



Teachers negotiating discourses of gender (in)equality: the case of equal opportunities reform in Andalusia

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5 opportunities reform in Andalusia
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3 This article examines how school teachers who were responsible for co-
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5 ordinating and implementing the First Plan for Equal Opportunities between men and
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7 women in Education in Andalusia, discussed and gave meaning to their experiences
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9 and the potential changes generated by this reform. We argue that it is important to
10
11 find out how teachers, who are responsible for implementing the Gender Equality
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13 Plan, construct, negotiate and validate their actions in this changing process, and we
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15 attempt to do so through examining their discourse on gender equality. The focus is
16
17 on teachers' actions and the cultural tools (discursive and semiotic resources) they
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19 employed during their interactions with other teachers, and how this helped them to
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21 construct meanings and values related to gender equality. In other words, we try to
22
23 show how gender culture was constructed through conflicts experienced by teachers
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25 in the application of the First Andalusian Equality Plan in Education. Through
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27 analyzing conflict in conversation, we identify the arguments used by teachers to
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29 negotiate and interpret the application of the equality plan. We argue that this close
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31 analysis assists in understanding and evaluating the impact of the educational equality
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33 plan.
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38 We will start by contextualizing the First Plan for Equality in Education in
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40 Andalusia. In this section, we will address the current relevance of this particular
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42 topic in Spain, specifically in Andalusia, presenting the main principles and objectives
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44 of this plan. We will examine some theoretical issues about doing (gender) equality in
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46 education, noting that our study draws on the theoretical approach of 'doing gender'
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48 as elaborated by authors such as Butler, (1990, 1993), Crawford (2006) Garfinkel
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50 (1967) Kitzinger (2009), and West and Zimmerman (1987). We adopt a perspective
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52 based on the arguments of these authors in order to study the processes used to
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54 construct and validate shared meanings about gender equality and inequality in a
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3 school setting. To do so, we developed a methodological approach to analyze
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5 discursive practices that create, as we shall show, shared meanings and produce
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7 changes in school culture about gender equality. The methodology is based on an
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9 understanding of interactive processes as sites for the joint construction and
10
11 negotiation of meanings, and on discourse as a social mode of thinking. We shall
12
13 discuss these notions in the following section. This approach framed our study of how
14
15 notions of gender equality were constructed through teachers' discussions about co-
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17 education.
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20 21 22 23 **Contextualizing the First Plan for Equality in Education in Andalusia**

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25 During the late twentieth century and the beginning of the twenty-first, the
26
27 consolidation of democracy in Spain implied the adoption of equality as a principle
28
29 and objective of state policy (Cuenca, 2008). It was an important and significant
30
31 milestone in the social and legal development of Spanish society. As a result, a
32
33 number of laws were specially developed to promote equality between women and
34
35 men (Lombardo 2005). Andalusia, with a long history of socialist government, is one
36
37 of the most active regions of Spain in implementing the principle of equality in public
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39 policies. In 2005, the regional government of Andalusia introduced the First Plan for
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41 Equal Opportunities between Men and Women in Education, the goal of which was to
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43 promote a new gender culture in schools. This was a response to well-documented
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45 gender inequalities in co-educational school settings: there are no state schools with
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47 sex-segregated education in Andalusia.
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52 The I Plan for Equal Opportunities between Men and Women in Education
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54 (Junta de Andalucía, 2005) proposes a set of specific goals such as:
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3 Objective 1: To provide a better understanding of the differences between
4 boys and girls, men and women, not in terms of biological differences but in terms of
5 diverse educational patterns. Such patterns give meaning to men and women's
6 interactions. Understanding them should prevent and correct the discrimination that
7 such differences produce. This should also promote relationships based on the
8 freedom of choice of all citizens (men and women).
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16 Objective 2: To promote school conditions that foster educational practices to
17 help challenge the stereotypes associated with domination and dependence.
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20 Objective 3: To promote change in gender relations by encouraging greater
21 personal autonomy among students.
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25 Objective 4: To correct the imbalance between male and female teachers in
26 school activities and responsibilities in order to provide children and teenagers with
27 different performance models.
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32 In this Plan, teachers, especially those responsible for coordinating and
33 implementing the Gender Equality Plan, are considered to be a key element in
34 changing the gender culture. So, the state has proposed what has been called *teacher*
35 *experts in co-education*, according to their background and their experience in
36 previous educational innovations, to explicitly develop equality in schools. The term
37 co-education, is understood to describe pedagogical approaches that are able to
38 respond to feminist claims on equality, and which propose a reconstruction of the
39 settings for teaching and learning according to gender perspectives (Institute for
40 Women, 2008). The background and professional experience necessary for a teacher
41 to be considered expert in co-education includes participation in curriculum projects
42 for school innovation and change in equality of gender and gender culture
43 (elaboration of projects and school activities for gender equality, studies related to
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3 visualization of in-equality in schools, publications, and participation in conferences,
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5 etc.). There is one teacher expert on co-education responsible for each school or
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7 school area. The responsibilities of those teachers are to create and propose specific
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9 activities to perform inside the classrooms; evaluate and correct the language used in
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11 classrooms and also in the official documents elaborated by the schools; develop
12
13 groups for training teachers; assess the effectiveness of each school promoting all
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15 changes towards gender equality (through interviews, participant observation or
16
17 tests); and so on.
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21 Understanding the views and practices of the policy makers in designing the
22
23 Plan for Equality is important for examining the implementation of the plan. Further,
24
25 the nature of relationships between policy makers and their colleagues in schools is
26
27 also crucial for understanding the construction of a gender culture in schools based on
28
29 realizing equality.
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32 Our analysis of the equality plans and policies is framed by a ‘doing gender’
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34 approach (Crawford, 2006; Kitzinger, 2009; Liss et al., 2001; West and Zimmerman,
35
36 1987), which provides a theoretical model for examining how gender is “done” in
37
38 educational contexts. It takes a multi-level perspective that integrates the individual,
39
40 interactive (face-to-face interactions) and socio-cultural planes (Rader and Cossman,
41
42 2011). The ‘doing gender’ approach also provides an opportunity to study processes
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44 of educational change related to the construction of social meanings, and to analyze
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46 potentially new discursive practices about gender equality.
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52 **Examining doing (gender) equality in education: some theoretical issues**

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54 The importance of “doing gender” as a conceptual contribution to social
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56 thought has been widely discussed, revised and updated (Martin, 2003;
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3 Messerschmidt, 2009; Ridgeway, 2009; West and Zimmerman, 1987, 2009). We take
4
5 this standpoint to examine the processes used by teachers in this study to construct
6
7 and validate shared meanings about gender equality and inequality, and to understand
8
9 how gender is done in educational settings in terms of teachers' discursive and
10
11 semiotic resources.
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14 From this theoretical perspective, various "doing gender approaches" have
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16 challenged accepted views of gender as either an individual role or as a reflection of
17
18 natural differences rooted in biology (Butler, 1990, 1993; Garfinkel, 1967; West and
19
20 Zimmerman, 1987, for example). West and Zimmerman (1987, 2009,) among others,
21
22 drew attention to the ways in which gender differences are "doing" in social
23
24 interactions and contexts. They argued that gender is not an attribute of individuals
25
26 but a system of meanings, a way of making sense of actions which are oriented to
27
28 creating and maintaining a certain gender social order (West and Zimmerman 1987,
29
30 2009). Gender is understood as a system of meanings that organizes interactions,
31
32 giving them sense and direction. Gender is something that people *do* (Crawford,
33
34 2006; Crawford and Chaffin, 1997). This theoretical approach has given rise to
35
36 numerous studies which have further developed this complex conception of gender,
37
38 suggesting that gender is a multilevel social system in which institutional, interactive
39
40 and individual levels are interrelated (Crawford and Chaffin 1997; Marshall, 1999).
41
42 Messerschmidt (2009) has examined gender interactions in three distinct social
43
44 contexts: the family, the school, and the peer group. On the one hand,
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46 Messerschmidt's data shows that young people do not possess gender; instead gender
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48 is something they do in interaction with others. Young people accomplish gender
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50 through social interactions, and so their specific type of gender construction
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52 articulates with particular social situations. On the other, youth practices are evaluated
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3 by co-present participants in relation to normative conceptions of gender within each
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5 setting (2009, p. 87). In short, the idea of “doing gender” provides us with a powerful
6
7 tool for analyzing gendered behavior and interactions in different social settings and
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9 practices.
10

11 From this view, Crawford (2006) considers gender as a social system that
12
13 functions on three levels: (a) On the *socio-cultural* level, gender governs access to
14
15 resources and power, regulating social positions and relationship models between men
16
17 and women; (b) On the *interactive* level, gender is a dynamic process of
18
19 representation of what it means to be a man or woman, built in daily, face-to-face
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21 interactions; (c) On the *individual* level, gender is expressed as an aspect of personal
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23 identity (expectations, interests, desires, etc.).
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27 The socio-cultural level of gender systems in school contexts involves taking
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29 as objects of study the distribution and use of spaces in the school, the allocation of
30
31 academic posts, and representation, syllabus content and materials, etc. The
32
33 interactive level involves the study of interactions among staff, between staff and
34
35 students, among students, between staff and parents, and so forth, in terms of
36
37 questions of leadership, transmission of stereotypes and relationship models
38
39 (cooperation, conflict, and violence). On the individual level, this perspective directs
40
41 us towards studying academic performance, academic preferences and choices,
42
43 aspirations, for example, according to gender.
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47 We consider the First Plan for Equality between Men and Women in
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49 Education in Andalusia as a specific action or intervention at an institutional level
50
51 aimed at promoting equality between men and women through education. In fact, the
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53 aim is, amongst others, to encourage educational practices of equality and to
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55 introduce changes in gender relations, and is therefore a good strategy for change at
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3 the socio-cultural level. This Plan introduced a series of changes in the three
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the socio-cultural level. This Plan introduced a series of changes in the three
aforementioned levels in terms of school culture, which affected different dimensions
such as syllabus, language, organization, and spaces. Laws are potent tools for social
transformation because they create a new scenario for coexistence and an opportunity
for the exercise of citizenship. However, we are well aware that the approval of a law
is not going to bring about an immediate change to school reality, in terms of
organization, and its set of values, traditions, and customs. The actions of the
educational community (such as teachers, students, administrators, and family), or
interventions in what we have referred to as the interactive and individual levels, are
crucial for constructing new values, customs and practices.

Gaining an insight into interventions on the interpersonal level is directly
related to the objective of this paper. As we have argued, it is important to find out
how teachers, who are responsible of the implementation of the Gender Equality Plan,
construct, negotiate and validate their actions in this changing process, and we
attempt to do so through examining their discourse on gender equality. This
perspective is connected to a specific way of understanding interactive processes, and
to a specific way of understanding discourse, as we will now discuss.

A conception of language and discourse for analyzing doing gender equality

Discourse is not a channel for conveying messages but rather an activity which
generates meaning. Discourse in general, and educational discourse in particular, is
not simply a representation of thought in language; it should be regarded as a social
mode of thinking. In accordance with this perspective, we agree with Kitzinger
(2009), Mercer (2000), and Wertsch (1991), amongst others, on the importance of the
semiotic dimension of the classroom and the consideration of this space as a setting

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3 for the joint construction and negotiation of meanings. For joint activity to be
4 possible, the participants engaged in the interaction must be able to share
5 perspectives; this mutual understanding has been defined as inter-subjectivity
6 (Rommetveit, 1979). We understand each other insofar as we can share a common
7 point of view, or when by interacting with each other we can reach a common
8 reference, modifying our own position where necessary to bring about a greater
9 harmony with that of others.

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19 This approach analyzes inter-subjectivity as the actual process of creating
20 meanings in discourse. In a previous study, Cubero and Ignacio (2011) revealed as the
21 creation and maintenance of inter-subjectivity is closely related to how knowledge is
22 validated in specific contexts; that is, how facts regarded as truths are constructed,
23 which discursive resources are used to legitimize a specific version of the world and
24 how the relevant sources of knowledge are established in a given context. In specific
25 classroom settings in previous studies, we identified a series of discursive devices and
26 mechanisms that bear relation, not only to the validation procedure followed during
27 classroom activities, but also to the resources of validation or the provenance of the
28 authority through which knowledge is legitimized. The validation process refers to the
29 forms of reasoning and the justification of knowledge as "true" in classroom
30 discourse, to how the participants in the classroom create and negotiate what is going
31 to be considered the correct knowledge for the classroom, the contents to be learned
32 and agreed. So the legitimized versions of facts through different sources in the
33 classroom are expected to become shared knowledge for the classroom community.
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52 An example of one of the resources used to validate some facts or explanations is
53 "Invocation". Invocations are described as semiotic resources used to validate specific
54 points of view. In this paper we describe the invocations employed by teachers to
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3 validate their knowledge about questions related to gender inequality. Specifically, we
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5 analyze invocations in those situations in which there is no minimum level of shared
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7 meanings, generating a conflict related to the culture of gender at school.
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10 On a more general plane of discourse, Mercer (2000) proposes and applies the
11
12 notion of “discursive strategy” in relation to different forms of language use during
13
14 these kinds of processes of negotiation and construction of shared meanings. Mercer
15
16 (2000, p. 103) refers to discursive strategies as the specific ways or techniques of
17
18 conversation used by teachers when they try to guide students’ knowledge
19
20 construction. Discursive strategies are intentional forms of conversation oriented
21
22 towards a goal and which show the rules and obligations governing institutional
23
24 settings. In this study, we also analyze the “discursive strategies for doing gender”
25
26 which are directly related to the goals of feminism. A range of different scholarship
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28 (for example, Crawford, 2006; Kabeer, 2005; Liss et al. 2001; Reid and Purcell, 2004)
29
30 has shown that the gender consciousness promoted by women’s movements has some
31
32 shared features such as: a) a sense of interdependence and shared fate with other
33
34 women; (b) recognition of women's relatively low status and power compared to men;
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36 (c) attribution of power differentials to illegitimate sources, such as institutionalized
37
38 sexism, and (d) an orientation towards collective action to improve women's position
39
40 in society. Some of these features could be identified in our discursive strategy
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42 proposals used by teachers to create new shared meanings about gender equality in
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44 school. We present some data on this below.
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50 According to the theoretical background presented above, we drew up the
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52 following study objectives: (1) To analyze how expert teachers in co-education
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54 construct meanings about gender (in) equality; (2) To identify their Discursive
55
56 Strategies; and (3) To study Invocations in discourse.
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5 **A study of how gender equality is constructed through expert teachers'**
6 **discourses on co-education: Methodological decisions**
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10 Our aim here is show how gender culture is constructed through conflicts
11 experienced by teachers in the application of a new regulation such as the First
12 Andalusian Equality Plan in Education. Conflict in conversation becomes a space for
13 negotiation and construction of shared meanings through the meeting between
14 different voices or points of view. We need to identify the arguments used by teachers
15 to negotiate and interpret the application of the equality plan, or, in other words, to
16 create a certain level of inter-subjectivity about the meaning of materials, procedures
17 and actions. This is essential for monitoring and evaluating the impact of educational
18 equality policies and plans.
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30 The study is located within a qualitative paradigm, based technically on the
31 analysis of discourses 'uttered' by group discussants, including teachers responsible
32 for gender equality. These group discussions take the form of debates between experts
33 in equality and gender culture in schools. The exchanges in the group discussions
34 allow us to analyse processes of negotiation and resolution of contradictions and
35 conflicts. These are particularly useful for analyzing how opinions, attitudes, and
36 orientations emerge, constitute, influence, and modify each other in an exchange of
37 views (Bohnsack, 2004). Amongst other methodological advantages, participants in
38 group discussions can determine their own topics of debates, and when and how they
39 want to talk about them. However, it requires a certain degree of standardization, at
40 least with respect to the opening questions. Group discussions are widely used in
41 gender research. The application of group discussions in gender studies makes it
42 possible for groups of people who are faced with the same set of issues to become
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3 more aware of the political and social process of construction of their experiences and
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5 potentially lead them to organize themselves towards change (Danielsson, 2012). In
6
7 gender studies, group discussions have been shown to be very effective in observing
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9 how opinions are constructed and expressed, and how these are negotiated and
10
11 modified through discussion (Kitzinger, 2009). Some advantages of this technique
12
13 are: (a) It allows us to analyse how opinions are created and re-created in social
14
15 interactions; (b) It generates more natural situations because they resemble everyday
16
17 processes of social construction of meaning in interaction; (c) It reduces the power of
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19 interviewers because control of the content and interaction lies in the hands of the
20
21 participants (Bohnsak, 2004).
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25 For our purposes, the use of group discussions makes it possible to understand
26
27 the ways in which the culture of gender is tackled in school, which is deduced through
28
29 the recognition and analysis of discourses, subjects and mechanisms of discussion
30
31 used by these teachers. Moreover, in our case, this technique is particularly
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33 appropriate in exploring how teachers construct their professional identity in relation
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35 to equality, and in understanding the actions and practices that participants perform as
36
37 a result of assuming a gender perspective.
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43 *Aims of the Research*

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45 In a more detailed way we drew up the following study objectives:

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47 1. To analyze how expert teachers in co-education construct meanings about
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49 gender (in) equality.
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53 2. To identify “discursive strategies” used by teachers to construct shared
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55 meanings about equality between men and women.
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3 3. To study what “invocations” are used by teachers to validate their points of
4
5 view about equality between men and women.
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10 *Participants*

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12 Thirty-one female and four male Secondary Education teachers were selected
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14 for the study using the following accumulative inclusion criteria: 1) a secondary
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16 education teacher in Andalusia; 2) named as responsible for the Equality Plan
17
18 implementation in their school and, 3) had active experience, interest and training in
19
20 the area of co-education and gender equality. Of the 35 participants, 19 were from
21
22 Seville and 16 from Granada. Further, 30 of the total were aged between 40 and 60
23
24 years, and 5 over 60 years. As for the background on co-education programs and
25
26 gender equality curriculum, 5 participants had more than 20 years working in the
27
28 field, 19 participants had between 10 and 20 years of experience, and five had less
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30 than 10 years. In fact, 30 of the total were involved in several projects.
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37 In this paper we selected the second group for discussion, from a total of five,
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39 because some of its members had longer experience in co-education and they had
40
41 developed more intense and rich discussions about gender culture in school (State,
42
43 1995). The characteristics of the participants are presented in table 1.
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45 [Table 1 near here]
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49
50 *Procedure*

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52 Five group discussions were set up, each consisting of between 5 and 8
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54 teachers, with each meeting lasting approximately 90 minutes. The group discussions
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56 were held in the Education and Psychology Faculties of the Universities of Granada
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3 and Seville during June and September, 2009. At the start of each session, the
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5 question guide was handed over to the teachers and they were told how long the
6
7 discussion would last².
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10 The discussions were stimulated by the following open-ended questions: 1)
11 notions and objectives of co-education, 2) ideas and practices in the area of gender
12 culture in schools, 3) the impact of equality plans in education, 4) positions and
13 attitudes towards the construction of gender in the school community, 5)
14 repercussions of these positions and attitudes. But, as it is common in group
15 discussions, participants can determine their own topics of debates, and when and
16 how they want to talk about them. In each group there were two researchers and the
17 authors of this paper (one woman and one man) who assumed the roles of moderator
18 or observer participant. Participants were given guarantees that all information would
19 be treated in an anonymous way for the purposes of the study, and they were asked to
20 give their consent for audio-visual recording.
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38 *Data analysis*

39 Our approach to discourse analysis has allowed us to identify the
40 contradictions, ambivalences and conflicts in the teachers' discourses. This approach
41 provides methodological procedures for the analysis of discursive interaction,
42 providing keys for the identification and processing of the units of analysis. The data
43 analysis procedure involves the recognition and coding of discourse on the basis of
44 two units of analysis of a different but complementary nature. They are: 1)
45 "discursive episodes" which integrate sets of utterances which share the same
46 discursive purpose and which make it possible to monitor and characterize the main
47 discursive conflicts in debates; and, 2) "utterances", which constitute the real unit of
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3 communication (Bakhtin 1986) and in turn its most basic expression with narrative
4 meaning and properties. The categories which have emerged from this process of
5 analysis and which are discussed here are presented in tables 2 and 3.
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9 [Table 2 near here]
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11 [Table 3 near here]
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14 15 16 **Results and discussion**

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18 During the teachers' interactions, 14 conflicts were registered. More than half
19 of them were contextual; in other words, they revolved around the difficulties faced
20 by teachers when it came to implementing the Equality Plan in their schools due to
21 coinciding or contrasting opinions of the teaching staff in favor of, or against, the
22 Plan. Of the 1983 transcribed utterances, 572 were related to these conflicts,
23 representing 30% of participants' discourses. Most of these were concerned with two
24 subjects: the climate or state of opinion of the educational community concerning
25 gender equality (36%), and the interpretation and application of the regulation in the
26 school context (36%). For this paper, we have selected a conflict that is representative
27 of the dynamics which the application of the Plan generates in schools and of the
28 reactions among the teaching staff produced by the introduction of feminist thinking
29 in educational practice. "Identifying and recognizing inequality" is a contextual
30 conflict which expresses the lack of consciousness or awareness of the teaching staff
31 about the existence of gender inequality and the need to intervene to correct and
32 reduce specific practices and situations of discrimination. On the "socio-cultural
33 level", this conflict questions the need for the Equality Plan and the work which is
34 being conducted by the teachers implementing it at school, and it is represented by the
35 voice "inequality does not exist" (see below). On the "interactive level", this voice
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also means a conflict which reveals the devaluation of the work of teachers responsible for applying the Plan, mainly feminist women with a long professional trajectory in this field, forcing them to defend their activity and justify the need for it. This social voice “inequality does not exist”, which penetrates schools through the discourse of one teacher, provides the opportunity to deploy a whole set of strategies and resources to construct shared meanings about gender equality at school. The analysis of the discursive episode or conflict has been summarized in table 4.

[Table 4 near here]

We will show three episodes from this conflict, which arises from the different points of view about whether inequality between men and women does or does not exist. The analysis of the episodes has been summarized in table 5.

Extract 1¹

1805	María: I think that people have the idea that there isn't so much inequality today, and that
1806	women are progressing a lot, and they are occupying a lot of areas ... so, there isn't
1807	inequality, which isn't perceived, you understand? That inequality isn't perceived or,
1808	at least, a lot of teachers have that idea.
1809	Pedro: In fact, there's no such inequality at my school
1810	(The rest of the group murmur)
1811	Susana: Let's see if we can work it out, because I'm not sure about that
1812	Julia: I can show you the school lists if you want
1813	Pedro: Well, it's possible there is inequality at high level principals, but at the present time,
1814	even in numbers, there are many more female teachers
1815	Julia: Yes, but a male teacher is more respected by students than a female teacher.
1816	María: Yes, they are the top management, there for the professional careers and so on.
1817	However, our pupils address us as if we were their mums because we are women and
1818	if a male teacher will arrives and shouts, then everybody respects him.

In extract 1, we can say that the topic is related to the question: “Is or isn't there inequality between men and women at the present time?” The event which sparks off the conflict is the first María's intervention which, with a certain amount of irony, denounces the lack of awareness or short-sightedness of the teaching staff as a “sensitizing” discursive strategy invoking “the cultural experience” of the group. Pedro states that in his school there is no inequality and, using his own experience to

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2
3 argue against the existence of inequality, unleashes the conflict, seeming to question
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5 the need for the Equality Plan. As a response to that argument, Julia uses the
6
7 “visualization” of inequality by referring to statistical data on the number of men and
8
9 women who are school principals as evidence of doing gender. The argument used by
10
11 Julia to construct and validate shared meanings about gender inequality, is a good
12
13 example of how gender is done in educational settings in terms of teachers’ discursive
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15 and semiotic resources. The naturalization or normalization of inequality means
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17 gender construction arises in discursive actions, let’s say here and now, it means to do
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19 gender.
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23 But with that intervention this teacher not only visualizes inequality, she also
24
25 resorts to the invocation of “institutional authority” to validate her points of view. It is
26
27 interesting to highlight how, in this case, the teacher takes a line of argument based on
28
29 a more formal institutional authority (data coming from the Woman Institute research
30
31 papers) to reinforce her point of view, using a more persuasive argument (Bruner
32
33 2006). Invoking the “institutional authority” also seems to be accepted by Pedro, who
34
35 asserts that gender equality existed, as he uses this same type of reasoning to counter
36
37 the arguments of his most direct interlocutor, as we can see in lines 1813 and 1814 in
38
39 which he refers to statistics of the number of teachers depending on sex quote him.
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43 However, the resources used by some participants to persuade others of their
44
45 point of view do not just cover the sphere of documents and official texts as we have
46
47 seen in the utterances of Julia (“*I can show you the school lists if you want*”) and
48
49 Pedro (“*Well, it’s possible there is inequality at high level principals, but at the*
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51 *present time, even in numbers, there are many more female teachers*”) in extract 1.
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53 Once they have been presented, the actual shared experience as members of the same
54
55 community, of teachers, may acquire great persuasive power. In this sense, Julia
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3 (“Yes, but a male teacher is more respected by students than a female teacher”) and
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5 María (“Yes, they are the top management, there for the professional careers and so
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7 on. However, our pupils address us as if we were their mums because we are women
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9 and if a male teacher will arrives and shouts, then everybody respects him”) use a
10
11 discursive strategy of “visualization”, to make evident the different ways that male
12
13 and female teachers are treated in their daily interactions with students, invoking the
14
15 “cultural experience” of the group.
16
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18
19 This combined use of different types of invocations, far from being
20
21 inconvenient or insufficient, could be understood in positive terms as an extension of
22
23 the sources of validation in the conversation, which undoubtedly increases the
24
25 persuasive power of the line of argument participants follow. This could be extended
26
27 to the discursive strategies used; to illustrate it we shall present a second episode of
28
29 this conflict. The “subject” of this second episode relates to “the difficulty of working
30
31 in co-education due to the naturalization of inequality”.
32
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34 Extract 2
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36	1865	Julia: And it has been hard work to really win respect and authority, in the right sense of
37	1866	the word, of the staff room towards all the activities we have been performing over
38	1867	all these years [...]
39	1872	... since I arrived I have been trying to arrange, well, I have always arranged activities to do
40	1873	with coexistence, values and the like, but I've always tried to put on things to do with
41	1874	co-education because I have always thought that it is a really important subject,
42	1875	because under any type of inequality you will find gender inequality; in other words, it
43	1876	is completely naturalized, in such a way that we do not perceive it, which is the great
44	1877	problem with gender, because it is so natural that the school principal is a man and the
45	1878	cleaners are women, that the girls for the most part do humanities and the boys do
46	1879	science, and women do not appear in history books, and in physical education the two
47	1880	or three pictures of girls they're doing this, you know, it is all seen as normal, isn't it?
48	1881	[...]
49	1883	And I put on some courses in the Primary School, prevention of gender violence and things
50	1884	like that, and the same people always went, the people who were in the values work
51	1885	group, and now this with the equality plan, well of course, we have taken full
52	1886	advantage and we've put on loads of courses [...]
53	1892	... These courses should be compulsory; all the teachers in my staff-room should hear the
54	1893	same things I am hearing. I say this because there really is a lack of profound
55	1894	training, and it becomes naturalized, and really, when people receive training, or
56	1895	when a work groups comes which really knows what it is doing, well, get an article,
57	1896	discuss it, do work with students and take it: [Well, what I wanted to say with this is
58	1897	that when you hit sensitive chords with teachers, they do get it].

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2
3 In the analysis of the utterances in this episode we could say that Julia uses
4 different types of strategies to do gender. At different moments of her intervention she
5 uses strategies of “empowerment”, in which she includes and even takes part in
6 actions aimed at making gender inequality evident and towards training in co-
7 education. For example, when she says “*And it has been hard work to really win*
8 *respect and authority, in the right sense of the word, of the staff room towards all the*
9 *activities we have been performing over all these years*” (but also in lines 1872-1874
10 and 1883-1886). To validate these interventions she resorts to invocations based on
11 her “personal experience” as a trainer and advocate of training courses in gender
12 equality.
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25 This strategy is used together with a strategy of “visualization” of inequalities
26 of gender in different areas of daily and academic life, as from lines 1874 to 1880. In
27 this case, she resorts both to invocations to “institutional authority” (“*I have always*
28 *thought that it is a really important subject, because under any type of inequality you*
29 *will find gender inequality; in other words, it is completely naturalized, in such a way*
30 *that we do not perceive it, which is the great problem with gender*”) and to “cultural
31 experience to validate her point of view – (“*because it is so natural that the school*
32 *principal is a man and the cleaners are women, that the girls for the most part do*
33 *humanities and the boys do science, and women do not appear in history books, and*
34 *in physical education the two or three pictures of girls they’re doing this*”).
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47 Finally, and complementarily, in this second episode, she uses the strategy of
48 “sensitizing” as a discursive device for constructing shared and negotiated knowledge
49 about gender. Thus, when she says “*These courses should be compulsory; all the*
50 *teachers in my staff-room should hear the same things I am hearing. I say this*
51 *because there really is a lack of profound training, and it becomes naturalized, and*
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3 *really, when people receive training, or when a work groups comes which really*
4 *knows what it is doing, well, get an article, discuss it, do work with students and take*
5 *it”, she refers to the importance of everyone working towards equality, for which she*
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10 draws on “teaching profession knowledge” as a criteria for validation.

11
12 To finish the analysis of this conflict we now present a third episode. The
13
14 “subject” of this third episode revolves around “the difficulty that men in particular
15
16 have in perceiving the inequality that affects women at a time when significant
17
18 progress has been made in gender equality”.

19
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21 Extract 3

22	23	1914	Julia: This morning, for example, I was talking to an inspector and telling him that there were
24	25	1915	only a few women at the inspection. “Damn it!, <u>I don’t know why you complain if you</u>
26	27	1916	<u>have advanced a lot</u> in recent years! Besides, if you want to win a prize in the lottery,
28	29	1917	you will have to buy a lottery ticket, come on, and <u>become an inspector yourself!</u> ” Wait
30	31	1918	a minute, we aren’t talking about that, it’s question of seeing why women can’t get
32	33	1919	certain responsibilities, do you understand? When you have to debate about equality,
34	35	1920	sometimes it’s very difficult to make working groups with people who can move and
36	37	1921	provoke other people and if you get this, people will join, do you know what I mean?
38	39	1922	There are two kinds of positions about this subject. On one hand, those people for
40	41	1923	whom co-education produces repulsion because it’s like the (military) wing of feminism
42	43	1924	in education and feminism has created a lot of repulsion. The Franco system said that
44	45	1925	feminists were crazy women. On the other hand, it (feminism) has created very
46	47	1926	forthright people who have begun to work about these subjects and, they are <u>working</u>
48	49	1927	<u>overtime</u> , do you know? In other words, there are two attitudes towards this subject. But
50	51	1928	the most important thing, as I say, is for people to join the cause.
52	53	1930	Amanda: And I just wanted to say, that up to that point, we, the teachers have a bandage
54	55	1931	covering our eyes on this subject, and when we made the diagnosis we saw that the boys
56	57	1932	were the ones occupying the patio, with the girls all standing round the side, and in the
58	59	1933	classes the girls sat together and the boys somewhere else, and the boys were more
60		1934	participative, they were the ones who interrupted the class (...)

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45
46 Again Julia argues by trying to construct a shared knowledge about gender
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48 that would enable teachers to do gender in education institutions. She starts by
49
50 complaining about the lack of awareness about inequality. In our study it seems
51
52 particularly noteworthy that one of the ways in which the strategy of “visualization” is
53
54 used is by complaining about teachers’ lack of awareness of gender equality, as when
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56 Julia says “*This morning, for example, I was talking to an inspector and telling him*
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58 *that there were only a few women at the inspection. ‘Damn it, I don’t know why you*

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3 *complain if you have advanced a lot in recent years! Besides, if you want to win a*
4 *prize in the lottery, you will have to buy a lottery ticket, come on, and become an*
5 *inspector yourself!* Wait a minute, we aren't talking about that, it's question of
6 seeing why women can't get certain responsibilities, do you understand?" This
7 "Gender Blindness" is well documented as a crucial factor for inhibiting the
8 promotion of changes towards equality between men and women (Carrera, Depalma
9 and Lameiras, 2011; Santamaría et al. 2013; Verdonk et al. 2009). This strategy,
10 gender blindness, is one of the most widely used by groups who undertake active
11 gender policies, presenting different points of view or "voices", which come into
12 conflict on subjects of gender equality. These are voices which are embodied in
13 specific discourses (of a colleague, the principal, etc.) but carry different ideological
14 positions that come into conflict in questions of equality. These discordant voices tend
15 to appear through the use of irony as a rhetorical device and a direct style, as
16 mechanisms that alter the normative use of language and contribute to attracting
17 attention, surprising with their originality and persuasiveness, and allowing more
18 effective communication. Maybe because of that, both in this case and in the first
19 episode (when María says: "I think that people have the idea that there isn't so much
20 inequality today, and that women are progressing a lot, and they are occupying a lot
21 of areas ... so, there isn't inequality, which isn't perceived, you understand?") this
22 strategy was formulated using a broad set of prosodic resources (intonation,
23 accentuation, rhythm, speech velocity, exclamations, raised tone of voice, etc.) which
24 obviously has a communicative function. Finally, this discursive strategy rested, as
25 was to be expected, on the use of "personal experience" as a source of validation of
26 the argumentation presented.

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2
3 In this episode, Julia uses strategies of “sensitizing” to discuss how it is
4 possible, if one works with active, provocative people, to make sure that “*people will*
5 *join*” (line 1921) and that “*people will join the cause*” (line 1930), on the basis of the
6 “cultural experience” of the group. Perhaps she uses “cultural experience” as a way to
7 validate her argument because most of the participants have a great deal of experience
8 in co-education work groups, and in projects of educational innovation in gender, etc.
9 Through the use of the “visualization” strategy, this teacher gives her own
10 interpretation of the two points of view, two voices or two ideologies which come into
11 conflict in the recognition or not of the inequality between men and women. In this
12 case, Julia resorts both to invocations to “cultural experience” (“*There are two kinds*
13 *of positions about this subject. On one hand, those people for whom co-education*
14 *produces repulsion*”) and to “ideology” (“*The Franco system said that feminists were*
15 *crazy women*”) to validate her standpoint. To defend the existence of the former she
16 resorts, as a source of validation, to the dominant ideology of a specific historical
17 period in Spain, under Franco’s regime, whose influence can still be felt today.
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36 This intervention of Julia forces Amanda to assume this position and
37 strengthens Julia's point of view in the group, which leads to the conflict being
38 resolved by the group as they adopt this line of argument (being an extremist on
39 issues of co-education or non-sexist language produces rejection in many people) and
40 thereby recognizes Julie’s authority on the subject. Through the use of the
41 “sensitizing” strategy, as when Amanda says “*And I just wanted to say, that up to that*
42 *point, we, the teachers have a bandage covering our eyes on this subject*”, Amanda
43 shows that she shares Julia’s point of view and she resorts, as a source of validation,
44 to “cultural experience”. Further, through the use of “visualization”, she gives more
45 examples of her “personal experience” as a source of validation of the argumentation
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3 presented by Julia and herself, as when Amada says “*boys were the ones occupying*
4 *the patio, with the girls all standing round the side, and in the classes the girls sat*
5 *together and the boys somewhere else, and the boys were more participative, they*
6 *were the ones who interrupted the class*”.

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11 The following table is an outline of the different extracts analyzed.

12
13 [Table 5 near here]

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16 A microanalysis of teachers’ discourses has allowed us to study how a shared
17
18 knowledge about gender equality and the role of the school and their work coalesces
19
20 around gender. The analysis of the teachers’ discourses in the resolution of conflicts
21
22 which arose in the understanding and application of the Equality Plan has provided us
23
24 with an opportunity to study how they work out these new codes and regulations for
25
26 educational practice and integrate a gender perspective. It has helped us understand
27
28 the social process through which teacher experts in co-education construct gender
29
30 culture in the school settings, providing different levels of analysis of the interactions
31
32 and conflicts that the teachers experience while applying the Equality Plan. At the
33
34 same time, discourse analysis has given us conceptual tools to study the process of the
35
36 construction of new, shared meanings on gender equality in the school settings, and
37
38 this in turn has allowed us to study how the socio-cultural level is created and
39
40 recreated dynamically in interactions. We have used “invocations”, which have
41
42 already proven to be a valuable resource in the shared construction of meaning in
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44 school contexts, to find out how knowledge about gender equality is constructed as a
45
46 result of the implementation of a new educational policy on this subject. We also
47
48 found that teachers use a variety of discursive strategies to do gender, with
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50 “visualization” and “sensitizing” being very present when coping with the resolution
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52 of conflicts in the school settings.
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Conclusions

The main aim of this article was to examine how Andalusian teachers who are experts in co-education discuss gender (in) equality and in doing so construct shared meanings about gender equality and how these meanings can influence their practices. Our main argument is that the Plan for Equal Opportunities between women and men in education offered an opportunity to change the culture of gender in school settings. From a research standpoint, it gave us the chance to observe this process of change with a micro-analytical lens in the early stages of its implementation. In formal terms, the Plan meant that schools had to assume the social role of correcting gender imbalances and inequalities by adopting the gender perspective as the backbone of educational practice. Its implementation was responsible for introducing social debate about equality between men and women into the school and into the discourses and practices of the teaching staff as a central issue.

Analysis of discussions of the Equality Plan revealed the strong presence of social voices skeptical of equality in the school, such as *inequality doesn't exist*, *women are making too much progress*, etc., highlighting the reality of the social context and suggesting the need for further action to highlight gender inequality. This indicates that gender is done at school settings through multiple social voices embodied in the discourses and interactions which take place in the school context. The policies and plans for promoting gender equality in education help to counteract these voices' socio-educational influence, by introducing and giving value to other voices and discourses coming from feminists in educational practice. In a previous study, Santamaría, et al. (2013) revealed the variety of voices which inhabit the discourses of teachers in relation to the changes in the subject of gender equality at

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3 school. They saw these voices as a useful analytical tool to lay bare the social,
4
5 cultural, institutional and historical context in which the conversation takes place and
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7 to reveal the position taken by teachers in these processes of change. To do this, the
8
9 most argumentative and persuasive discourse is used by female teachers with an
10
11 awareness strategy aimed at countering the influence of these voices in the
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13 educational context, accompanying this with a rich variety of invocations to
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15 legitimize and validate their points of view, with particular emphasis on “cultural
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17 experience” and “ideology”, as we saw here. The women’s movement seeks to
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19 promote gender consciousness through collective actions to improve women’s
20
21 position in society (Liss, et al. 2001; Reid and Purcell 2004). A substantial body of
22
23 research has focused on gender training and awareness for teachers as a crucial factor
24
25 for promoting favorable changes towards equality between men and women (Carrera,
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27 Depalma and Lameiras 2011; Verdonk et al. 2009). Rebollo, et al. (2011) found a
28
29 wide repertoire of strategies for doing gender at school settings, with the use of
30
31 argumentation with forms of theoretical and practical reasoning being more
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33 widespread when they want “people to join the cause”.
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39 In this paper we have developed a methodological approach to analyze
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41 discursive practices that create shared meanings in school settings and produce
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43 changes in school culture about gender equality. This approach has helped to study
44
45 how expert teachers in co-education do gender through their discourse and
46
47 interactions, but it has also helped to identify key features of social contexts that are
48
49 either obstacles or advantages for social changes related to the gender system. The
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51 conceptual categories used for the analysis of teachers’ discourse reveal useful tools
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53 for a combined analysis of the socio-cultural and interactive levels of the social
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55 system of gender through the actions of the teachers. In parallel, we would like to
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3 point out that this approach has also been valuable for revealing the ways in which
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5 responsive teachers for the implementation of a Plan for Gender Equality act in school
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7 settings to construct new values and meanings associated with equality between
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9 women and men, identifying how they act and the resources they draw on to do so.
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12 As we have pointed out above, the purpose of the First Strategic Plan was to
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14 address and overcome different forms of gender discrimination. More specifically, it
15
16 was intended to create conditions and structures that promote equal opportunities for
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18 women and men in our region. We think that in order to achieve this goal, a necessary
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20 condition is the active participation and involvement of all sectors in Andalusian
21
22 society. Its implementation in wider society will make the plan an appropriate and
23
24 useful tool to advance towards real and effective equality between women and men.
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28 The important legal advances in our region during the last decades have not
29
30 yet allowed us to overcome gender inequity. The new legislation and the
31
32 implementation of the Andalusian Plan for Gender Equality in education alone will
33
34 not bring the necessary changes. We also need to train professionals capable of
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36 developing educational activities in areas such as equal opportunities, gender violence
37
38 co-education and sexual education. All these activities must involve specific training
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40 in gender and co-education. For this reason, we think that there is still much to be
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42 done, including: a) to incorporate gender perspectives in all courses and training
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44 activities involving professionals working with young people, b) to promote the
45
46 effective participation of associations (especially women's associations) in the
47
48 transmission of equitable gender values, as well as in co-education projects in schools
49
50 (i.e. by participating in school councils), c) to establish general educational strategies
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52 for alternative conflict resolution, such as dialogue, conciliation, negotiation or
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54 mediation, and d) to promote the balanced participation of women and men in school
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boards and other positions of responsibility, as well as in teaching at all levels. We need, in sum, to train teachers who must be experts not only in the different subjects of the curriculum, but in gender perspectives in their educational practices. The current offers a preliminary approach to the analysis of how these teachers who are experts in co-education might understand and implement the legal principles of gender equity. The road to gender equality will be long and possibly difficult, but definitely exciting.

Notes

1. The materials analyzed and the results presented in this article come from a larger research project that was funded by a grant from the Andalusian Regional Government (Proyecto de Excelencia “Teón XXI: Creación de recursos digitales para el conocimiento y difusión de la cultura de género en la escuela”, P06-HUM-01408), aimed at making a diagnosis of gender culture in secondary schools in Andalusia. Once done, we will discuss the results and point out some preliminary conclusions.
2. For conducting group discussions, we enjoyed the cooperation of advisors from Teacher Centers of Seville and Granada (CEPS) who selected teachers taking into consideration the inclusion criteria. They also provided us with the information to contact them on their centers. We negotiated with teachers and advisors the timetable to collect data. Teachers participated voluntarily and they filled out the authorization requested to participate and to be video registered.
3. To maintain teachers' confidentiality and anonymity, we have changed their names in the transcripts. We also removed some references with which participants could be identified (names of their centres, names of co-workers, projects in which they were involved, etc.).

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Tables

Table 1. Characteristics of the group discussions selected.

Variables	Categories	Frecuency	Percentage
Cities	Seville	6	
Sex	Female	5	83%
	Male	1	17%
Ages	From 40 up to 60 years	5	83%
	Over 60 years	1	17%
Coeducation experiences	Less than 10 years	1	10%
	Between 10 and 20 years	3	50%
	More than 20 years	2	40%
Participation in coeducation projects	Yes	4	67%
	No	2	33%

Table 2. Type of Conflict.

Unit of analysis	Categories	Subcategories
Discursive episodes o conflict	Conflict type	Contextual or Strategic
	Conflict plane	Socio-cultural and Interactive
	Conflict topic	Regulation, Curriculum, Language or Climate

Table 3. Type of utterances.

Unit of analysis	Categories	Subcategories	Definitions
The utterances	Discursive strategies	Visualization	Actions oriented towards reporting situations and practices which condition the development of people depending on their gender in school contexts. Particular emphasis is laid on the naturalization or normalization of inequality
		Sensitizing	Actions aimed at making teachers aware of equality. These actions are based on the argumentation and persuasion to create a gender shared consciousness amongst teachers.
		Empowerment	Actions aimed at increasing capacity for having an influence on and taking part in decision-making about school culture and life. Includes actions aimed at empowering the collective
	Invocations	Personal experience	Utterances based on knowledge from speakers' everyday lives and their personal experiences.
Cultural experience		Utterances based on experiences, knowledge and events which are shared as people	

		belonging to a same cultural group.
	Teaching professional knowledge	Utterances referring to events, experiences and knowledge which are shared as teachers.
	Institutional authority	Utterances based on writings such as rules and statistics, and which govern school contexts.
	Ideology	Utterances referring to a system of values, moral ideas and beliefs and referring to publicly recognized people for those ideas.

Table 4. Some data of the conflict analyzed.

Conflict	Variables	Categories	Descriptions
Identifying and recognizing of inequality	1.1 Conflict type	Contextual	The lack of consciousness or awareness of the teaching staff about the existence of gender inequality and the need to intervene to correct and reduce specific practices and situations of discrimination.
	1.2. Conflict plane	Socio-cultural Level	The need for the Equality Plan and the work which is being conducted by the teachers implementing it at school,
		Interactive Level	The devaluation of the work of the responsible teachers for applying the plan by some colleagues of work, which force them to defend their activity and justify the need for it.
1.3. Conflict topic	Climate	The state of opinion of the educational community concerning gender equality.	

Table 5. Some issues of the utterances analyzed.

Extracts	Topic	Utterances		
		Discursive strategies	Invocations	Lines
Extract 1	<i>“Is or isn’t there inequality between men and women at the present time?”</i>	2.1.2. Sensitizing	2.2.2. Cultural experience	María at 1, 1805 to 1807
		2.1.1. Visualization	2.2.4. Institutional authority	Julia at 1, 1812
		2.1.1. Visualization	2.2. 2. Cultural experience	Julia at 1, 1815
		2.1.1. Visualization	2.2. 2. Cultural experience	María at 1, 1816 to 1818
Extract 2	<i>“The difficulty of working in co-education due to the naturalization of inequality”</i>	2.1.3. Empowerment	2.2.1. Personal experience	Julia, at 2, 1865 to 1867, 1872 to 1873, 1883 to 1886
		2.1.1. Visualization	2.2.4. Institutional authority	Julia, at 2, 1873 to 1876
			2.2.2. Cultural experience	Julia, at 2, 1877 to 1880
		2.1.2. Sensitizing	2.2.3. Teaching profession knowledge	María, at 2, 1892 to 1897
Extract 3	<i>“The difficulty that particularly men</i>	2.1.1. Visualization	2.2.1. Personal experience	Julia at 3, 1914 to 1919

<i>have of perceiving the inequality that affects women”</i>	2.1.2. Sensitizing	2.2.2. Cultural experience	Julia at 3, 1919 to 1922, 1928 to 1930
	2.1.1. Visualization	2.2.2. Cultural experience	Julia at 3, 1922 to 1925
		2.2.5. Ideology	Julia at 3, 1925
	2.1.2. Sensitizing	2.2.2. Cultural experience	Julia at 3, 1926 to 1927
		2.2.2. Cultural experience	Amanda, at 3, 1930 to 1931
		2.1.1. Visualization	2.2.1. Personal experience

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