Appendix 1: Example of iRAT tRAT

Appendix 2: Example of

Appendix 3: Example of Case Study from the text book (Black, J.,& Roberts, C. (2011). *Doing ethics in media*: *Theories and practical applications*. NY: Routledge)

CASE 4.1 **Journalism: Publish or Not: Changing Stages, Changing Sides?**

You are an editor with Freedonia Media International (FMI), your nation's largest wire service with 1,000 domestic clients. Freedonia has long been at war with a smaller nation thousands of miles away, and FMI has long had reporters and photographers embedded with Freedonia military units to document the action for the 1,000 newspapers that are your clients.

A week ago, an FMI photographer was on a routine mission with the Freedonia military, for a magazine-length story about difficulties encountered by such units. The unit was hit by an ambush, and your photographer captured photos of an enlisted man receiving first aid by fellow soldiers minutes after being hit by a rifle shot. The photos show a slight hint of blood, but you've seen worse watching PG-rated war movies.

The soldier died on an operating room table a few hours after the photo was taken. You followed military protocol, which forbids publishing photos until the next of kin are notified. Moreover, you made sure an editor showed a photo to the family before releasing it to your clients.

The family says it does not want you to publish the photo, and both military public affairs personnel and high-ranking Freedonia Department of Defense officials have called you to ask that you respect the family's wishes.

➤ You feel pulled by both sides. You appreciate the point of view of the military and the family—your father was an officer for ten years, although you never served. But you also feel the need to tell the story.

Questions to Answer

1. For each stop along Kohlberg's list of moral development stages (Table 4.1), describe the competing interests, your decision if you acted at that stage, and the justification.
2. Now consider the same case study, this time using Gilligan's "ethics of care" orientation (Table 4.2) to defend decisions both to publish the photo and not to publish the photo.
3. At what point do the Kohlberg and Gilligan developmental approaches intersect?
4. Which approach felt more comfortable to you?
5. Imagine that you were the editor of the hometown newspaper of the soldier who died: How might this affect your decision?

Education for social change: The potentials of participatory teaching and learning with students in media and communication education

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Abstract

What lies beyond 'teaching' as straightforward instruction? How does one train for engagement and mobilization for social change? These questions continue to challenge educators who believe that higher education should be about adjusting unequal and unfair social practices, and that their role is to be agents of such a process. This paper explores the potentials of participatory research and teaching methods within the setting of media and communication studies. It offers an overview of the experiences of an assistant university professor across three academic years devoted to experimenting with deliberative pedagogical approaches, and insights into the influencing role played by the settings On the basis of a combinatory qualitative methodology using observations, journals, evaluations and testimonials, and analysing teaching output, the research findings deliver evidence of the ways in which participatory learning schemes can prepare students for a socially reflective and engaging role in an ever-transforming all-digital media environment. The results should inform curricular development of media and communication studies, with the ultimate aim of better connecting higher education to social change.

Keywords: media gender inequalities; participatory action learning and action research; deliberative teaching; social awareness; responsiveness to social inequalities

Introduction

The 21st century media industries are (re)-producing gender inequalities pervasively and enduringly, perceivable in misrepresentation in media output, in 'awkward' working conditions, and in exclusion from decision-making (Ross and Padvani, 2007; Padovani, 2020).

The picture regarding the enduring, and newly emerging, inequalities that will be experienced by the next generation of the media workforce, is distressing. After decades of research, advocacy and activism by feminist scholars and media educators dealing with issues of inequalities, violence and exclusion – as well as their intersections –, the question today is: how should pedagogy in the future "be translated into reflective, responsive and transformative gender-aware approaches and models to educate a new generation of media professionals, ICT developers and global communicators?" (Padovani and Ross, 2020, p. 154).

The main challenge this research addresses is: *How, and in particular through which educational methods, should we reimagine the classroom as a space for social change?* Which teaching and learning methods are most suited to raising students' social awareness and to empowering them to challenge the realities and practices of the industry? What role should educators as individual agents (Made, 2009) play in this process? The answers to these dilemmas lie in critical reflections on the curricular design of research seminars offered to students of media and communication studies at the University of Vienna within the setting of a dedicated Teaching Project (TP) and, accordingly, the disciplinary reconceptualization and realization of teaching practices.

This paper tells the story and describes the experiences of those involved in the TP, which was implemented over three consecutive academic years. The paper is structured as follows: first, it offers an overview of the design of the TP and the methodological considerations underpinning the concept; next, it provides insights into the classes attended, and the research projects undertaken by the students; then, it analyses and evaluates the various sources of information related to the learning and teaching observations - grouped under three pillars (relationships; reflection; recognition) - so conclusions on the procedural, thematic and personal aspects can be drawn; finally, it invites discussion around the baseline challenge of (better) connecting education to social change.

Media gender inequalities and the educational responses: Formulating the research question

The structural, organizational and behavioural inequalities women have faced in the media industries were identified as early as 1987 by Margaret Gallagher and further analysed in a first-ever globally representative study on employment patterns (Gallagher, 1995). In a search for the reasons for (re-)production of such configurations in and by the media sectors, Carolyn Byerly (2014) identified the micro-, meso- and macro-level structural interdependencies, and pointed to the role of organizational culture, ownership and policy

(Byerly, 2014). Digital media and their labour practices consolidated the structural barriers to women's advancement (Duffy, 2015), and recent data on the current status of women in the media sector (Nordicom, 2018); (Global Media Monitoring Project, 2021) underscore the fact that gendered media inequality is the reality today. This evidence has also re-affirmed the validity of the hypothesis by Rush et al. more than three decades ago maintaining the 1:3 or 1:4 ratio of women's historical marginalisation (Rush, Oukrop, and Sarikakis, 2005).

The gender inequalities inherent to media industries and output are multifaceted and structural and thus cannot be solved merely by 'raising the numbers' of women working in the field. While the presence of women in media industries does make a substantial difference to media output, the higher proportion of women in journalism alone, even in decision-making positions (Ross, 2014), does not per se lead to a different – 'better'-gendered and more sensitive – type of reporting. Today, gendered implications of digital transformations, as well as the exposure and safety of media professionals in the news-making sector, have gained prominent attention (Padovani, Raeymaeckers, and De Vuyst, 2019) but there is an ongoing need for more theorisation and reflection (Keil and Dorer, 2019). The continuum of historical, structural, legal and political constraints (Kassa et al., 2019) presumes that any attempt at change must address the entirety of inequality regimes – including higher education, the institution 'producing' future journalists and other media professionals.

The situation within the Austrian media system, where the TP was conducted, echoes the global concerns to a large extent. Although the number of female journalists has risen constantly over the years, reaching near-parity by 2019, with 47 percent of all journalists female (Kaltenbrunner et al., 2020), news beat assignments remain gendered, with men favoured for reporting on hard news and sports, while women covered mostly lifestyle and culture (Letstalkequal Blog, 2019). Also, the dominance of men in leading positions in both traditional (print) and online media remained overwhelming (European Parliament, 2018). Moreover, the recent picture regarding the representation of women in the news and the prevalence of gender-sensitive topics remains disturbing (Rozgonyi, 2020). In the Austrian media sector – which constitutes a highly competitive and over-saturated labour market (Dorer et al., 2009; Kirchhoff & Prandner, 2017) – the future of many media and communication students very much depends on their awareness of, and preparedness for, the conditions under which they will be looking for jobs and pursuing careers. On the one hand, they must be cognisant of the fact that the various and systemic glass ceilings they will be faced with are not evidence of a personal failure to advance their careers, and at the same time they must be prepared to abolish them. On the other hand, they will need to critically reflect on their own position and responsibilities in producing news and media content and the 'genderedness' thereof. These preconditions further imply that their education should not only reflect these realities didactically (Roth-Ebner, 2019), but enable them to develop skills, competencies, and robust capacities to effect transformative change in and by the media, for a gender-equal future.

Against this background, the TP aimed at establishing the classroom as a laboratory of teaching and learning for social change. Therefore, the central and overarching Research Question of this paper aimed to answer the inquiry: which particular features of educational methods and practices are best suited to empowering students, as the next-generation media workforce, to play a socially reflective and responsible role in the media, dedicated to challenging gendered inequalities?

Methodology

Considerations on pedagogical methods

The TP was aimed at reinforcing the establishment of a connection between education and social change, creating a learning space for students to be co-creators of their own learning through deliberative conversations (Bargerstock, Van Egeren, and Fitzgerald, 2017). The "need to train gender-aware next-generation professionals to contribute to implementing gender equality principles and gender-equal practices in both media structures and content" (Montiel and Macharia, 2019, p. 128) is apparent to gender media scholars and educators, and there have been a number of calls for more gendered education in this field (North, 2010) providing a collective case study about the teaching of gender in journalism education. The research finds

that no journalism program offers a unit that specifically addresses the portrayal of women in the media or, importantly, the gendered production of news and gendered newsroom culture. This paper posits the importance of gender education in journalism courses, hypothesises why it is ignored as a valuable part of journalism education, and suggests how tertiary journalism education could address systemic inequity for women in media organisations by adapting its curriculum.(North, 2010); (Padovani and Ross, 2020). The precondition for the pedagogical experimenting (Geertsema-Sligh, 2014) was the enabling institutional normative framework in place at the University of Vienna, and the Department of Communication specifically provided for the necessary curricular flexibility.

The pedagogical concept originated in the critical tradition of Freire (1992), and aimed at *conscientization* of students with the ultimate goal of positioning them to challenge and transform future working conditions in the media industry. It also focused on energising students' personal engagement in selecting the object of their studies and the manner in which they approached the learning process. Given the sensitive nature and the social complexity of the undertaking, it was felt that traditional teaching methods may not suffice to achieve transformative change; instead, a learning continuum of critical exploration, assessment and reflection with shared and participatory feedback loops and learning cycles appeared necessary. Thus, the TP was designed in a manner that created an enabling communicative space (Habermas, 1987; 1981) for students, with the ultimate goal of increasing their social commitment to challenging replication or (re-)production of gender inequalities in and by the media, while understanding the role of the media in creating the Good Society (Djerf-Pierre, 2011).

The methodological considerations underlying the TP also reflected my more than 15 years' experience of teaching practice, including experience of a particular *learning bottleneck* (Pace and Middendorf, 2004) namely *distance*. While teaching topics and disciplines related to freedom of expression, media freedom, pluralism, diversity and democracy, I was confronted with the superficial distance of the issues at hand, and the everyday media realities of the students involved. Very often, the students recognised actual gendered hate speech in their social media newsfeeds – sometimes even targeting them – but they were unable to connect those experiences to abstract questions about the limits to free speech. Also, for them, normative theories referring to the social-political-philosophical principles organizing the relationship between media and society were frequently disconnected from the realm of 'fake news' shared by their friends and connections. Therefore, reflections on freedoms as human rights and foundations of civility, equality before the law, solidarity and cohesion, cultural diversity, active participation, or social responsibility, were rarely triggered. Consequently, my pedagogical approach had to focus on the critical lack of engagement with their role and responsibility as future media and communication professionals, and their potential as change agents. This bottleneck also triggered realisation that 'the notion of a unified critical thinking' runs counter to an essential strand in current thinking about teaching which stresses the disciplinary nature of knowledge (Pace and Middendorf 2004, p. 1).

Meanwhile, I shared feminist scepticism about the political ambitions of critical pedagogy (Luke and Gore, 1992), and reflected upon that scepticism as I carried it with me into the TP on which this paper is focused. I resolved to take on the role of the 'engaged pedagogue' of (bell hooks, 2014) addressing the personal well-being of students in addition to their academic achievements, bringing the personal into the realm of the professional. We devoted significant time to discussion of students' experiences with their own gender awareness and consciousness awakening. Many were frustrated, and emotionally affected, by the ignorance displayed by family members towards the issue of gender equality, and their resistance to any discussion of the topic at the dining table. Discussions within the safe space of the classroom were intended to build communities through perseverance (hooks, 2003).

Finally, the selection of the *teaching method* rested upon the working hypothesis that shared, active and inclusive learning journeys would best fit with the objectives of the TP: activating students' awareness of their relatedness to the topics and *identification* with the topics, while contributing to theoretical knowledge transfer. Necessarily, some limitations had to be negotiated. The upper limit to the size of the class was set at 30 students, to ensure personal and hands-on guidance. The students could select from a pre-defined set of research topics tailored for participatory methods, typically of a qualitative nature. Thus, the results of the TP need to be interpreted within these boundaries.

Participatory action learning and action research (PALAR) as a theoretical concept

The method of participatory action learning and action research (PALAR) was selected for the TP. Action research in social sciences is a participatory research method that involves participants actively reflecting on social problems and contributing to finding solutions while producing guidelines for effective practices. The term was coined by Kurt Lewin (1946), who characterized it as "…comparative research on the conditions and effects of various forms of social action and research leading to social action", using a process of … a spiral of steps, each of which is composed of a circle of planning, action, and fact-finding about the result of the action" (Lewin, 1946, p. 35, 38). Action research as a method and as social action focuses on finding 'solutions' with the ultimate aim of changing an existing situation and thus enforcing social justice. Moreover, it is generally used to improve practice involving action, evaluation, and critical reflection deeply embedded in the process of engaging researchers and participants to collaborate closely and continuously (Norton, 2008). Action research creates 'knowledge' within the process of acting, residing with 'the belief that knowledge is socially constructed, subjective, and influenced by culture and social interactions' (Koshy, et al., 2011, p.12). In this way, findings emerge as the action develops with the purpose of learning for personal and professional development and in order to inform and influence practice (Kemmis, McTaggart, and Nixon, 2014). It is often argued that action research is a particular orientation and purpose of investigation rather than a distinct research methodology (Reason and Bradbury, 2001), in seeking transformative change through the simultaneous processes of taking action and doing research linked together by critical reflection (Rowell et al., 2015). Furthermore, it holds the potential to democratize research by challenging its exclusive and exploitative institutionalization (Waterman et al., 2001).

Lawrence Stenhouse (1975) first applied the concept of action research to teaching and curriculum development. He positioned teachers as practitioner-researchers, stressing the need for research-informed teaching conducted as educational research (Stenhouse, 1975). It is first and foremost the action process as an empowering experience for students and for educators which enhances participation, problem finding and solving skills primarily based on qualitative research methods. The role of the teacher within this scenario spans that of a planner-leader-catalyser/facilitator-designer-listener-observer-synthesizer and reporter within the settings of schools, universities and learning communities everywhere (Bradbury et al., 2019).

Out of the various approaches linking action research to education, the Participatory Action Learning and Action Research (PALAR) scheme provided an optimal educational, theoretical, and methodological framework, which involved a partnership and collaboration between the educator and the students (Zuber-Skerritt, 2018). This is why PALAR was chosen as a methodological approach, rather than a single and distinct method; it permitted a flexible, multidisciplinary and democratically-engaged critical educational exercise (Jordan and Kapoor, 2016).

The courses throughout the semesters were built upon the participatory and action-led PALAR model, whereby the main building blocks, the pillars of the teaching method, corresponded to the '3 Rs': (I.) relationships; (II.) reflection; and (III.) recognition (Kearney, Wood, and Zuber-Skerritt, 2013) - woven into one process on the assumption that the students would connect them to gendered inequalities projected onto their realities.

The relationship-building (I.) pillar underpinned the development of trust and the team-building process among the students and the educator, and the creation of an inclusive atmosphere within the classroom and throughout all communications during the research and learning process. The reflection (II.) elements (critical, self-critical and meta-reflective) were inherently built-in at every stage of the TP, with a special emphasis on identification with the research objects, namely gendered inequalities in, and brought about by, the media. This practice was vital in ensuring self-critical insight into the students' own worldviews, and was facilitated by the greatest possible flexibility provided with regard to the research design. Meanwhile, recognition (III.) of outcomes involved the open publication of the students' findings on a dedicated web platform, and of their individual action proposals in the form of academic blog entries, as a recognition and reward for the research efforts.

The process of data investigation: Analysing and evaluating the TP

Data on the TP was generated in multiple ways and analysed through different methods. The Individual

Learning Journals completed after each class by the students and submitted at the end of the semester (n68) served as the major source of information. Students had to systematically and anonymously keep logs documenting the learning process, note, analyse and reflect on their observations, draw conclusions, and map a personal action plan. The content of the Learning Journals was first categorised according to the 3 R's (relationships-reflection-recognition) and then analysed thematically while observing characteristics and patterns in students' experiences of conscientization.

Furthermore, I recorded my observations in Teaching Diaries (n19), all of which were systematically analysed across the main pillars of the TP. Collegial Teaching Visits organised by the Centre for Teaching and Learning at the University of Vienna (n5) provided further input and feedback informing this paper. Additionally, students' formal course evaluations submitted to the University of Vienna (n68) and aggregated by the Quality Assurance Division (n3) were further assessed against the criteria of clarity of teaching objectives, and satisfaction with the outcomes and the quality of teaching, as well as against the Research Question. Finally, the research reports and the individual testimonials expressed in the blog entries of the students were thematically studied as a matter of social reflection and responsiveness to gendered inequalities.

Implementing the teaching project: module description and timeline

Based on the aforementioned theoretical and pedagogical considerations, a series of research seminars over three academic years were dedicated to the TP. All modules were organised around a complete research cycle within the field of media and communication studies, which includes various areas of professional communication, such as journalism, public relations, advertising, and market research. First, students identified social problems related to gender inequalities within the research areas of journalism practices in Austria, representation in media content or the urban settings of the city in which they lived (Vienna). Next, they worked together with their research subjects (Austrian journalists, media professionals and gender specialists) in a participatory fashion to understand the problematic social situation and change it for the better. To this end, they conceptualised, designed and implemented complex research projects with the aim of critically assessing and planning possible interventions on gender mainstreaming in the media. The research results - in the form of blog entries, videos, podcasts, data visualization and photo stories - were published on a dedicated web-based teaching platform (academic blog). Finally, they identified with their future role as socially responsive media professionals and change agents and wrote short essays about their reflections (also published on the academic blog).

The pilot phase was realized in the 2019 Summer semester, and the results were taken further in the 2019/2020 winter semester and the 2020 Summer semester teaching periods. In total, 68 students were involved. The student body of the seminars consisted exclusively of female Bachelor students usually in their fourth or fifth semester[1]. The TP relied upon the hypothesis that the realities of gender inequalities in the Austrian and other European media industries where the students will seek jobs, would not only create detrimental long-term conditions for their career development, but also oblige them to align with the industrial routines of (re-)producing inequalities. However, the distance bottleneck would have prevented students' identification with these realities, as well as the realization that they were linked to their future job prospects. So the TP aimed at 'doing gender' in and by the media, illustrating that gender is performed and embedded in everyday interactions, to highlight how gender is produced (West and Zimmerman, 1987) and how gender is 'thought' (Rakow, 1986) in and by the media industries.

Thematically, during the first seminar series in the 2019 Summer semester (the pilot phase of the TP) a group of students quantitatively researched gender distribution among all Austrian journalists in order to be able to make valid statements on the current situation of gender (in)equality in the media sector[2]. They independently and creatively designed their data collection and the analytical process, whereby they were trained in digital skills to present their research findings[3]. Further, another group qualitatively assessed best

1 Several colleagues at the Department of Communication have often noted, with disappointment, that classes for which the description includes the keywords 'gender' or 'intersectionality', are largely attended by female students. When male students do register for such a course, they often drop out when they realize they are 'alone'. Since gender-related classes are not mandatory under the curriculum, many students complete their studies without significant contact with feminist theory and practice, or issues of intersectionality, signalling curricular policy deficits.

2 For this reason, the gender distribution of the national and regional print media, and the radio and online media landscape, was examined. In total, data on 3,883 journalists in Austria were collected as part of this project. See Quantitative Studie zu Gender-Diversity unter österreichischen JournalistInnen.

3 During one of the classes, a data visualization expert gave a guest lecture on visualization techniques. Students experimented suc-

practices on gender mainstreaming in the media with the members of the Austrian public service broadcaster's (ORF) 'Frauen task-force' (a special unit within the ORF set up a decade ago to change the organisation from within4). The students selected interview formats, including podcasts, and also decided how to exhibit personal portraits of the women - who have achieved historical, meaningful transformation of the broadcaster into a role model in Europe for gender-equal institutional change. In parallel, students launched the Let's Talk Equal web platform5 on gender (in)equality and media in Austria, utilizing strategic thinking about the complexity of inequalities in, and brought about by, the media, as they addressed gender issues and developed ideas and proposals for gender equality policies. The platform served as the main reference point of the TP and a crucial feature of the deliberative pedagogical exercise. The opportunity for visibility lent gravity to the students' projects and was a critical tool for the action assignments.

The second phase (2019/2020 Winter semester) of the TP included a complex, broad and interdisciplinary research exercise on gender mainstreaming in cooperation with the City of Vienna. The 100+ years of experience, and the achievements, of the Austrian capital city in creating gender equal opportunities and better life qualities for its residents inspired and informed the project. Throughout this semester, students worked in cooperation with the Gender Mainstreaming Department of the City of Vienna following the PALAR method. The learning objective was to become familiar with the policy processes of gender mainstreaming in a non-media related context (urban planning and management), which the students had interpret and transfer to their core studies on media and communication. From the very beginning, students enjoyed agency, conceptualising the research areas, selecting their objects and introspectively evaluating their personal experiences as young women living in Vienna. They identified five action research areas: childcare; security and safety (including harassment); urban planning; community spaces (including sports fields and parks); and gender-neutral language - all of which reflected personal experiences. Conceptually, they focused on methods of gender mainstreaming and the learnings of the City of Vienna and abstracted the research takeaways and findings to the media context.

And finally, the third part of the TP (2020 Summer semester) was dedicated – in the midst of the COVID-19 public health crisis – to monitoring and analysing news reporting at the leading Austrian online outlets, in cooperation with the Global Media Monitoring Project, which is the is the largest and longest-running research endeavour on gender in the world's news media, and an important advocacy tool for gender equality6. The students volunteered to run a pilot research element for the global monitoring, which considered for the first time the impact of the COVID-19 crisis on news reporting. They used the monitoring tools, and delivered country-specific results. The quantitative snapshots were discussed in class, compared with the longitudinal data on Austria of the previous global monitoring exercise, and contextualised with the help of literature, and a number of gender issues and problematics related to the Austrian media were identified. Finally, the students formulated their action proposals referring to media best practices retrieved from the Advancing Gender Equality in Media Industries platform (AGEMI)7, a Europe-wide database and resource hub promoting a more equal, diverse and inclusive media.

Analyses of the Teaching Project

Once the TP concluded in 2020, I started with the investigation of the data gathered from the Individual Learning Journals, the Teaching Diaries, the feedbacks and the evaluations (see Methodology section above). Next, I categorised the information according to the 3 R's (relationships-reflection-recognition) and then analysed it thematically, and traced it systematically for the characteristics and patterns of students' conscientization.

(I.) Relationships

The assessment of the students' learning journey experience (Table 1) revealed that a safe, secure and overall inclusive teaching environment was fundamental for the meaningful participation and engagement of students, and that adoption by the lecturer of the role of change agent was also essential.

cessfully with the use of the Flourish software programme in presenting the research results on data collection and analyses for all types of media in Austria, as well as for the gender ratios at different media outlets. See Data Visualisation.
4 The ORF gender equality plan was recognized as 'good practice' by the European Institute for Gender Equality in 2013, and was also awarded the Women's Empowerment Principles CEO Leadership Award by the United Nations in 2015. See ORF Task Force.
5 See the Letstalkequal blog.
6 See the website of the Global Media Monitoring Project.
7 See the Advancing Gender Equality in Media Industries platform database.

	Students' individual attributes	Lecturer's attribute
Personal traits	Experiences of young women living in Austria Intersectionality	Agency Experience Authority Managing complexity
Motivation	Appealing research agenda ('something different at last') Atmosphere Self-defined research objective Equal participation in the definition and design of the research project8	Inclusive feedback Drive Mitigating conflicts Nurturing Guidance Inspiration through 'real-world' situations
Journey	'Full ride' research cycle Mature decisions & responsibility 'Stretching limits'	Safe space Partnership Sharing experiences
Reflection	'My own awareness of change' Empowerment	'It's about you'

Table 1: Relationships – students' learning journey experience

The establishment of close and friendly working relations, along with cultivation of a collaborative context, were crucial preconditions for effective application of the PALAR method. Moreover, external partners in the research activities – including senior media professionals at the ORF and representatives of the City of Vienna – also connected in a non-formal, generally welcoming manner with the students, which enabled activation of imaginative skills in research design. Likewise, dedicated teaching techniques, such as differentiation exercises, helped the participants identify their exact affiliations within the different groups in a transparent manner. They freely created, and assigned to themselves, roles such as 'researchers', 'journalists and editors' or 'activists'.

(II.) Reflection

The next critical part of the PALAR process was about researching for action, which involved a spiral of self-reflective cycles (Kemmis, McTaggart, and Nixon, 2014) guided by formative feedback from the educator and each other (peer feedback) on educational excellence as well as on their mastering of identification. Analysis of this pillar (Table 2) revealed another set of crucial features of the participatory teaching and learning exercise.

Features of self-reflection	Learning experience

8 "By involving all students equally in the process, I think it was much more motivating for us to choose one of the ideas, something that might not have been the case would we have simply chosen them from existing topics or if we would have had to come up with them by ourselves. It was certainly a well-executed group method that I will keep in mind, should I ever find myself in a similar situation again.' (Quote from the Independent Learning Journal (ILJ) of J.L., BA student). Note: only initials of students' names are referred to for data protection purposes.

Setting one's (own) research agenda	Taking on board personal experiences (fear, intimidation, otherness)
	Agency
	Interest and dedication
Research process design	Learning and failing
'Getting out' – ethnographic research	Beyond classroom boredom
	Among 'real people'
	Exploring the city, we live in
Team bonding	Responsibility
	Peer feedback; mitigating competition
Inspirations	Female leaders
	Personal stories
	Realizing the true impact of change-making (ORF Task Force)
Gendered aware-ness	'See others' ('I felt like I was living in a bubble.')
	Solidarity (towards women with care duties)
	'See gender'
Being heard - vis-ibility	Proudness of 'tangible' output
	Creativity and the reward of visibility

Table 2: 'Reflection' – students' reactions and responses to the research journey

The freedom and agency associated with the setting of one's own research agenda and the process design was a core, indeed a decisive, key to undoing distancing and activating consciousness, and also enabled close team bonding and engagement. The sense of being 'taken seriously' and the promise of 'making an impact' due to the prospect of publicity for their research output proved highly inspirational, and students often volunteered for extra assignments, which helped increase the visibility of the research output. Moreover, 'seeing gender' and an overall raised awareness facilitated identification with, and deliberation on, the objects of their studies. Overall, the iterative process of reflection permitted students to "learn more about their context, about themselves and about the knowledge they have co-created; and to identify requirements for further action" (Kearney, Wood and Zuber-Skerrit 2013, p. 128).

(III.) Recognition

Recognition of outcomes in the PALAR process – of both action and learning – was important as an affirmation of collective and personal achievements. The TP considered recognising students' achievements by enabling visibility and 'being heard' through the dissemination of action leads formulated as part of their research projects, and by tailoring the evaluation and grading system of the courses to the specific learning objectives reflecting their personal journeys.

Visibility: the output of the students' research was published on the self-crafted and self-curated online platform on gender (in)equality and media in Austria, the Let's Talk Equal website, which served as a deliberative and empowering communication channel for them to present their work, and constituted an opportunity to establish individual presence and publicity, and to speak up and have their voices heard. The published action proposals on possible interventions on gender mainstreaming addressing gender (in)equalities in, and brought about by, the media were shared with the external research partners such as the ORF and the City of Vienna, and were acknowledged. Furthermore, the actions were contextualised and strongly linked to industrial practices in the media with the help of the AGEMI resources bank, and they were aligned with best practices included in the AGEMI platform.

The evaluation and grading of students' academic performance clearly and transparently measured the detailedness and quality of personal action plans in terms of their adherence to challenging gendered practices of media production with the objective of empowering the next-generation media workforce to play a socially reflective and responsible role in the media. Thus, association of the research subjects with a gender-transformative agenda was a crucial requirement for successful completion of the courses.

Findings and discussion

Once we had completed all courses, I assessed against the Research Question all the data and information gathered, including the individual learning journals, the teaching diaries, testimonials published on the blog, colleagues' feedback and students' formal course evaluations. My analysis focused on the signals of social reflection and responsiveness to gendered inequalities, logically organised across the learning journeys, including both the research and the action phases (Table 3).

	Research Phase	Action Phase
Observations	Atmosphere	Inspiration by 'real-world' situations
	Self-defined research objective; equal participation in the definition and design of the research project	
Analyse, explain, gain insights	Facing real-life inequalities	Connections to real-life situations (ORF, City of Vienna)
Reflect	Research limitations (non-availability/non-responsiveness of interview partners, time allowance, workload)	'Sense of importance' - making meaningful contributions to social change
	Critical need for continuous feedback	Acknowledgment through involvement of 'real' stakeholders (ORF Task Force members; City of Vienna representatives)
	Articulation of need for the use of multidisciplinary research methods	Advocacy for social change
Conclusions[9]	Realization of how complex the social science research process is Hardships in formulating the Research Question	Engagement
		Visibility as motivation
		Pride about work output
	Multiple research reporting methods (interview transcripts, videos, podcasts, visual story-telling) highly welcomed	appreciation of the role of social science research in social transformation[10]
Personal action plan	Devoting more resources to research work	Self-reflection on the role of the researcher as a change agent[11]
		Identification with social realities[12]
		Activation of personal strategies to effect social change

Table 3: Assessment of the learning journey

The PALAR method offered a concise, yet comprehensive, explanation of the didactics and practice - a transformative, collaborative and inclusive process for resolving complex problems related to methodology and the theory of learning (Wood, 2020). PALAR appears to have been the appropriate fit for work with students as individual change agents, utilising their personal experience gained throughout research projects

9 "… the main conclusion I reached was that talking about the issue is helping solve the issue. It is the refusal to define the problem in the first place that leads to numerous problems, especially the refusal to discuss issues that do not affect oneself".; "The example of the City of Vienna shows us how implementing awareness of gender perspective in the policy-making process can have a long-term impact on society and can make the society more aware which would ultimately lead to some social changes. Such examples encourage us to have more hope for change in the future."; "And media power is one of the most powerful mechanisms for changing the subconscious. And as a first step, it is important for us to take measures to minimize inequality in journalism. To show the serious intention of women to break through that very unfinished glass ceiling and rise to the top. The intention to talk and discuss topics that are important for society. And the intention to save freedom of speech. The intension to speak and be heard both for women and men." (Selected quotes from students' blog entries on the Let's talk equal web platform.)
10   "Research is a way to show the world why it needs to change and help to start a change." (Selected quote from the ILJ of C.C., BA student)
11   "I will try to always see the bigger picture behind my own research: Who can I help with my research? How can I help? Research isn't just researching; it is a way to change the world." (Selected quote from the ILJ of C.C., BA student)
12   " …die Tatsache, dass ich die Stadt Wien mit anderen Augen wahrnehme". ("The fact, that I could see the City of Vienna through a different lense.") (Selected quote from the ILJ of L.G., BA student)

and organising their reflections, with the ultimate aim of deepening their social commitment to challenging replication or re-production of gender inequalities within and by the media. Through the action exercises they were empowered and gained the confidence to start to work for change, coaching and learning from each other in dialogue and in discussion (action learning).

The enabling and deliberative research process, the close-to-real-life situations and the sense of importance were clearly articulated as the cornerstones of the TP. The participatory design allowed students to take ownership of the learning process. Identification with the gendered social problems encountered during their inquiries –whether true stories about the struggles of senior female journalists or the perception of urban settings through gendered lenses – was the most significant benefit of the participatory methodology. The students engaged with the subjects of their research, and attained critical levels of alertness – becoming aware of gendered inequalities in their daily routines, while walking on the streets, acknowledging the diversity of the city they live in or 'seeing' the exclusion of young girls from participation in public open spaces.

The scope of freedom and responsibility for their own research design, complemented by the publicity afforded the results, in the context of accountability for action, countered to a great extent the distance bottleneck: it was 'their' problem to study, and 'their' ideas for change to put forward. Moreover, publicity for, and acknowledgment of, their work proved a central motivation for excellence. The perception of the importance of countering acute social problems and being heard by real decision-makers (such as the ORF and City of Vienna representatives) spurred devotion to the tasks at hand.

In sum, the outcomes of the TP answered the Research Question by delivering evidence that: deliberative pedagogical techniques are well suited to, and welcoming of, students at early stages of higher education; and that the PALAR method – democratic, open and inclusive in design and implementation – is highly appropriate in education for transformative social change. The TP was also acknowledged by the students in their formal evaluation of the seminars as a great educational experience.13 Moreover, the AGEMI research platform acknowledged the TP as representative of 'best practice' in 'education making change'; details about it were published in the AGEMI ChanGE section.

Conclusions

The TP was a manifestation of a deliberative pedagogical exercise focused on preparing students with skills for participatory decision-making in building democratic mind-sets to tackle 'wicked problems' (Carcasson, 2017), such as gender inequalities. The participatory learning scheme showcased *how gender is performed in social interactions and advanced students' understanding of gender as a routine accomplishment embedded in everyday practices. The participatory approach* enabled students to conduct serious research about problems and challenges that affect their lives (McTaggart, 1997). Moreover, the TP created an ideal 'classroom for creative experimentation with alternative languages, vocabularies, images and genres – spaces enriched by international encounters where gender-aware storytelling from different geo-cultural contexts would parallel the opportunities to learn from academic studies and research' (Padovani and Ross, 2020, p. 155).

The experiences of the TP reaffirmed a critical need for the systemic and strategic embedding of similar pedagogical methods in the curricular development of media and communication studies 'manufacturing' the next generations of professionals. The urgent need for globally sensitive and locally reflective pedagogics should inform our considerations on what we teach our students and how we get them to 'feel' this urgency, and to engage. Future journalists, PR and marketing specialists should be equipped not just with skills that reflect the quest for excellence; they should be able to inherently and adamantly challenge the assumptions, the context and the social value of their professional actions. Instruction that advances such a mindset may well be at odds with old curricular objectives.

This necessitates further research about the transforming realities of media industries, the changing nature of creative work, and the newly emerging vulnerabilities of the workforce in the precarious conditions of the all-digital environment. A better understanding of the (re-)production of media gender inequalities should inform education policy reflecting upon the dynamic of demography and diversity in our places of higher education, and should lead to adaptation of both episteme and pedagogics. Teaching practices should endow

13   See 'Auswertungsbericht Lehrveranstaltungsevaluation zur Veranstaltung FOPRAX: PS Forschungspraxis (19S-22-220031-02), SE Forschungspraxis (19W-22-220023-08), SE Forschungspraxis (20S-22-220032-10) mit dem Fragebogen vom Typ 022-2-V6'; where the average value of all the criteria evaluations by students was a high-end 1.1.

students with skills and capacities suited both to big data-driven media production, inherently built upon artificial intelligence, and a focus on their potentially transformative role as change agents, thus ultimately connecting education to social justice in the digital age.

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