
Commons, Classrooms, and Freedom: Feminist Pedagogy as Knowledge Commons in Cultural Studies

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Abstract:

This paper conceptualises cultural studies teaching as a feminist practice of knowledge commons that reimagines the classroom as a collective project of ethical, political, and transformative world-making. Drawing on feminist pedagogies that foreground gender, power, and intersectionality, I argue that cultural studies educators must understand their work as part of wider struggles against patriarchy and interlocking systems of oppression, and as a practice that cultivates students' capacities for democratic participation, resistance, and collective freedom. First, I situate my own standpoint as a gendered, located knower and ask how privileges and positionalities shape curricular design, classroom authority, and the selection of "legitimate" knowledge, building on feminist critiques of neutrality, androcentric epistemologies, and the banking model of education. Second, I theorise dialogic, problem-posing pedagogy as a feminist mode of co-intentional learning in which students and teachers collaboratively diagnose gendered inequalities in everyday cultural, economic, and political life, and co-produce knowledge that is accountable to diverse lived experiences, especially those of women, queer, and other marginalised subjects. Third, I frame the classroom as a feminist commons in which dialogue, ethical relationality, and shared intellectual responsibility are cultivated as skills for collective action beyond the university, linking classroom practice to activism, consciousness-raising, and community engagement. The paper contributes to gender studies in three key ways: it offers an explicitly feminist account of how knowledge commons can challenge gendered hierarchies in academic knowledge production; it models reflexive methods for negotiating power, voice, and safety/contestation in gender-diverse classrooms; and it demonstrates how feminist teaching in cultural studies can function as a practice of freedom oriented toward building more just, gender-equitable futures.

Keywords:

Feminist pedagogy, Knowledge commons, Intersectionality, collective freedom, Gendered power relations.