

material feminist

black feminist

armchair feminist

Terf

liberal feminist **bad feminist**

femi-nazi

I'm not a feminist but... **male feminist** **angry feminist**

I identify as a feminist but...

Thoughts

Emancipatory and social justice goals of Feminism means it links to other theories and movements

-risk of conflating everything and obfuscating particular evolutions and historical developments?

Questions

Why are other equality discourses apparently less controversial? Is that the case?

Defining feminism...

...confusion?

- proliferation of labels
- feminist credentials / identity politics
- culturally-bound
- post-feminism
- invoked and maligned, or ignored / taken for granted?
- Wave terminology – second- wave, third wave, fourth wave... problematic



*Image from
Prospect
magazine article*

Called

*'Everything you
wanted to know
about 4th wave
feminism - but
were afraid to
ask'*

Aug 14 2017

*Do images like
these commodify
feminism?*

*(like Frida Kahlo
bags...?)*

FEMINISM FOR ME

- Proliferation of 'types' – symptomatic of its

- i) versatility

- ii) disruptive potential

- iii) success / failure

- social justice and emancipation at its core – linked though not synonymous with other equality discourses (decolonisation, inclusivity)

- Concerned with the collective and structural causes and effects of inequality (enacted through language for e.g.)

- linked to intersectionality (coined by Kimberle Crenshaw 1991)

- questioning of private and public distinctions

- researcher / practitioner reflexivity

- scrutiny of language—representative and discursively productive of relative oppressions – long history of engagement with language and language ideologies



So what happens if we apply a feminist lens to EAP??



Thoughts

*EAP and
Feminism seem
to be not quite
compatible or
uneasy
bedfellows*

Irrelevant?

Contradictory?

too long on just feminism?

*How can I get a picture of Beyonce in
beside Ken Hyland?*

CRITIQUES OF EAP

- Is feminism incompatible with EAP based on critiques (and perceptions) of it?

From Hyland's 2018 defence of EAP 'Sympathy for the devil? A defence of EAP'

Critiques include the perceptions that EAP:

- is complicit in the relentless expansion of English which threatens indigenous academic registers (e.g. Phillipson 1992; Canagarajah 1999)
- [...] is a remedial 'service activity' on the periphery of university life (Spack 1988)
- imposes an imprisoning conformity to disciplinary values and native norms on second language writers (e.g. Benesch 2001)' (Hyland, 2018)



BUT HYLAND (2018) CONCEDES

‘The problematization of pedagogy is still not a matter of regular communal discourse in the field and often practitioners lack time for professional development and discussion of teaching issues. Nor have **we distinguished ourselves in understanding how students experience their lives, their studies and their disciplines while privileging TEXT above PRACTICE** can sometimes lead us to treat language, and in particular writing, as primarily a linguistic, and perhaps even an autonomous, object rather than something which is socially embedded in particular lives, disciplines and contexts.’

(Hyland 2018, p.399)

Thoughts

Some of the discourse surrounding EAP is potentially gendered?

butler stance

service and care

*‘like blaming coal miners for air pollution’
(Hyland 2018)*

EAP AS SOCIAL PRACTICE – WHAT CAN FEMINISM CONTRIBUTE?

- Language Centres and EAP as embedded within institutional settings
- Complex communities of practitioners and students – how might practices, relations, status, power, agency be inflected by gender (and / or other identities) and gender *relations* in EAP communities
- In the EAP classroom, the associated disciplines in the institution, in the workplace...
- Can these be traced linguistically and discursively?
- In what ways are oppressions, inequalities and their resistances articulated?



EAP AS SOCIAL PRACTICE – WHAT CAN FEMINISM CONTRIBUTE?

Studies can be conflicting...

e.g. Rosslyn Appleby's (2018) ethnographic study of male EAP practitioners in Japanese universities – identifies EAP as gendered labour but argues that:

‘Although the men’s accounts tend to frame TEAP as a rational, disembodied, asexual occupation [...] gender and sexuality are deployed as identity gatekeeping tools that serve to police the borders of academic English as an elite, male-dominated professional category.’ (Appleby 2018, p.42)

Thoughts

No mention of feminism though feminist constructs and methods are used....

Metaphoric Language again:

Gatekeeping

Policing the borders

This seems at odds with Leeds / UK context?

EAP AS SOCIAL PRACTICE – WHAT CAN FEMINISM CONTRIBUTE?

Versus...

Jackie Tuck's (2018) JEAP article:

“I’m nobody’s Mum in this university”: The gendering of work around student writing in UK higher education

- ethnographic study across several institutions
- Finds that feminising discourses of ‘care’ invoke ‘stereotypically female caring roles in ways which reflect and perpetuate the marginalised status of writing work and at the same time infantilise students’ (Tuck 2018, p.32) – distinction between emotional and intellectual labour is stigmatising

Thoughts

This feels familiar to me....

Again feminist mentioned once in article though feminist authors are cited...

Language workers

Cinderella workers

EAP AS SOCIAL PRACTICE – WHAT CAN FEMINISM CONTRIBUTE?

- Are the findings of other studies replicated in our / your context(s)? Are particular discourses prevalent and [where] does gender fit?
- (What) is the dialectic between the perspectives of EAP practitioners, institutions, students ?
- What are typical EAP practices and products and who participates in them? (Why?)

Questions I ask myself?

What about conferences, scholarship, leadership

Professional practices...

EAP EPISTEMOLOGIES & KNOWLEDGE BASES

- Genre Theories – applying a feminist lens?

Task Two

Here are two versions of an email request; they differ principally in their structure. Which do you prefer, and why?

Text A

Dear Professor Swales,

I have been interested in your work for some time, and I am currently writing a thesis on the history of English for Specific Purposes in the Arab World. In this context, I have seen a reference to a 1983 volume on this topic, which you co-edited with Hassan Mustafa. I have looked for it here in Morocco, but in vain; I found it is not available. Would you be able to send me a copy? I am looking forward to hearing from you soon,

With respect

Ms Fatima Abdulla

Navigating Academia

Writing
Supporting
Genres

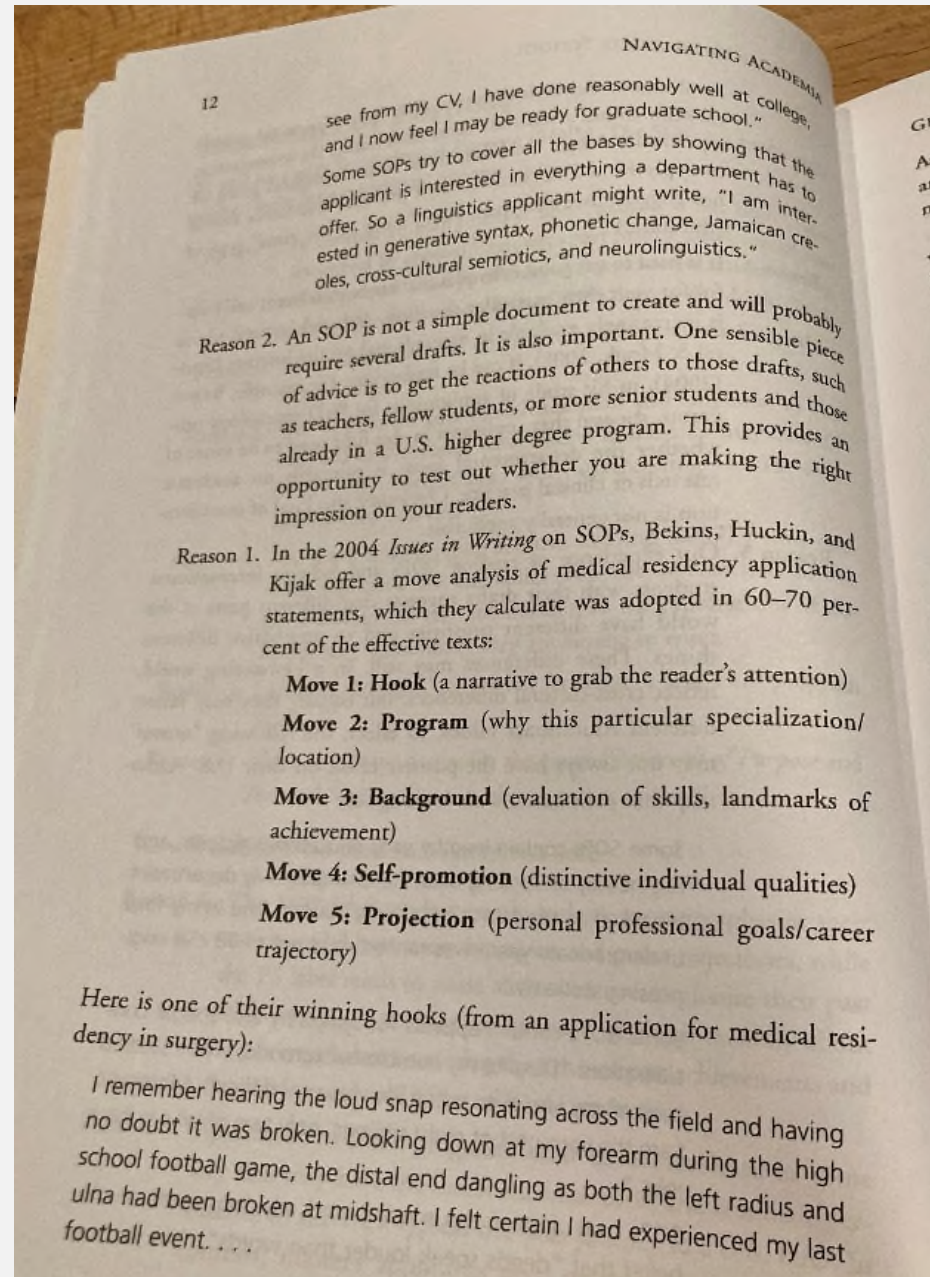
JOHN M. SWALES
CHRISTINE B. FEAK

VOLUME 4 OF THE REVISED AND EXPANDED EDITION OF
English in Today's Research World



The Michigan Series in English for
Academic & Professional Purposes

GENRE THEORIES – APPLYING A FEMINIST LENS?



GENRE THEORY

- Are 'moves' or 'conventions' in any way gendered? –see *self-promotion*?
- At the very least – what do some textual analyses of rhetorical moves in texts **owe to** or **occlude** about [academic] power relations, the processes of text production, text producers and consumers?
- But ... also a lot of resistance through **genre innovations** (cf Tardy 2016, among others) and evolution of genre theory approaches (e.g. Ding and Evans 2022)

Questions

*Am I
misrepresenting
genre theory?*

*Study of letters
from birth mothers
to adoptive
mothers were
analysed by genre
for success and
found to be
affected by class/
socioeconomic
background of
writer*

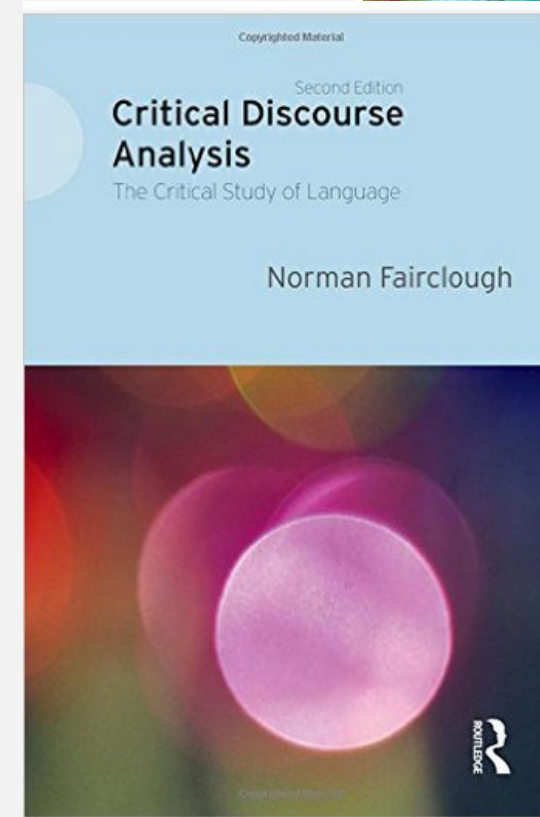
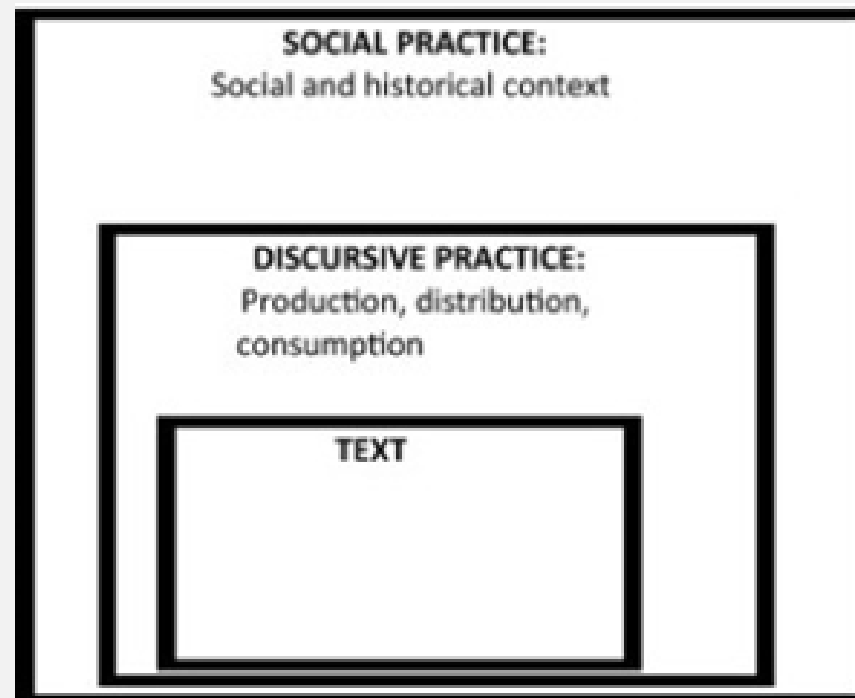
ALTERNATIVE / COMPLEMENTARY TEXTUAL ANALYSIS – (FEMINIST) CRITICAL DISCOURSE ANALYSIS (CDA)

Who is the text for and what is its aim? (discursive)

How does this text relate to the wider context? (political, social, etc.)

How do its linguistic features represent and encode power relations?

See **Michelle Lazar** 2017 for FEMINIST CDA



DOING FEMINIST CDA – QUICK EXAMPLE

Writing a Personal Statement – From Swales and Feak (2011) – how are identities and academic disciplines indexed

Student 1 extract

I remember hearing the loud snap resonating across the field and having no doubt it was broken. Looking down at my forearm during the high school football game, the distal end dangling as both the left radius and ulna had been broken at midshaft. I felt certain I had experienced my last football event.

Student 2 extract

The moment came on Friday, June 23rd, 2006, at precisely 5:25PM. I was attending an XX conference....

[...]

As the conference went on, I set a challenge for myself: I would ask a question of one of the speakers about their presentation. When the final speaker stepped up to the podium, I knew this was my last chance... And so the moment arrived, that Friday afternoon; I stood up, took a deep breath, and crossed the line from observer to participant in the professional world of XX

(See Cerda in Ding and Evans 2022)



FEMINIST SCHOLARLY AND PEDAGOGIC PRACTICES

- Creative, critical collaboration (Handforth and Taylor, 2016)
- Disrupting genres – poetic riffs on form (Handforth and Taylor 2016, Lillis, McMullan and Tuck 2018)
- Questioning / problematising key concepts of academic discourse(s), such as *argumentation* and *voice* (e.g. Belcher 1997 and Mitchell, 2017)
- Principled feminist pedagogies (e.g. Danvers, Hinton-Smith and Webb, 2019)

*Collaborative,
supportive,
transformative*

*Some fascinating
articles which
model different
ways of doing
academic
writing...*

WHAT HAVE I LEFT OUT?

The disciplines and related work environments...

But some anecdotal views:

Me: 'Can I ask an academic question to anyone out there... Do you think your work / field is gendered? And if so, how?...'

Female QC: 'YES!! How long have you got?! Legal decisions gendered, not least because senior judiciary still 70% male. And that's partly because senior judges are required to stay in judges lodgings, ideal for 60 yr old men who leave wives at home...



Mining whatsapp groups for data?

Explained question,

Sought consent to quote

WHAT HAVE I LEFT OUT?

Female Art Historian: @Yolanda Cerda – the gender bias in the artworld is very clearly laid out with all the statistics in the Freelands Foundation Report

<https://freelandsfoundation.co.uk/research-and-publications/annual-report-representation-of-female-artists-in-britain>

Oh and your favourite newspaper ...wouldn't publish artworks depicting bush or let me use the word pussy in a feature on art and women's sexual pleasure.

Me: Haha! Except when quoting Trump I presume

FAH: Yep – abuse ok affirmation not ok

Re: gendered language. My pet hate is the word 'seminal'.



LANGUAGE USE

TO CONCLUDE

- feminism still relevant and is 'for everybody'(bell hooks, 2000)
- feminist concerns with language and discourses make it an appropriate lens for EAP
- educational concern with inequalities and social justice also make it a generative framework
- are we resistant as academics to examining the 'conditions of our own production' as some have claimed? (Tuck 2018, p.32)
- Scope for more enquiry (see Cerda 2022 in Ding and Evans)
- What about the disciplines and EAP?
- Remind ourselves of the social underpinnings of some of our knowledge bases? (e.g. SFL) ...

I hope I've piqued some interest

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THANK YOU

y.cerda@leeds.ac.uk



*I'd be interested in
hearing your
feedback on what
you found
interesting /
relevant / useful to
your scholarship
or pedagogy (if
anything!)*