



## Article

# “Our Teaching Is Rocking Their Ontological Security”: Exploring the Emotional Labour of Transformative Criminal Justice Pedagogy

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**Abstract:** Feminist scholars teaching criminology, criminal justice, and law actively address issues of gendered and intersectional importance as crucial additions to degree programmes. Their inclusive acts illustrate a critical pedagogic approach to representing a diverse range of identities and experiences which is necessary to affect the kind of transformational learning that may resonate and impact upon graduate justice practitioners. However, the personal and professional impacts involved in seeking to effect positive developments in social and criminal justice often go unnoticed. This article presents empirical research findings exploring criminal justice tutors' experiences of undertaking transformative teaching using feminist pedagogies. It provides insight into the lived experiences shared by scholars which highlights the affective nature of this work and offers recommendations for others navigating the neoliberal academy.

**Keywords:** criminology; social justice; intersectionality; emotional labour; feminism; pedagogy



**Citation:** Duggan, Marian, and Charlotte Bishop. 2023. “Our Teaching Is Rocking Their Ontological Security”: Exploring the Emotional Labour of Transformative Criminal Justice Pedagogy. *Social Sciences* 12: 162. <https://doi.org/10.3390/socsci12030162>

Academic Editor: Barbara Fawcett

Received: 5 January 2023

Revised: 20 February 2023

Accepted: 3 March 2023

Published: 9 March 2023



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## 1. Introduction

### 1.1. Overview

Criminology and law degrees remain popular choices for students in the UK. Stockdale and Sweeney (2019) highlighted the growth in criminology specifically, with 130 providers offering 906 courses in 2019/20, rising to 154 providers offering 1116 courses the following year. The number of UK law applicants—which has always been a popular degree—has also grown exponentially in recent years. Entry trends collated by The Law Society indicate that in 2020/21, places were offered to two-thirds of the 31,585 applicants.<sup>1</sup> Given both the increasing numbers of domestic and international undergraduate students studying criminology and law, and many aspiring to work in the wider criminal justice field upon graduation, graduates have the potential to shape the very justice processes they learn about at university. Exploring how issues of social relevance manifest in curriculums provides a useful starting point for discerning what undergraduates are taught. Understanding *how* invested tutors convey this information with meaning and passion can shed important light on how students feel inspired into taking action, particularly when deciding their future career path upon graduation.

For socio-legal educators teaching about criminal justice, classroom-based discussions hold significant potential for addressing lived and learned experiences of injustice, unfairness, and inequality. They are often aware that students taking part in these discussions may be inspired to use their insight to work towards effecting meaningful change within their own zones of influence, or later on as part of their careers. Focusing on criminal justice classrooms is also a necessary exercise while cases of institutional sexism and racism (and other forms of discriminatory practices) remain prevalent. Locally and globally, the Black Lives Matter movement has highlighted the pressing need to address the continued impact of structural racism in criminal justice agencies, as evidenced by people of colour's

engagement with state agents. In the two decades since the publication of the [Macpherson \(1999\)](#) Report, analyses of institutional racism in the UK criminal justice system have demonstrated that very little has changed to improve the experiences of people of colour within it. The Lammy Review ([Lammy 2017](#)) highlighted the pervasive nature of institutional racism, demonstrating some of the reasons why Black, Asian, and Minority Ethnic (B.A.M.E) men and women accounted for 25% of prisoners and over 40% of young people in custody despite making up just 14% of the general population. The Review showed how racial and ethnic bias permeate the justice system, along with low feelings of trust among members of B.A.M.E communities that they will be treated fairly ([Lammy 2017](#), p. 6). The Review also highlighted the intersectional discrimination faced by B.A.M.E women who were more likely than white women to be convicted at the Magistrate's Court ([Lammy 2017](#), p. 32) and more likely than white women to have a tougher experience of prison ([Lammy 2017](#), p. 45). Women as victims and offenders also encounter bias and discrimination. Baroness [Corston's](#) (2011) report highlighted the myriad vulnerabilities faced by women offenders, including exposure to domestic abuse, managing mental illness, detrimental socio-economic situations and struggling with childcare ([Corston 2011](#)). Issues affecting women in relation to prison include gender-responsive programmes which problematically reinforce stereotypical gender roles, higher rates of self-harm, and the detrimental impacts of being separated from children on women's experiences of both prison and desistance work ([Hine 2019](#)).

These data indicate the importance of embedding gendered and intersectional approaches to teaching and understanding in criminal justice degrees if efforts to solicit change are to be advocated within the criminal justice sector. Examining the classroom environment also offers a way of discerning what (if any) impact a critical pedagogic approach may be having on inspiring positive action among students:

Engaging students in acts of reparation that extend beyond classroom walls infuses reparative pedagogies with the embodied dimensions as well as the materiality of larger political projects of social justice ([Zembylas 2020](#)). What is essential is that teachers and students deconstruct how emotions and affects construct, change, and re-make the boundaries of "affective communities" such as classrooms and schools, and in doing so shape and re-shape the boundaries of for whom and how we care. ([Zembylas 2020](#), p. 72)

As Zembylas notes, it is not only the students' emotions and affects that are important; those of the tutor are equally relevant. The affective turn provides a framework for understanding how to inspire action (praxis) based on the embodiment of emotion. Exploring this, [Pedwell \(2012\)](#) outlines the importance of addressing empathy in emotionally driven affective transformations, or moving from knowing to doing. While this nexus has always been a core tenet of feminism, the focus on affect in critical theory marked a shift from addressing the psychological impact of being affected by challenging situations to examining the embodied nature of these issues on individuals. Consequently, greater attention was given to how these factors intersected to produce responses to increasingly complex situations:

While you can separate an affective response from an emotion that is attributed as such (the bodily sensations from the feeling of being afraid), this does not mean that in practice, or in everyday life, they are separate. In fact, they are contiguous; they slide into each other; they stick, and cohere, even when they are separated. ([Ahmed 2010](#), p. 231)

Criminology, criminal justice, and criminal law address topics that arguably *should* evoke emotion, therefore it is important to explore how—not if—emotive and often sensitive issues are addressed in the classroom. It is especially necessary to understand how tutors encourage yet carefully manage discussions on emotive topics relating to injustice and inequalities in ways that open possibilities for change. While explorations of feminist pedagogy are not new ([Weiler 1991](#)), our intentions with this project were to contribute to

this wider body of knowledge, from within a UK socio-legal framework specifically and against a backdrop of greater social awareness of discriminatory treatment towards women and people with minoritized identities.

### 1.2. Aim for the Study

This article presents research findings from a project exploring feminist socio-legal academics' experiences of creating learning environments where transformative pedagogies can flourish. The study sought to explore if and how sensitive topics were addressed in teaching spaces, whether these discussions can result in a form of affective classroom 'consciousness-raising', and what—if any—personal or professional obstacles tutors encountered in the pursuit of such endeavours.

Three key research questions informed our study on feminist academics' experiences of teaching gendered and intersectional issues on criminology, criminal justice, and criminal law modules in UK universities:

1. To what extent are gendered and intersectional feminist perspectives incorporated into specific areas of criminological and legal teaching across UK universities?
2. To what degree have socio-legal scholars faced subjective and objective challenges when attempting to incorporate feminist perspectives into relevant content?
3. What can be learnt from the ways in which feminist socio-legal scholars have faced and overcome personal and professional barriers when incorporating gendered and intersectional perspectives in criminal justice teaching?

This article focuses on the first two research questions (above) as the third has been explored in detail elsewhere ([Duggan and Bishop 2022](#)). It begins with an outline of the theoretical framework informing this study, namely feminist approaches to pedagogy and the affective nature of emotional labour, before outlining the research methodology in greater detail. The findings are presented in four thematic subsections (experiences of embedding critical feminist perspectives; navigating the boundaries of discomfort; managing un/conscious expectations and evaluations; and negotiating emotional welfare and burnout) exploring the personal and professional investments made by feminist scholars seeking to inform and sustain critical intersectional approaches to learning about criminal justice. The article concludes by highlighting the need to acknowledge and address the variable impacts of transformational teaching on both tutors and students.

## 2. Theoretical Context

### 2.1. Feminist Pedagogies and the Neoliberal Academy

The theoretical context informing this article situates the use of feminist pedagogies within the neoliberal academy. One of the most foundational concepts of feminism is 'the personal is political' ([Rajah et al. 2022](#)). Embodying this mantra has significant implications for one's perspective, activism, and interaction with others. Much like the conceptual approach offered in *The Matrix*<sup>2</sup>, research (which is explored in detail below) suggests that once one sees concepts, such as patriarchy, discrimination, power structures, inequalities, and such, they cannot be (easily) unseen or ignored. For many feminist teachers, this knowledge is both a blessing and a curse: on the one hand, receptive students will often experience something akin to an epiphany and demonstrate gratitude for having the means to intellectualise, articulate and evidence what they already suspected to be true about social relations ([Amsler and Canaan 2008](#)). On the other, resistant students may feel polarised and persecuted upon recognising the power structures operating that afford them privileges they were previously unaware of or unconcerned about ([Weiler 1991](#)). Furthermore, as hooks ([hooks 1994](#), p. 21) outlined, '[a]ny classroom that employs a holistic model of learning will also be a place where teachers grow and are empowered by the process.' The impact of such approaches on the tutors is as important as those felt by the students. Conscientious educators must therefore effectively manage the varying levels of discomfort that arise in the classroom to ensure that students see the importance of critically

engaging with uncomfortable topics. This is even more important when the educator feels that doing so is their social and/or educational responsibility.

Feminist pedagogies, which grew from Marxist-informed critical approaches to pedagogy, foreground critical analyses of gender specifically. Initially, this was through the establishment of women's studies courses, although later these efforts evolved to encompass wider deconstructions of, and resistance to, androcentric scholarship in 'traditional' disciplines (Weiler 1991). They emphasise the empowerment of students' voices, collaborative engagement, and learning through shared experiences in a manner that emulates feminist values, demonstrating a 'desire to develop education that unsettles conventional ways of thinking or behaving and confronts people with various manifestations of power and their entanglement in them' (do Mar Pereira 2012, p. 129). As Shrewsbury (1997, p. 167) notes, '[a]t its simplest level, feminist pedagogy is concerned with gender justice and overcoming oppressions. It recognises the genderedness of all social relations and consequently of all societal institutions and structures.' This has proven necessary as academic institutions increasingly operate along inherently gendered structures. While by no means a unitary approach—socialist, liberal, radical, and postmodern feminisms being just some examples of the perspectives demonstrated within the academy—the shared goal rooted in social activism which characterised early feminist pedagogy (Weiler 1991) continues to inform contemporary disciplines. It was clear from the interview responses in this project that participants did not share one single understanding of feminism but, as will be seen, a shared understanding of the aims and transformative potential of feminist-inspired teaching was still in evidence. What may be less evident are the challenges facing those who embody affective teaching styles rooted in emotion, empathy, and experience.

Politically driven educational changes have played a significant role in fundamentally altering the nature and purpose of higher education institutions in the UK (Ogbonna and Harris 2004). An increased bureaucratisation of educational administration that started in the 1970s resulted in the subsequent rise of neoliberal ideologies, deregulation processes, and devolution. By the 1990s, new policies of privatisation, marketisation, and managerialism had engulfed the public sector, along with imposition of accountability measures through performance management and metrics (Amsler and Canaan 2008). The result was an intensification of educational inequality and stratification between gendered management; men dominated at the top, while women proliferated in middle-management roles, meaning 'masculine heterosexual hegemony was maintained within a numerically feminised profession' (Blackmore 2013, p. 188). This move towards greater professionalisation practices in UK academia has continued into the 21st century via the ongoing infiltration of business models reflected in structural adaptations to many universities through the creation of multi-level management hierarchies (Amsler and Canaan 2008).

This environment is markedly contrasted to the liberatory scholarship approach to education which saw universities as sites for inspiring and enacting positive change. Inspired by Freire (1970), many critical scholars sought to create environments where lived and learned experiences merged to facilitate learning. Feminist pedagogy duly evolved as a gender-sensitive development influenced by earlier radical pedagogic approaches, where the micropolitics of the classroom reflected broader social issues (Morley 1998). Therefore, '[w]hen the contemporary feminist movement made its initial presence felt in the academy there was both an ongoing critique of conventional classroom dynamics and an attempt to create alternative pedagogical strategies' (hooks 1994, p. 180). Recognising that different feminist identities and pedagogical approaches exist, Clarke (2002, p. 67) suggests that these differences are less important when educators who are invested in critical pedagogy 'are united in a view of education as a practice committed to the reduction, or even elimination, of injustice and oppression.' Feminist academic practice, therefore, enables students to 'develop critical approaches that ultimately contribute to equity and equality, within and beyond the academy' (De Welde et al. 2013, p. 105). As the neoliberal restructuring of academia continues across the UK higher education sector, the need for more insightful and radical approaches to pedagogy are rendered increasingly evident (Cooper 2015).

## 2.2. Feminist Pedagogies as Affective Emotional Labour

While it is somewhat new to the criminal justice realm, feminist engagement with affect, solidarity, and resistance has a long history elsewhere (Pedwell and Whitehead 2012). Many feminist theorists have explored the role of affect in both oppression and political transformation. For example, Audre Lorde (1984) and Iris Marion Young (1990) illustrated how the work of oppression is often carried out at an affective level. Ahmed (2004) and Megan Boler have similarly examined the role of affect in enabling power to shape individuals in a way that maintains gender, race and class hierarchies (Boler 1999, p. xxi). However, while Ahmed (2004, pp. 11–12) has identified affect as a barrier to social transformation because our affective attachments to social norms are ‘so intractable and enduring’ and thus feelings can (re)produce dominant social and geo-political hierarchies and exclusions, other feminist theorists have identified emotions as a site of political resistance that can mobilise movements for liberation (Boler 1999, p. xiii). The aforementioned feminist slogan ‘the personal is political’ illustrates this point, emphasising the appropriation of affect in creating solidarity and mobilising for resistance. The objective of this resistance may take contrastingly different forms (i.e., feminist abolitionism versus carceral feminist approaches) but the impetus towards actualizing change remains central. The practice of consciousness-raising is another example, whereby the sharing of experiences created solidarity through emotional responses and led to the feminist revolution where domestic violence became seen as a political rather than a personal issue. The personal voice has persisted as an important part of feminist scholarship (Pedwell and Whitehead 2012, p. 121) but at the same time the personal and the affective have been intertwined with the structural to avoid privileging the personal (Ahmed 2010, p. 216). Feminist pedagogy transforms the classroom into a space where the intertwining of affect with structural analysis/critique can be used to stimulate personal insights, solidarity and, ultimately, resistance to the status quo.

This history is particularly evident in the evolution of feminist praxis from the 1970s, where a focus on women’s intimate relations within the home and family challenged the ‘privatization and pathologizing of emotions’ (Boler 1999, p. xvi). Affect and praxis are foundational aspects of understanding teaching that inspires evolution but linked to this is recognising the personal and professional impacts of such action on the educator, particularly when teaching sensitive or distressing content. Relatedly, Fobes and Kaufman (2008, p. 27) suggest that ‘the distinguishing feature of critical pedagogy is that it is both a form of practice and a form of action . . . it also implores us to use our teaching and learning to effect positive social change.’ As such, it is likely that pedagogic approaches requiring greater investment from educators may, in turn, have more of an emotional impact on the educators themselves.

The move to exploring emotion in the professional realm came through the seminal work of Arlie Hochschild (1983), who indicated how jobs which call for emotional labour have three defining characteristics: an element of interaction with the public (visual or auditory); a requirement for some form of emotional state to be elicited (positive or negative); and an ability for employers to retain some form of control over the employee’s emotional activities (i.e., through training or supervision). However, while there is a strong tradition of examining emotional labour in the social sciences and marketing literature, it is a nascent area of study in law and criminal justice, despite the highly emotive nature of carceral institutions, policing cultures, and victim-focused work, particularly when issues of race and gender take centre-stage. As studies on the nature and impact of emotional labour have developed, researchers have begun to embrace the rich framework this mode of inquiry offers for analysing practitioners and occupational cultures in the UK criminal justice sector (see Phillips et al. 2020). Emergent insights into statutory sector workers outlined in the collection compiled by Phillips et al. (2020) addresses a range of relevant issues relating to practitioners’ negotiations of values, competencies, identities, performances, and managing burnout. This illustrates a growing desire among scholars to know more

about how emotion permeates, shapes, and impacts a range of criminal justice practitioner roles and environments.

Extending this inquiry to the pedagogic domain can illustrate how empathetic processes operate within a higher education paradigm. Feminist and critical pedagogical approaches discern meaning and purpose through suggesting that affective self-transformation is central to achieving social justice (Morley 1998). Similarly, such research offers greater insight into the lived experiences of criminal justice tutors who adopt a feminist pedagogic position when teaching social justice content. As such, affect can be considered as social / external, whereas emotion is more focused on the individual / internal. Recognising the transformational potential of meaningful criminal justice teaching 'is important to the discipline, the current socio-economic and political character of contemporary society, and to criminology students' development to become informed and active citizens' (Stockdale and Sweeney 2019, p. 98). To create this affect, tutors who are emotionally invested and committed to inspirational teaching will likely seek to ensure that '[t]he classroom remains the most radical space of possibility in the academy' (hooks 1994, p. 12).

### 3. Methodology

#### 3.1. Research Design

The research study comprised of a mixed-methods approach, employing quantitative (online survey) and qualitative (semi-structured interviews) methods over a period of 8 months in 2019. Both the survey and the interview protocol underwent full ethical review in the lead researcher's home institution and adhered to the ethical standards set out by the Socio-Legal Studies Association and the British Society of Criminology.

The online survey comprised of 34 questions, with space given at the end for further comments to be provided as desired. The questions asked about respondents' feminist identity; experiences of teaching; how feminism related to the topics taught; their teaching philosophies and approaches; challenges encountered from students or colleagues; and how they navigated institutional barriers to incorporating gender and intersectional perspectives. The terms 'gendered' and 'intersectional' were used purposefully since where the term 'intersectional' is used it has often become shorthand for issues related to 'race' alone.

The survey was hosted on Qualtrics and advertised via social media, particularly through both researchers' Twitter accounts. The research project was also promoted via the Socio-Legal Studies Association, the Society of Legal Scholars, and the British Society of Criminology websites, social media accounts and in person by both researchers at these learned societies' conferences.

Inclusion criteria focused on the respondent being based at a UK university and teaching a topic of socio-legal relevance. Due to the scoping nature of the research, a comparison with non-UK higher education institutions was not possible. Upon completion, survey respondents were given the option to indicate their interest in being followed up for a qualitative interview. All respondents were assured that their survey responses remained fully anonymous and could not be traced to them if they chose to take part in the subsequent interviews.

The interviews comprised of 11 questions which explored participants' own relationship with feminism; their experiences of teaching content relating to gender and intersectionality; how their students responded to feminist content and/or teaching styles; whether they had encountered challenging, unexpected, or uncomfortable teaching situations; and how universities can inform students' values. The final two questions asked about the participants' working environments to explore whether these had impacted on their feminist identities or teaching approaches.

The researchers were white women employed full time at two different British universities. While both considered their own approaches to socio-legal teaching to be critical and feminist in nature, each recognised that their dominant ethnic status would have bearing on their interpretations of the research findings.

### 3.2. Research Population and Sample

The survey was open for three months, during which it received 44 responses. Survey responses were anonymous with minimal demographical information sought from participants. Survey respondents were mostly women ( $n = 40$ ) with only a few men ( $n = 4$ ). Most respondents were heterosexual ( $n = 29$ ) with the remainder identifying as bisexual ( $n = 7$ ), queer ( $n = 3$ ), lesbian ( $n = 2$ ) or 'other' ( $n = 3$ ). Most ( $n = 38$ ) identified as ethnically white with the remainder ( $n = 6$ ) indicating mixed, Arab, or 'other' heritage. Most ( $n = 35$ ) were in teaching-and-research focused institutions, 6 were in teaching-focused institutions and 3 in research-focused institutions. Slightly more respondents were involved in the teaching of criminology and criminal justice modules than law modules, but the majority taught on some form of core criminal justice module.

Of the thirteen interviewees, all but one had completed the online survey; completion of the survey was not a requirement for participation in the interviews. Inclusion criteria for the interviews focused on identifying as feminist and teaching topics or modules related to criminology, criminal justice, and criminal law in a UK university. All interview participants were female, eleven were white, one was mixed race (but presented/was read as white), and one was Asian. The one-to-one interviews took place virtually (Zoom) over a period of 3 months and were recorded for professional transcription. The researchers provided interviewees with an online shopping voucher worth £20 to thank them for their input. The researchers also randomly assigned the interviewees a pseudonym based on a famous historical feminist figure.

### 3.3. Data Analysis Method

The survey findings were thematically analysed (Braun and Clarke 2006) by the researchers in order to identify themes upon which to formulate the interview questions. The interview data were also thematically analysed by both researchers and a research assistant to produce codes and generate themes. This was undertaken individually at first (using both Nvivo 11 and Microsoft Word software), before all three coding processes were compared, and final themes decided upon. Due to the small sample size, the findings are not to be considered as representative of socio-legal scholars using a feminist pedagogic approach to embedding gendered and intersectional approaches in their teaching practices. However, as will be demonstrated, the analysis indicates findings and themes which are reflective of previous research in this area.

## 4. Results

The remainder of this article focuses predominantly on the data obtained from interviewees as these provide greater context to the issues raised in the survey findings. Where relevant, reference is made to correlations with sentiments shared by the survey respondents. It is important to note that these findings stem from interviewees who identify as feminist. The findings are presented in four thematic sections relating to the first two research questions (outlined above): experiences of embedding critical feminist perspectives; navigating the boundaries of discomfort; managing un/conscious expectations and evaluations; and negotiating emotional welfare and burnout. Combined, the sections demonstrate the extent to which gendered and intersectional feminist perspectives are incorporated into criminological and legal teaching, and the challenges and emotional responses encountered by feminist tutors undertaking this work.

### 4.1. Embedding Critical Feminist Perspectives

I think that the education that [students] have and what they're exposed to without a doubt can inform the kind of professional identity or their identity when they go into work. (Thelma)

Criminology and law remain androcentric disciplines dominated by white western scholarship. Despite a (slow) growth in a more diverse range of voices gaining greater prominence and inclusion in course materials, much of this content remains relegated

to the margins of what is mainstream or core to each discipline. In the UK, academic standards are set out by the Quality Assurance Agency (QAA) via subject benchmark statements that provide guidelines around learning outcomes that ‘allow for flexibility and innovation in course design within a framework agreed by the subject community’ (QAA 2022). Universities appear to permit slightly more flexibility in teaching criminology and criminal justice degrees, with feminist and intersectional topics featuring more readily in both core and elective capacities. In comparison, institutional approaches to teaching law often means such content appears mostly in elective modules or in relation to specific topics (i.e., rape and the partial defences to murder). However, several interviewees described the placing of feminist content within programmes as being annexed or set apart in some way that influenced perceptions of relevance. Participants spoke of having the ‘feminist week’ or the ‘race week’ rather than a more embedded approach to teaching issues of gendered and intersectional importance throughout:

what happens is they get put into a specific module that will more explicitly think about those things rather than them embedded across modules . . . I don’t think it’s particularly mainstream a lot of the time. (Betty)

we will do all the teaching and then we will have a week where we talk about gender . . . Or we have a week where we talk about race, but of course we won’t connect that to gender or disability or sexuality or indeed the core topics. . . . And it’s really not the way that the world works. (Irene)

Siloing or annexing feminist or racial inquiry in this way creates the impression that they constitute specific or specialist interests and are not of relevance to mainstream content. It also does little to address the critique of disciplinary androcentrism (Morris and Gelsthorpe 1991). This siloing is reminiscent of the critique put forth by hooks (1994, p. 38), who lamented how content will often be segmented, with issues of race featuring at the end of a course where uninvested tutors ‘lump everything about race and difference into one section’. Addressing this in a meaningful way was deemed important to demonstrate the multifaceted way in which power operates:

I think it’s also important to embed those critical ideas . . . maybe less formally, more informally. And I think for me it’s because inherently the systems that we’re teaching about are classed, raced, gendered, ableist, colonial. You know, all of those things are present all of the time, and so the idea that you can teach about them without mentioning that to me seems bizarre. (Irene)

Failing to embed inclusive content means that it becomes incumbent on individual staff members to undertake this work. Francis indicated how her university failed to engage with intersectionality in the curriculum, focusing solely on gender and even then, only in specific gender-related modules. Her surprise at this was confounded by the university having a diverse student population who were likely to be “more personally affected by some of the issues that intersectionality would draw out” (Francis). As a result, she felt that it would be remiss of her as a tutor to ignore content that was playing out in her students’ daily lives. Other participants engaged in this additional work to ensure that students were employing a critical analysis using gendered, raced, and other non-traditional perspectives. Their narratives demonstrated how the integrated nature of these issues was important to reflect wider social structures and fallacies around objectivity:

I think there is something problematic about . . . having feminist approaches or intersectionality as a little add-on that you do in one week or in a separate module, and then the rest of the time we’re just doing some kind of neutral study of law when we’re not. (Pauline)

Participants indicated that they felt personally responsible for ensuring that their students had an authentic and meaningful understanding of the class topic or material. Therefore, at some point most had made sacrifices to ensure their teaching delivered the content they felt was important. Academia is notorious for unrealistic time pressures and constraints, more often acutely felt by earlier career academics (do Mar Pereira 2012).

[Stockdale and Sweeney \(2019, p. 88\)](#) have also indicated how wider institutional cultures may impede the inclusion of feminist material when viewed as extraneous to core topics:

Diverse, intersectional and critical curriculums, pedagogic and teaching approaches require preparation time and the financial backing of staff to develop which is often limited within neoliberal university departments.

Interviewees alluded to these factors when discussing the lack of time available to undertake their job to the best of their ability, therefore it was unsurprising to see several mention having sacrificed their leisure time to perform this additional work:

if you're wanting to . . . rewrite part of your lectures to have a greater focus on feminism or intersectionality or on critical race . . . you don't get the time for that. (Coretta)

it's how much of your own time are you willing to put into it. I was on holiday and I was reading stuff, because I wanted to make this change and I knew I didn't have enough [preparation time] to do it otherwise. (Irene)

Yeah, definitely time constraints. So, I think to really do justice to a feminist approach . . . you've got to get students to read through the literature and also engage . . . they've almost got to come to a realisation, you know? And so you can tell them 'til you're blue in the face about all these gendered issues and these gendered dynamics, but it's until they read and analyse and actually internalise that, you know, I think that's the important process. (Francis)

While the level of commitment and emotional input may be high, this can pay dividends in additionally rewarding outcomes. Sylvia highlighted how her emphasis on intersectionality paid off when students adopted this approach (i.e., going beyond gender) in their assessments without prompting. However, these perspectives resonate with the fears highlighted by [do Mar Pereira \(2012, p. 132\)](#) who noted how the constraints on scholars' abilities to 'invest in time and labour-intensive pedagogies' can leave educators feeling guilty if sacrifices are not made. She draws on Skeggs' work to illustrate how tutors who have neither the time nor 'enough emotional resources' to contribute are left feeling like 'the ideals of feminist pedagogy are very difficult to meet' (Skeggs 1995, p. 482, cited in [do Mar Pereira 2012, p. 133](#)).

[Blackmore \(2006\)](#) suggests that feminist analyses are often deconstructive and reconstructive, thus 'tend to also be transgressive and interdisciplinary, working in a disruptive and ambivalent relationship to master narratives'. It is therefore the role of feminist scholarship to demonstrate alternative perspectives on the dominant mode of thought, wherever possible. [Hayes and Luther \(2015\)](#) indicate that many criminology students go on to develop careers in the police, courts, prisons or working with victims: 'areas that are ripe with potential for enacting social change'. Similarly, [Jones \(2015\)](#) acknowledges how this knowledge should inform teaching approaches:

Learning about victimization can develop empathy in our students which may have an impact on their treatment of victims in society. Sending knowledgeable graduates in to law enforcement, to work in the courts and in areas of victim assistance can impact practice and the wider system of processing crime.

Several of the interviewees focused on the impact they believed their teaching had on students beyond the classroom, informing their workplace identities:

. . . as much as possible, I try to bring in feminism, politics, race, intersectionality, 'cos that stuff will apply whatever their career ends up being. (Harriot)

I think a lot of the women . . . choose to go out and work in their communities. . . . it's actually about, not about [a] financial kind of like, return, but actually [a] kind of community return. . . . they want to go and work with the homeless, they want to go and work with prisoners, they want to go work in sort of rehabilitation, that's what quite a lot of what our students go to do. So, I think they do strongly

take some of what we do, some of what they do at the university, and I think they do follow through with that into life. (Naomi)

... the nature of the students we have, who will very likely go into charities and voluntary sector kind of work or the criminal justice system, I think we have a crucial role. We are, in a lot of cases, where students are being exposed and questioning what their own views are for the first time. ... I think we're incredibly important and can have a very important role in people working out their own identities including their workplace identity. (Betty)

Naomi and Betty both recognised that many students want something more from their criminology degree than increased earning potential. The value placed upon giving back to their communities is indicative of feminist praxis and reminiscent of a study undertaken by McCusker (2017), who described how her students extolled the wider impact of the feminist spaces she had created on their lives outside of the classroom. However, it is also illustrative of a gendered dynamic in that traditionally feminised or feminine qualities—care, support, community—is more evident in female students' narratives.

#### 4.2. Navigating the Boundaries of Discomfort

For many students, our teaching is rocking their ontological security. (Online survey respondent)

Boler's (1999) 'pedagogy of discomfort' explores the approach to teaching which 'begins by inviting educators and students to engage in critical inquiry regarding values and cherished beliefs' in order to 'examine constructed self-images in relation to how one has learned to perceive others'. Our participants were aware that to teach difficult content in a meaningful way involved recognising the importance of emotions and emotional management. Evoking discomfort can be ethical if conducted with conscious care and consideration; shying away from traumatic concepts could be argued to do a greater disservice to learners. Berlak (2004) suggests that a degree of discomfort may be necessary if social justice education is to have any meaningful impact on challenging students' deeply held worldviews. Indeed, experiencing discomfort and a degree of suffering can bring value to education relating to social justice issues, particularly with respect to victims of injustice (Zembylas 2015). Moving students beyond their comfort zones and having them critically question their preconceived beliefs is 'grounded in the assumption that discomforting feelings are important in challenging dominant beliefs, social habits and normative practices that sustain social inequities' in a manner which creates 'openings for individual and social transformation' (Zembylas 2015, p. 163). However, Koster (2011, p. 63) highlights the importance of recognising that dealing with the personal as political 'can unleash considerable emotions and distress, particularly in the classroom where the teacher does not necessarily have the skills to deal with the situation'. As such, it is vital that educators are equipped to confront and navigate difficult situations in a confident and controlled manner.

Managing discomfort as part of the learning process arose as a prominent theme and depicted a continuum of experiences from embarrassment through to distress and demonstrations of student hostility. Teaching topics relating to sex, sexual violence or the body could cause varying levels of embarrassment or discomfort among students. Gloria recalled how in a law lecture on sexual activity, students' discomfort with the material manifested in disruptive laughter and conversation. Her response was both swift and accommodating of the students' emotions while simultaneously demonstrating how she regained control of the situation:

I said, 'Oh, it seems like there's a lot of restlessness and chatter in the audience, so would you like it if we just took a one-minute break and then you can ... finish your conversations, have a bit of a breather, and then, hopefully, when we come back people can be quieter and sort of more respectful?' And that seemed to be ok. (Gloria)

This measured approach is important to note as tutors must be cognisant of the potential triggering effects of laughter or excitement on survivors in the class. Not addressing such behaviour may prove as detrimental to the survivors witnessing it as the behaviour itself. Similarly, Pauline recognised that the material alone may prove triggering for some student victim/survivors in the class. She had created a version of the assessment paper which did not reference sexual assault, thereby ensuring that students with sexual assault histories were not additionally triggered in what was already a stressful assessment environment. As she outlined:

I want to put the, sort of, power in the hands of that student to manage their engagement with that material. (Pauline)

Pauline likened this strategizing to the ‘reasonable adjustments’ offered to students with specific learning needs. In other cases, speaking about personal issues in relation to different cultures or countries was considered a useful way of having students engage with difficult material, but from an emotional distance:

... it might be easier to see it in another country, talk about abortion rights or lack of in other countries, and I think that kind of makes a lot of the female participants kind of go, ‘Oh, right, ok.’ And I don’t know whether it’s just because they don’t want to think about themselves being oppressed; maybe they don’t feel that themselves. Maybe they can see it through other people’s stories. (Naomi)

Taking the time to think about students’ needs and provide alternative routes or additional support is, to a large degree, discretionary and dependent upon individual tutors’ intentions and awareness. Participants also depicted their feelings of discomfort in ‘exposing’ students to harms, such as sexual assault, sharing concerns that they may be having an undue impact on students who were otherwise unaware of certain acts as harms (i.e., what constitutes sexual assault) then being confronted with these in classroom environments. Betty raised this, stating: “I do worry we make people vulnerable and less happy sometimes in what we’re doing, rather than empowering ... that makes me uncomfortable” (Betty). Raising awareness can also prompt student disclosures of victimisation to staff who are considered ‘experts’ as a result of teaching on these topics (Durfee and Rosenberg 2009). Therefore, it is important that educators are aware of and prepared for potential disclosures. In Irene’s case, her visible activist work in relation to sexual violence meant that she was considered a key person to turn to by students in distress: “students will come to me and tell me about experiences of sexual violence, or what their friends are going through, rather than go to the university support services” (Irene).

In Irene’s case, her wider sexual violence activism meant she was in a good position to advise students who approached her with such issues. However, without adequate institutional training and support, alongside relevant services to refer students on to, tutors can experience an undue burden of responsibility upon receiving disclosures. It is recognised that, when teaching sensitive topics, course material may ‘create emotional reactions from students’ or ‘trigger extraordinary reactions or crises’ (Branch and Richards 2015). This may also be the case for tutors. Speaking specifically about her experience of delivering lectures on sexual offences, Coretta commented on the “profound impact” it had on her, leaving her “quite upset” after the lectures. Zembylas has also alluded to this outcome:

While research on emotions, affects, and trauma in classrooms has opened up more nuanced understandings of the impact that trauma has on students and teachers, the issue of *how* student and teachers may grapple with *representations* of trauma in sensitive and transformative way remains a long-standing challenge. (Zembylas 2020, p. 61 original italics)

While tutors are usually aware of others’ feelings during difficult topics or classes, managing their own emotions may be less prioritised. As indicated above, this could be argued to be having a disproportionate impact on feminist tutors in terms of additional emotional investment and echoes Koster’s (2011, p. 68) suggestion that ‘teaching gender

leads to emotional labour over and above that carried out by other lecturers.’ Similarly, James (1989, p. 31) has suggested that:

the more common form of emotional labour is that where its centrality and value are not recognised. In the workplace the employment of emotional labourers is widespread in tasks where close personal attention is required, though the value of what they do is often unrecognised.

Nonetheless, several participants reflected on instances where it was *students* who had indicated their gratitude for the tutor’s careful handling of sensitive content; in doing so, these participants implicitly highlighted that such feedback has an important validating impact on educators. For example, Coretta recalled an email from a student thanking her for acknowledging the potential experiences of trauma in the classroom, despite this particular student not having been directly affected by the issues discussed.

While feminist theory and praxis have underpinned efforts to highlight social injustices, they have also suggested measures that benefit those disadvantaged or marginalised by structural inequalities. This can often mean exposing people to the unconscious biases they hold about themselves and/or others:

Such a pedagogy has as its aim to uncover and question the deeply embedded emotional dimensions that frame and shape daily habits, routines, and unconscious complicity with hegemony. By closely problematizing emotional habits, it is hoped that teachers and students will begin to identify their unconscious privileges as well as the invisible ways in which they comply with dominant ideology. (Zembylas 2015, p. 166)

The teaching of feminist, gendered, and intersectional topics requires a pedagogic approach ‘where meaning is constructed by the student and not simply imparted by the educator’ in a manner which encourages ‘critical awareness and reflection’ (Jones 2015, p. 55). This means going beyond the banking model of mere knowledge exchange to invoke emotion, feeling, and investment among learners (Freire 1970). Demonstrating this, Irene reflected on times where she had drawn on her own personal experiences of adversity to help illustrate the material students were addressing in class. Usually, this would benefit students’ learning, but on occasion, she had faced some hostility:

[A student] literally said to me, ‘You just have a chip on your shoulder.’ ... And I’ve been like, ‘Yes, yes I do.’ I think anybody who’s been consistently marginalised, yes, that’s what you end up with. ... yeah, the problem is not that I have a chip. The problem is that these structures place me in that position, and that’s the bit [students] struggle with. (Irene)

Employing a critical pedagogic approach enables students ‘to recognise and counteract powerful narratives, relating to race, class, and gender hierarchies, which influence social problems and injustices’ (Stockdale and Sweeney 2019, p. 98). In doing so, such learning may transcend the classroom, but at the educator’s expense. As hooks (1994, p. 39) outlines, sometimes the apprehensions may not lie in the content or delivery, but in its anticipated reception:

The unwillingness to approach teaching from a standpoint that includes awareness of race, sex, and class is often rooted in the fear that classrooms will be uncontrollable, that emotions and passions will not be contained.

Participants in our study referred to students’ fears around language, or their reticence to speak for fear of causing unintended distress:

... a lot of our students have a lack of confidence about talking about things like ethnicity and they get stressed about getting the language kind of right, in inverted commas, and so on. But that arguably makes it more important to be talking about these things and yet we’re not. (Betty)

Discussing issues like racism may result in profound paradigm shifts among some students where seeing the world through new eyes can cause discomfort. In her work on

transgressive teaching, [hooks](#) (1994, p. 42) both acknowledges this pain and advocates for the need to openly recognise it, indicating the ethical importance of working with students to explore such changes: ‘This gives them both the opportunity to know that difficult experiences may be common and practice at integrating theory and practice: ways of knowing with habits of being.’ Exploring the experience of being unsure about how to talk about race and ethnicity is a valid and important part of critical pedagogy, but one that is fraught with emotion ([Doharty 2020](#)). While emotions can be considered as individual displays of feeling, *emotionality* is understood as the collective feelings arising from shared experiences (usually anger) in relation to the structural control of race, class, and gender; emotionality is therefore gendered and racialised ([Blackmore 2013](#)). Having a safe setting in which to explore this is vital for constructive learning and to underpin transformational teaching. However, as [Doharty \(2020\)](#) outlines, for many Black women academics, this emotionality may be read negatively by others—particularly those from dominant ethnicities. In her exploration of anger, race, and the positioning of emotion, [Doharty \(2020\)](#) highlights how women of colour will often be ‘read’ through a prism of emotion and in a way that may lead to greater self-regulation of expression as a result.

#### 4.3. Managing Un/Conscious Expectations and Evaluations

I had a student who said that I’d set them on fire, which I think is a positive! (Jane)

Whether or not they are aware of it, many people have a preconceived idea of what a university lecturer looks like, largely due to hegemonic depictions in popular culture. Often, this will inform gendered and racialised expectations placed upon tutors which may manifest in difficult working relationships and negative evaluations from students ([Sprague and Massoni 2005](#)). Most of our participants were white and therefore discussion of gendered expectations took precedence over those relating to race. However, race was highlighted in Gloria’s (a woman of colour) experience regarding students’ presumptions of who would be teaching them at university:

‘How old are you?’ ... or, I don’t know, I think it’s also that I’m not British. ... they come to this elite British university and they are expecting, like, an old white man ... except here I am [laughs] (Gloria)

Gloria’s point about the type of institution influencing students’ expectations is an important one due to the implicit gendering that informs these expectations. The masculinist subtext of leadership, authority and knowledge means that it is female rather than male faculty members who are more likely to encounter conscious or unconscious bias from students ([Macnell et al. 2015](#)), as alluded to by Betty:

I’m more concerned about wider expectations on women and some of the research that indicates that students have different expectations of male and female lecturers. (Betty)

In some cases, students’ lack of respect for female educators and/or their feminist identity functioned as a pedagogic barrier, often before the first interaction. Naomi’s experience highlighted this, drawing attention to the importance of the ways in which criminal justice programmes may be informing such assumptions. Speaking about the predominantly older male cohorts that comprised her policing and criminal psychology students, Naomi described a gendered dynamic where she felt more scrutinised and judged by them than (predominantly female) students on the other criminology programmes she had taught:

I really feel a sense, quite often, of the ‘Go on then and teach me’ from those men. I’m very little, I look quite a lot younger than I am ... there are times when I feel like having had a PhD for 25 years ... doesn’t really matter. (Naomi)

Being made to feel judged, or obliged to (repeatedly) prove one’s credentials, can become very wearing over time. Reflecting further on this particular cohort of students, Naomi stated:

There were about twenty, twenty-five of them, and they refused to like, you know, talk to other people. They'd just stick among themselves. And I had a bit of a run-in with one of them because he was really arrogant and just unpleasant. And the evaluation form said something like 'the female lecturer was very rude to me' or something like that. (Naomi)

Naomi's reflection indicates the gendered nature of the classroom environment. The 'regular' profile of a UK criminology undergraduate student is more likely to be a younger female while the cohort she is referring to are older males, many of whom were already engaged in policing or were on a policing career pathway. These students performed hegemonic masculinity (DeKeseredy and Schwartz 2016) in the classroom in a way that made them stand out from the younger, more subdued, female students. Similarly, Sylvia outlined difficulties she had encountered with policing students, where following a guest lecture she had delivered on her specialist subject, one male student had approached her to ask if she "actually knew anything" about the topic. Upon telling him that she had a PhD in the area, his reaction was telling:

He went, 'Oh, okay. I just wanted to check, cos I'm not entirely convinced that all the women that teach here actually, you know, are experts in what they are claiming to know about and talk about.' ... I said, 'Well, you know, that's just a little bit rude about my colleagues'. (Sylvia)

The fact that this student only queried whether the female members of staff were suitably qualified is notable. Here, like in Naomi's earlier accounts, the automatic presumption of male faculty as competent criminal justice tutors is not extended to female faculty members. Sylvia went on to describe how the student, seemingly aggrieved by Sylvia defending her colleagues, challenged Sylvia's understanding of the topic by interrogating her further on it. Sensing that he was trying to question her authority more generally (not just on this topic), she duly answered his queries. His response to this hinted to what may have been the true issue:

And then he said, 'Oh, and a little tip: you don't have to make everything about gender.' I think my face must have looked puzzled as he said, 'Oh, you brought it up in relation to revenge pornography.' And I said, 'Well, that particular offence is as gendered as you get.' Then I started to give him some more evidence and he just went, 'Oh, okay. Well, but you just don't need to be like some of your other colleagues here, that's all they do is talk about gender'. (Sylvia)

Students' interpretations that raising a gendered critique or applying a gendered framework of analysis is extraneous or inconsequential to 'real' learning was evident in several of the interviewees' experiences. Similarly, approximately half of our online survey participants (the majority of whom were female) had experienced some form of hostility from students about their actual or presumed feminist identity and/or teaching approach. This was most usually based on presumptions of being exclusionary or biased against men, or a feminist identity as being something subjective and irrelevant to the module content. These sentiments were echoed by Coretta, who noted that "it's experienced by a lot of younger or younger-looking women academics, where they're perceived to be incompetent" (Coretta). Other studies have demonstrated negative student bias in evaluations of teachers specifically identified as feminist (Carillo 2007). Several participants in our study indicated that disgruntled students had used the module evaluation process to criticise feminist educators and/or module content:

... you get it on the evaluation forms ... 'Why is it all about women?' 'Every single thing is about feminism,' 'I didn't sign up to do feminist studies' or stuff like that. (Naomi)

... the comments have been along the lines of 'There's too much feminism within the content,' and 'men don't appreciate feminists or feminist topics'. (Sylvia)

... we have student feedback on some modules that say, 'This didn't directly teach us how to do the assessment,' ... We're talking about how to think about crime and how it operates in a gendered, classed, raced, ableist, you know, sexualised world. (Irene)

Several participants went on to indicate that these types of comments bolstered their commitment to teaching intersectional content to ensure that students understood its importance to criminal justice. Sylvia even ensured that she had the support of her colleagues in doing so:

... they agreed with my standpoint, that actually if that's the case we probably need to include more if [male students] see it as something that should be on the sidelines or something that should only be delivered to women. (Sylvia)

Students' varied understandings of what counts as 'teaching' was highlighted by Carillo (2007) whose own evaluations indicated that students' expectations that they would be told the correct answers impacted their judgement about the value and impact of discussion-based, non-hierarchical learning spaces. Furthermore, Carillo (2007, p. 28) also notes the possible impact of biased evaluations, stating that 'the presence of women in academia—and especially those who practice feminist pedagogy—is at stake if female professors continue to receive lower evaluations than their male counterparts'.

... we're teaching women so that they can say no to more things. And I'm thinking, okay so what are you doing about when they take the hit on their module evaluations for example, because they are saying no to students, what are you doing about that? (Betty)

The responses to the issue of evaluations demarcated a difference between participants based on length of experience; those who had been teaching for longer periods of time indicated less concern around negative student scores or comments. Some demonstrated a level of confidence in their dismissal; while this could have been reminiscent of their wider rejection of the neoliberal measurement machine, it may also have had some root in other privileges, such as secure contracts, ethnic dominance, or institutional status:

I don't care about metrics ... I think I can justify my teaching philosophy, so these metrics don't really tell us very much. (Jane)

I've never been worried about, 'Oh, I'm going to get a bad evaluation 'cos it's too feminist and then X, Y and Z is going to happen to me,' that's—yeah, that's never been an issue that I've worried about really. (Pauline)

A core theme linking these interviewees' alternative perspectives on performance measurement was the recognition that critical reviews often meant (to them) that they were doing their job correctly. These interviewees were also more likely to incorporate pedagogic elements that could be considered as provoking discomfort as part of their teaching practice. In effect, this was evidence of their critical approach to pedagogy (Amsler and Canaan 2008). Jane, whose comment about setting a student "on fire" prefixes this section, elaborated:

I had a student say, 'Oh, this module is shit,' 'Why is it shit?' 'Because it makes me think,' but the metrics have coded that as a negative, I had to go back and say, 'No, it's shit because it makes her think, that's clearly a positive. (Jane)

... this idea that learning is immediate, like—the thing I really appreciate is when students from four, five, ten, fifteen years ago kind of come back and they find you and they drop you an email and they say, you know, 'I didn't really appreciate it at the time, but I just wanted you to know that this thing really changed my thinking'. (Irene)

As hooks (1994, p. 42) indicates, '... shifting paradigms or sharing knowledge in new ways challenges; it takes time for students to experience that challenge as positive.' However, Carillo (2007, p. 31) has shown how adopting a feminist approach to teaching

in subjects outside of what might be considered relevant to feminism can be an obstacle in itself:

In practicing feminist pedagogy outside of women's studies, though, one faces an array of challenges including those that stem both from students' lack of exposure to these practices and from their exposure to mis-representations of feminism.

Addressing the changing nature and purpose of the university, McCusker (2017, p. 456) suggests that the neoliberal context which 'currently has a hegemonic influence on UK universities' has created a range of tensions around roles, expectations, and outcomes. It is often women who feel the most pressure over the increased evaluation and surveillance of their work and the pressure to 'perform' (Koster 2011, p. 70). In the UK, higher education's move towards more private sector styles of working is of relevance to issues around performance measurement and the importance placed upon module evaluations for professional development. These increasing mechanisms of surveillance have extended to encompass the additional scrutiny of being under the 'student gaze' through institutional (and increasingly public) commentary (i.e., websites like Rate my Professor).

Students who indicate 'satisfaction' with the course in standardised evaluations will rarely outline the reasons why, particularly if they pertain to having been provided with significant amounts of individual emotional and/or practical support (Koster 2011, p. 71). Instead, a focus is usually on the course content and delivery, assessment patterns, feedback, and library resources. This sheds light on some of the survey responses which indicated both an awareness of the potential impact of negative evaluations and tutors' attempts to strategize around this. Gloria, a female lecturer of colour, had an interesting insight into managing student evaluations. At the time of the interview, she had not experienced this type of performance indicator as it had not been implemented in her previous institution. However, since moving to her present post, she had been made acutely aware of its potential impact:

... the empirical work indicates that BME [black and minority ethnic] persons and women are sort of more harshly treated in any case, so that's not very reassuring. ... I think some of the other older colleagues I know have indicated experiencing that ... So it's like a little bit of a scary thought. (Gloria)

To mitigate this, Gloria had asked colleagues to attend her classes and provide feedback, resulting in positive peer reviews on her teaching. However, her rationale for doing so was self-protection:

I feel like those things are a kind of cushion as well because ... I'm thinking about [the student evaluations], but it's not like centre stage in my thinking. But I am trying to create a cushion in case I need to draw upon my colleagues' evaluation, in case I need to hold up my first year accreditation and things like that. (Gloria)

Gloria's embodied experience of being a young, early career, female lecturer of colour was evident in her strategizing to ensure she minimized her potential exposure to disadvantage through inappropriate evaluation. Her insight is also reminiscent of Grosz's (1994) instruction that lived experiences are always embodied, that social interactions are always racialized and sexualized; though these identity markers mean such experiences will be acknowledged differently by those with minority status.

#### 4.4. Negotiating Emotional Welfare and Burnout

I think academia is very personal, it's not like a nine to five that you can turn off, it becomes who you are. (Harriot)

The feminist classroom may incur a blurring of boundaries between the professional and personal (Morley 1998), so educators must engage in careful emotional management. Teaching places expectations on workers where the desired qualities of patience, care, empathy, and assistance indicates both the gendered dynamics of power and the 'feminisation' of emotional labour. Women (including women who are academics) are held to standards reflective of gender stereotypes that may be exacerbated by expectations affiliated to the

occupation (Amsler and Canaan 2008). A paradox arises if women fall short of these stereotypes or expectations, as questions about their femininity emerge and judgements are made accordingly (Leathwood 2005). The process of questioning a person's professional identity by calling into question their personal characteristics is therefore a recognised form of gendered regulation as it is more often used to police women's behaviour, particularly if they are considered to have breached social or conventional gender norms. Therefore, not only are expectations to perform emotional labour placed more regularly on women than men, the penalties for not meeting these expectations go beyond the professional realm to suggest personal defects that may in turn affect an individual's workplace experience (Hochschild 1983; James 1989; Leathwood 2005; Morley 1998). This was noted by some of our participants, as well as the potential impediments these expectations had on their professional development (i.e., what counts for promotion purposes):

Disappointingly, this year I've been taken off module leadership and given loads of tutorials instead . . . the pastoral care stuff. (Coretta)

I do wonder . . . whether there's a gendered element to that, in terms of one of the reasons why we would have less time is because of the pastoral care, and I wonder sometimes do students go—well, I mean the evidence is there that students come to female staff rather than male staff for that kind of support, so . . . it is something which is creating its own problems. (Jane)

Pauline directly addressed the "lack of recognition of the sort of labour involved in doing that work" which makes content more inclusive, accessible, representative, and meaningful. This was an important point as recognising and overcoming barriers to the delivery of relevant gendered and intersectional content may be more difficult if tutors find their mental and emotional capacities regularly engaged in teaching-adjacent responsibilities. James (1989) also indicates how it is important to recognise the labour involved in pastoral care:

not only because it contributes to social reproduction but also because it is hard work. Emotional labour can be as exhausting as physical labour. . . . Comfort, confrontation, humor, empathy or action may each be appropriate in different circumstances. As with physical labour, after a sustained period of emotional labour, an alternative or a rest are necessary.

However, Koster (2011) suggests how the types of work performed as part of emotional labour will rarely feature in any formal arena other than under the vague banner of pastoral care. Furthermore, Burke and Jackson (2007) indicate that this pastoral role only becomes visible when students complain about their teachers, particularly if these complaints relate to gendered expectations:

. . . some of the research indicates that students have different expectations of male and female lecturers. And that if you're not . . . focused on giving them loads of help, as a woman, you maybe get evaluated more negatively. (Betty)

I mean, we know from all the research evidence, even the adjectives used to describe male and female lecturers are remarkably different for the very same thing. (Irene)

James (1989, p. 22) suggests that 'the supposed 'naturalness' of women's caring role is central to the significance, value and invisibility of emotional labour and its development through gender identity and work roles'. However, this can be a dangerous terrain due to the emotional/rational binary upon which women have long been judged and subordinated. In terms of performance management, the kinds of emotional work that women academics end up performing are considered less beneficial for promotion or career advancement because of the structural determinants of the institution, so can appear as less productive in comparison to male counterparts (Morley 1998; Leathwood 2005).

When an individual's personal and professional identities fuse, their well-being becomes increasingly determined on the execution of their role:

individuals with high initial job involvement, professional commitment, idealism, and empathy for others are most susceptible to burnout, presumably because they invest more emotion in the enactment of their helping role. (Ashforth and Humphrey 1993, p. 106)

This poses less of a problem when things are going well, but if institutional barriers to professional success are considered indicators of personal failings, then things become tricky. Along with increasing bureaucracy and professionalisation, academia has traditionally focused on men's experiences of success, particularly in terms of leadership. By determining the 'psychological, intellectual and physical characteristics of bureaucratic and management masculinities as the personal attributes required for leadership', hierarchical divisions emerged between the practical and pastoral aspects of academia (Blackmore 2013, p. 188, original italics). Speaking about this in terms of negative feedback, Harriot indicated:

... it does feel personal and when it's good I feel great about myself, and when it's bad it hits me harder than it should considering it's just a job, you know, work. But it's not just a job though, is it? (Harriot)

Feminist academic work challenges traditional approaches within the academy, from structures through to expectations, and as a result may find a lack of wider institutional support (McCusker 2017). Research demonstrating links between emotional labour and 'burnout' has been described by Koster (2011, p. 73) as 'a unique type of stress reaction that can lead to job turnover, absenteeism and low morale' as well as 'insomnia, increased use of drugs and alcohol, and physical exhaustion.' Burnout occurs when an employee expends more emotional resource than they can replenish, leading to 'emotional exhaustion, depersonalization and reduced personal accomplishment' through energy depletion and fatigue (Grandey 2000, p. 104).

The impact of a person's wider network, including students and colleagues, on their mental and physical wellbeing is therefore of great importance. Blackmore (2013, p. 148) advises how people 'understand who they are and experience the environments in which they live through their emotions as individuals and through their relationships and professional identities.' Having a network of colleagues with similar outlooks or who were supportive of feminist content links to Hochschild's (1983, p. 114) notion of 'collective emotional labour'. However, Hochschild's focus on the nature of emotional labour was greater than her focus on its impact. Subsequent explorations into workers' mechanisms of resistance and coping strategies have suggested the validity in sharing experiences with likeminded others while being mindful that 'part of the stress of emotional labour is that we cannot share it, so we have to self-manage' (Koster 2011, p. 72). Speaking about the increasingly bureaucratic nature of academia, Irene indicated her coping strategies:

I have started kind of just withdrawing from that sort of thing and just not participating, rather than choosing to make the point that this is deeply unhelpful or this is an incredibly neoliberal way of working or, you know, this just exacerbates pre-existing marginalisation and disadvantage. Like, withdrawing is the thing I can I guess emotionally and practically manage. (Irene)

In their exploration of the synergies between affect and feminist theory, Pedwell and Whitehead (2012, p. 121) note how Hochschild's work was 'crucial in contributing to budding theories of the social construction of emotions, and later analyses of their performative circulation in the context of gendered, classed, racialised and sexualised relations of power'. Despite feminist literature having a long history of seeking to critically explore emotionality and rationality in relation to gender and stereotyping, neuroscientific research has bolstered recent moves towards a greater focus on emotional intelligence as a 'legitimate' mode of inquiry (Blackmore 2013). In other words, once 'hard science' was behind the idea of emotions as valid characteristics, people took the concept seriously. However, this focused on the emotions required for leadership that reinforced the idea that acceptable emotions were results-focused and operated to ensure practicality and rationality. This contrasts with critical pedagogical approaches of challenging, deconstructing, and questioning such objec-

tivity ([Amsler and Canaan 2008](#)). However, developments in emotionality and leadership have substantially changed this discourse to one that rationalises the presence of emotion in a very different way to the previous pathologizing approach to women who displayed feelings and empathy in their working practice ([Blackmore 2013](#)).

[Goleman \(1995, p. 7\)](#) has suggested that ‘managing feelings and expressing them appropriately and effectively, enabling people to work together smoothly towards their common goals’ may be considered a form of emotional intelligence due to the regulatory processes involved. However, in academia, and feminist pedagogic practice specifically, these ‘common goals’ may be more difficult to discern. The critical educator who desires students learn about issues of social (and legal) importance (which may or may not link to the assessment or wider curriculum framework) does so for socially transformative purposes. The student, however, may be more goal-oriented in terms of personal attainment rather than transformative learning. Making space to explore students’ goals, values and sense of purpose may open avenues to assist them in making positive impacts generally, and as graduates working in the criminal justice sector.

## 5. Final Considerations

I do think of it as a kind of activism that I’m doing, but mostly to raise good people rather than good professionals. (Harriot)

Feminist pedagogic praxis strives to impart meaning in a way that shapes students as social actors, both inside the classroom and beyond. Within the academic paradigm, students may interpret the exclusion of emotion and subjectivity (as mirrored in the legal and criminal justice worlds) as indicative of how they should approach their learning (for example, the traditional requirement to remain objective in assessments) resulting in confusion around critical pedagogic approaches. This article has explored some of these tensions, and the experiences of academics involved in undertaking them, from the perspectives of feminist scholars who desire to help improve the future of criminal and social justice. The analysis has demonstrated how participants engage in immersive, purposeful pedagogy while recognising that such an approach often comes at a personal and/or professional cost. Reviewing these costs is necessary to expose the inherently gendered challenges evident in seeking to invest emotion, empathy, and experience to affect transformational socio-legal learning in UK universities. However, as [do Mar Pereira \(2012, p. 132\)](#) illustrates, this may be difficult in the current neoliberal higher educational framework:

Many of us involved in feminist teaching value pedagogies that seek to transform students’ experiences of discomfort into generative learning tools, a process which requires time, energy and emotional investment. However, these are three things that in many European universities we often lack.

Ensuring the continuation of truly transformational teaching is important, but the ability to achieve this may not always be within the individual scholar’s power. Institutions which better recognise and respond to the demands placed upon academics may help to create the space and capacity necessary for such valuable work to flourish. On a more individual level, it is important that feminist scholars recognise that the kinds of influence they want their socio-legal teaching to have on students may not be immediately evident, so they should not put unrealistic pressure on themselves to ‘measure’ their impact in a traditionally neoliberal fashion (i.e., through reliance on metrics). Embodying and embedding alternative ways of viewing social issues in the classroom not only demonstrates the relevance of broader perspectives but models the very nature of critical interaction or disruption that students may later seek to emulate. While the neoliberal academy may not prioritise, acknowledge, or support this type of longitudinal impact, it is vital that feminist tutors remind themselves about what *they* consider to constitute success in their teaching and support each other in these endeavours accordingly. Scholars across all career levels will, at various points, likely encounter some form of resistance to the embedding of gendered and intersectional perspectives in their teaching. As confirmed by research into

neuroscience and burnout, taking steps to link in with likeminded educators can provide necessary reassurance and restitution to ensure the perpetuation of such approaches while limiting the potential detriment to facilitators. Despite the sensitive nature of some content delivered, and the pastoral care offered to students (which, given the formative nature of their development, can be wide-ranging), UK academia has not ordinarily adopted a model of supervision beyond the academic appraisal process. Therefore, sharing their experiences with peers may provide the kind of pastoral support necessary in academia while the sector catches up with acknowledging the growing importance of emotion as a valid professional skill.

**Author Contributions:** Conceptualization, M.D. and C.B.; methodology, M.D. and C.B.; formal analysis, M.D. and C.B.; writing—original draft preparation, M.D. and C.B.; writing—review and editing, M.D. and C.B.; project administration, M.D. and C.B.; funding acquisition, M.D. and C.B. All authors have read and agreed to the published version of the manuscript.

**Funding:** This research was funded by the Socio-Legal Studies Association through their Research Grants Award Programme.

**Institutional Review Board Statement:** Not applicable.

**Informed Consent Statement:** Informed consent was obtained from all subjects involved in the study.

**Data Availability Statement:** Not applicable.

**Conflicts of Interest:** The authors declare no conflict of interest.

## Notes

<sup>1</sup> <https://www.lawsociety.org.uk/career-advice/becoming-a-solicitor/entry-trends>. (accessed on 1 March 2023).

<sup>2</sup> Dirs L. Wachoski and L. Wachoski (1999).

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