Chapter 3
The Use of New Web-Based Technologies in Strategies of Teaching Gender Studies

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ABSTRACT
One of the defining traits of our existence as users of the Internet is convergence. This feature is a widespread common good within each level of online participation. Nowadays, we are obliged to perform communicative acts in a more transparent manner than in the Web 1.0 age, and the content itself allows for a higher degree of self-awareness. This is also the case of the learning media. We are offered more intuitive devices which reshape our mindset and forward us towards different mainframes of our innate intelligence, reshaping us into highly educated citizens. Nonetheless, technology is not the only construct with a pervasive character. Gender mainstreaming also claims a front place, either as an explaining factor for policy failures, economic deficits or social fractures. As such, it is our purpose within this chapter to outline the use of new web-based technologies in the new Web 2.0 pedagogical environment, with an emphasis on Web 2.0 teaching strategies in the case of gender studies.

INTRODUCTION
As new web-based technologies focus the term social media (Doyle, 2010), especially in relation to the concept of user generated content, the pedagogical environment needs to approach the challenge of generated micro-content starting with the user. The term user coins, in our opinion, a post-modern frame of the individual, a frame which merges roles and identities. The term content presents no structure due to its pervasive character, whereas the term micro-content stands in for content which conveys one primary idea or concept (Anil, 2002). Furthermore, it allows
more and more inputs and travel of concepts but with no structured codes of interpretation or of conduct, which could allow the information to be filtered down, in a higher degree of resonance with the user’s needs.

Despite the altered nature of the included interaction within communication, the Web 2.0 is increasingly becoming an almost always present dimension of teaching practices and of academic collaborations, as technology is becoming more transparent, (so the) attention is focused (more) on content (Alexander & Levine, 2008).

Since the 1970s, European universities have witnessed the steady development of a wide variety of MA programmes in gender studies, women’s studies and feminist studies.

One outcome of this academic institutionalization of gender has been the initiation of a debate on the extent to which the course materials and research approaches of other disciplines incorporate gender as a primary unit of analysis and engage seriously and critically with feminist and gender issues.

A second outcome focuses the challenges of the methodologies used to teach gender studies in order to convey their trans-disciplinary character. Within a shifting learning environment based on a peer (equal)-to-peer (equal) education (UNAIDS, 1999) approach, the teaching strategies themselves underwent a structural and a cultural change, shifting from teaching strategies to strategic teaching (Greenberg & Davila, 2002).

A third outcome refers to the synchronistic character of the Web 2.0 and to where the limits should be defined, according to the learning environment within which the Web 2.0 tools are applied. This also refers to how the scholars should foster the pedagogical discourse within the re-configured learning environments, considering the global equality architecture.

Starting from these outcomes our research objectives are:

1. Determining how gender studies are mainstreamed within the academic syllabus;
2. Pinpointing the transformation of teaching strategies into strategic teaching;
3. Identifying a possible connection between what is perceived as global equality architecture and the global participation architecture, in the case of the Web 2.0 pedagogical setting.

In order to reach our objectives, we shall use the following methods:

1. Content analysis, by means of text analysis (Wordstat 6.1);
2. Visual analysis, by means of chromatic patterns (M.A.K. Halliday functional grammar);
3. Connector analysis to social networks;
4. Connector analysis to the common user.

As objects of study for our objectives we have chosen several universities from Hungary, Sweden, The Netherlands and United Kingdom. These universities are:

- Hungary
  - Central European University in Budapest, Department of Gender Studies
- Sweden
  - Linköping University in Sweden, The Posthumanities Hub and GenSet
  - Umeå University, Umeå Centre for Gender Studies (UCGS)
- The Netherlands
  - Utrecht University, Research Institute for History and Culture, Gender Studies
  - University of Amsterdam, Amsterdam Research Centre for Gender and Sexuality
- United Kingdom
  - London School of Economics and Political Science, Gender Institute
  - University of Cambridge Center for Gender Studies
  - The Women’s Library, London Metropolitan University
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