HOW DO UNIVERSITY LIBRARIES SERVE THE NEEDS OF GENDER STUDIES PROGRAMS?

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Presented at Gender and Power in the New Europe, the 5<sup>th</sup> European Feminist Research Conference
August 20-24, 2003 Lund University, Sweden

In my talk I focus on Gender Studies programs. To analyze their particular library needs, I will give at first a short historical background of how Gender Studies as a program developed in Germany. It is connected with the special role of women's- (or also feminist) information and documentation in Germany. In the main part I will discuss some results of a survey about how the information needs of Gender Studies programs are served by university libraries. Here I concentrate upon the problems of acquisition, cataloging and searching, including issues of interdisciplinarity and the question of where collections should be located. In conclusion I will formulate how Gender Studies students should be served by their university library in an almost ideal-typical way.

Basic conditions: Gender Studies programs and women's information centers

At the moment there have been 5 Gender Studies programs established at universities in German speaking countries, one with a Master’s degree (major field) (Berlin HU), the others with Master’s level field degrees (Basel, Freiburg, Göttingen, Hamburg, Oldenburg). In addition, Gender Studies topics are offered at 6 universities. All together there are currently 82 professorships in Women’s or Gender Studies. The total number of all Gender Studies students according to the survey is about 2,000, among which around 200 are men.

Only the first few students at Humboldt have already finished their program of study (8 as a major field rather than minor field, 13 with certificates). The first large group of students to write their final theses is approaching. The very first program in Gender Studies was founded in the winter semester 1997 at the Humboldt University in Berlin, the newest ones will open in the winter semester 2003 in Bochum and Bremen.
The Gender Studies programs that have already been established are undoubtedly a result and success of the women's movement. About 10 to 20 years after the women’s movement in the USA and Canada, a new women's movement also began in Germany. This movement was concerned with political emancipation and with theoretical research that attempts to reformulate existing fields of knowledge. In the 70s there were still very few women and women's groups who decided to found women's research, education and information centers. They very purposefully established these centers outside of the traditional social structures. In this early period the first special archives, libraries and information and documentation centers for women and lesbians were established, as well as the first women's book publishers, journals and women's bookshops. In the 80s the very first university centers were founded to coordinate women's research and promotion in the colleges. Then in the end of the 90s the first Gender Studies programs were established at some universities. During all these years various types of literature have been published in formats similar to publications in other fields from pamphlets and gray literature, to articles in journals and anthologies, newly founded journals, monographs as well as the first textbooks.

Today the question of whether or not and how these documents of women's and gender research exist in the libraries, obtains another dimension: with the newly founded programs there are no longer only some specialists who deal with the subject and could be served by the existing special women's archives, libraries and information and documentation centers. The number of students as well as the qualitative profile of teaching and studying require a more rigorous engagement in the discussion about the place and standard of women's and gender research documents in the libraries. Further, the more Gender Studies students one university has the more important and urgent it is to solve these problems. For example: at the Humboldt University we have approximately 572 students, in Linz 250, in Göttingen 209, but in newer programms we have programs with less than 50 students like for example in Marburg 22, Regensburg 21, Bern 14 and Basel 55 students.

Compared to the development in North America, Northern Europe (especially Denmark, the Netherlands and Sweden (s. Stein-Mosely, 1995)) and also Austria (s. frida, 2001) Germany is lagging behind in the discussion about "Women's Studies Collections in libraries".
This was made painfully clear at the international archive meetings in Amsterdam in 1998 and in Kampala last year. There were workshops about "Women's Information in Mainstream Libraries" as well as about "The Use and Range of Women's Studies Information in the (Academic) Community". In Europe this subject is and will be discussed in the Women's Information Network (WINE).

There is still no wide discussion in Germany about how collections of Gender Studies literature could be established and developed in university libraries, neither within the field of women's and gender research itself nor by the libraries. Also at the first German-Austrian-conference of the women's studies coordination centers at universities in 1996, primarily organizational and university-political questions were discussed (s. Deutsch-Österreichisches Treffen, 1997). The exchange of experiences and the cooperation in the field of library/information-documentation was not addressed yet at that time, although almost all centers have such special information units.

In conjunction with the Gender Studies program at Humboldt University (HU) in Berlin, which was established in 1997, the Center for Interdisciplinary Women's Studies (ZiF) opened this discussion (s. Aleksander, 1998). We also finished a library project with the Regensburg classification system (s. Musser, 1998) and an archive project to collect women's-specific data from the university archive in a data bank in the year 2000 (s. Jähnert, et al., 1999).

I will come back once more in detail to the changes which arised by the establishment of women's and gender research and its publication history in the university libraries. First, I would like direct your attention to the necessary changes that meet the existing specialized women’s information centers at the same moment.

Libraries, archives and information/documentation centers for women and lesbians in Germany came into existence in the middle of the 1970s. Since 1983 there have been expert's meetings and since 1994 the umbrella network "i.d.a.“ (inform - document - archive) has existed for all German-speaking countries, i.e. in Germany, Austria, Switzerland and Luxembourg. Many of these libraries or archives are incorporated societies, that means they have no stable financial and personnel base. Fluctuation and often limited technical (ICT) equipment complicate the work.
At first they were the only groups who collected and edited women's-specific information and documents. Now they are trying not to fall into oblivion from the special position they once very consciously took. The issue at hand is primarily about presence in the general public, because the collections, especially in the archives, are valuable and often unique. Also here it is necessary for them to go new ways and to cooperate with traditional libraries.

In this sense the umbrella network "i.d.a" worked with the Staatsbibliothek Berlin to make journals of the women's libraries available to the general public by adding them to the OPAC of the Union Catalogue of Serials (Zeitschriftendatenbank-ZDB). At the end of the year the first data will be searchable on the internet. The same thing will be achieved with the book data because women's libraries hold older collections, mostly gathered without any gap, and these titles are better indexed and therefore more user friendly for those with specific research purposes. However, this advantage is also a disadvantage regarding the transformation of women's collections in big libraries, because the current classification systems and magnetic tape service are different. The treasure of women's collections would simply be lost, because a special classification system also envisions a special structure of knowledge which does not become clear in another system. I will return to this issue again later.

For the women's libraries, archives and information centers the new Gender Studies programs are an additional challenge, especially in such towns where both exist simultaneously and the university library begins to include the relevant literature in its acquisition policy statement bit by bit. There are good contacts between them where persons know each other through special projects. Generally the women's information institutions should be more proactive in offering their achievements and special services assert publicly the slogan of a WINE-document: "Behind every successful Women's Studies program there is a specialized Women's Library". Unfortunately, however, there are some who also hold the opinion that women's information institutions as unprofessional. These prejudicial judgments can be avoided by direct contact. Those who know the extensive collections properly can use it for their specific research projects. Also in the survey I want to analyze below I asked if there are still other libraries in town which can be used for the study. These possibilities exist in Berlin, Hamburg, Bielefeld, Basel, Graz and Bremen. They include for example the Berlin Network of Women's
Archives as well as the virtual women's library in Hamburg and a special union catalog in Basel. Questions regarding cooperation between university and other regional libraries have to be discussed more extensively in the network „i.d.a.“ itself.

Evaluation of the survey about how to meet the special information needs of Gender Studies programs at universities

The survey I sent off in January, 2003 is already the second of it’s kind. I started the first one in February, 2000, in the third year of our program in Berlin. At that time I received too few answers for a general result, although these non-answers were also a statement. This year I sent the questionnaire to 22 institutions; 10 of them did not answer. Finally I had 13 questionnaires to evaluate, together with our own response. The responses are complemented with a questionnaire that our center sent to all Gender Studies programs for a planned exchange of experience in July. My questionnaire contained 11 questions which I limit here to the questions of acquisition, cataloging and searching, interdisciplinarity and location of the collection.

Acquisition

A university library generally has the duty to collect all materials which are required for all disciplines for teaching and research at the university. Even if new courses are established, it should be natural to consider not only university-political and theoretical-methodical aspects, but to consider also the base and provision of literature. Except for the Humboldt University Berlin, however, no other program concerned itself with literature in the preliminary stages of establishing the program. For four universities already mentioned, it played absolutely no role (Hamburg, Graz, Salzburg, Oldenburg). Others planned to found the program together with their own (center) library (Basel), purchased books with funds from the women's studies' professorship or with special research funds (Potsdam, Bremen) or could resort to a good stock of their branch libraries because individual Women’s and Gender Studies courses had already been taught in individual departments before foundation of the program. You could say something similar about the financial and personnel resources for the provision of literature. The answers vary from being negative (Graz, Oldenburg, Salzburg) about using professorial
book funds for the branch libraries (Hannover, Potsdam) or special funds (Bremen) to being positive in terms of resorting to a women’s studies coordination center that has been existing at the university since decades (Hamburg). In Bielefeld (OS) the funds for literature were equally considered when planning all other resources and in Berlin (HU) an annual acquisition budget for literature was negotiated together with the university library. Except for Basel and Berlin no institution answered the question regarding personnel resources and their qualifications. In Basel they hired a staff member to establish the center’s library; also in Berlin a specialist for information/documentation has been working since the foundation of the women’s studies center (ZiF) who, except for her specialized professional qualification, also has a Master’s degree in Library Science.

Already here strategies are recognizable which concerns the planned collaboration of programs and university libraries (UL). Except for Salzburg all programs cooperate with their university libraries. That means that orders can be balanced, so that the center library collects the monographs and the UL the journals (Basel). Or they agree that all collections are registered in the OPAC of the UL (Basel, Hamburg, Bremen, Potsdam). In Berlin (HU) the research librarian at the center library puts the acquisition lists together with the support of the program’s instructors and submits it to the UL. At other universities coordinators of gender specific topics are responsible for the acquisition lists (Potsdam, Graz) or work as members in library committees (Hannover).

Because of their duties the university libraries also try to integrate Gender Studies as a new "discipline" into a field specialization (whether or not Women's/Gender Studies is a discipline in a traditional sense is still being discussed and mostly denied). Presently only four university libraries have special bibliographers on staff who are responsible for Gender Studies (Berlin HU, Bielefeld, Bremen, Graz), as well as up to three other disciplines, mostly social sciences, cultural studies or historical disciplines. In Graz one special bibliographer is responsible only for Gender studies, the responsibilities of the colleague in Bremen could not be determined. Unfortunately, I have no data about the professional education of these field librarians in Gender Studies. Mostly, however, they compile the acquisition lists for the UL with the help of Gender Studies specialists (professors, instructors, and information specialists of center libraries). Of course there are possibilities to add suggestions for literature by students everywhere.
Which problems arise from this organization of literature acquisition?

Acquisition policy always involves an interplay of conflicting interests. The ideal-typical systematic building of a collection mostly collides in practise with the restricted budget that then becomes a problem of choice for Gender Studies programs due to the large number of publications in Women's and Gender Studies. On the other hand, the systematic aspect collides with the aspect of demand. If most of the acquisition suggestions is primarily made by instructors and students (like in Hamburg, Potsdam, Bielefeld (OS), Bremen), the collection concentrates upon the requirements of teaching. This is positive only at first sight. Unfortunatly, this results in the emergence of so called "textbook collections" based on the student’s interests, or so called "handset agglomerations" (Friedl, 2002) based on the instructor’s interests. Here the systematic, and also critical consideration of the amount of available literature is absent, but necessary to prevent a possible canon building at university and to stimulate internal teaching and research by literature from other directions. Such a systematic acquisition would be possible with a specialist who ideally would be trained in Gender Studies as well as in library science, and who could act as a mediator between the program and the UL. Collaboration with special bibliographers develops positively where these specialists also show interest in Gender Studies (Bremen, Basel, Hannover, Marburg).

At the Humboldt University we inform all Gender Studies instructors about our concern and way of acquiring literature for the program twice a year as requests for offering new courses are made. Instructors can direct their offers based on teaching and research interests to our information-documentation center. Finally it is necessary to check whether this literature already exists and whether it can be purchased according to profile, costs and users. Then after performing literature searches in journals, in literature overviews, in recommended internet lists and review and publishing materials I send the order lists of German-speaking and foreign-language literature to our special librarian in the UL. She also informs us whether funds are available, so that we can collect suggestions continuously over the whole year and react quickly. Our wish to be informed about the purchased literature by a new acquisition list in the internet will be fulfilled shortly.
Our general problem is that instructors - in spite of all our preparations - do not utilize enough the possibilities available to them to suggest literature for their lectures. In addition, our strategy also collides with the increase in short-term university teaching positions and the usual budgetary barriers which prevent literature from becoming available at the beginning of the semester. A possible reason for the lower than expected cooperation could lie in the fact that instructors primarily order books for their own branch libraries instead of considering the university library collection. For a Gender Studies program like ours in which 20 departments are involved, it is organizationally better to offer the literature at a central location where books can be lent and more reading room seats exist. Furthermore, you have to consider, that the OPAC has been offering all collections of all branch libraries for only a few years, at the beginning of our program only the university library collection was searchable on-line.

Finally the question of how to assess the collection is also an issue of acquisition. You can answer it with two different rating scales. If the university library collection is estimated before any Women’s or Gender Studies program exist at university or as the only base for it, the collection is mostly assessed negatively (Essen, Basel, Salzburg, Freiburg, Bremen). If, however, the program was involved in collection building it is mostly positively (Berlin, Oldenburg, Regensburg, Hamburg, Frankfurt/M., Bern) or even very positively estimated (Potsdam, Hannover). A problem becomes clear here that must be discussed in the near future: what are the standards for assessing collections?

**Assessment of Women’s/Gender Studies-collections**

The assessment of Women's and Gender Studies-collections has, to this point, been based on notions of quantity rather than quality, even in the USA (s. Intner; Futas,1996). Besides, researching with keywords like „gender, woman’s studies, men’s studies, gender studies; women’s movement or women“ it is a matter of fact that German university libraries with Gender Studies courses offer in average more items in their OPAC than even the Deutsche Bücherei in Leipzig, the Deutsche Bibliothek in Frankfurt/M. or the Staatsbibliothek in Berlin. This proves that university libraries meet their responsibilities, especially because Gender Studies courses continue to create needs that cannot
be met only by women's information centers and women's research before their institutionalization at universities. However, experiences with qualitative methods could already be used for building and above all for development of collections. Nevertheless, looking at the USA you have to take into account that sensibly standard methods used there can be applied here indeed as a measure of assessment, but, however, their results cannot be the standard itself. In this way we could methodically discuss the so called „Conspectus“ (=a library measuring instrument) for Women’s and Gender Studies collections on the basis of the US-Women's Studies-Conspectus which is relatively new there, too but we cannot assess our local collections on that basis. As long as there is no sufficient and professional basis in bibliographies about Women’s and Gender Studies collections in Germany, the necessary standard for a Conspectus at a national level is not yet possible. To assess own collections, we could compare all the individual collections of all the existing institutions. That has not occured yet. In the beginning of building a collection you can compare it with acquisition lists to qualitatively estimate the collection. But this procedure is no qualitative standard as Pritchard (1995) explains: "... care must be taken not to fall into the trap of using the same list to assess a collection that was used to select it. Doing that creates a self-fulfulling prophecy in which the evaluator is bound to find a splendid collection when, in reality, this might be far from the truth." To assess a collection, citation lists and other positively evaluated collections help. In addition, it should be considered whether virtual library of all collections could even be built. The more Gender Studies collections are presented online, the more the internet will be an important medium to compare them.

**Cataloging and searching in the light of inter- and transdisciplinarity**

Here in this circle of information specialists who are also involved in Women's and Gender Studies I do not need to talk about basic criticisms regarding existing classification systems, codes and the construction of data banks. I have already illustrated this in more detail in other articles, also in evaluation of US-research results (s. Aleksander, 1998, 2002).
What I want to do here is to analyze which special requirements for the libraries arise from the interdisciplinary or transdisciplinary character of Gender Studies for the search of literature. The interdisciplinarity of Women's and Gender Studies has already been recognized (s. Klein, 1990). The program „Cultural Gender Studies“ in Oldenburg formulated in 1997, for the first time in the FRG, the claim to transdisciplinarity (s. Kahlert, 2001). The Gender Studies program at the Humboldt University in Berlin was combined with the Center for Interdisciplinary Women’s Studies in July 2003, which organized the program, to become the new Center for Transdisciplinary Gender Studies. Even if the contents, differences and concrete effects of transdisciplinarity are still discussed as a concept for teaching and/or research, the special requirements for the library do not differ from those of interdisciplinarity. Generally it concerns the relationship between disciplines/fields and discipline-general research projects and programs. The needs of interdisciplinarily working students and researchers have been discussed in the USA for a long time (s. Searing, 1992A, 1996). In Germany the libraries are not prepared for it yet (s. Wellenreuther, 1996). Only Gender Studies programs could give important impulses for this discussion.

Those who work inter- and transdisciplinarily, need information from different disciplines/fields. With a library system which is divided into a central library and branch libraries, the acquisition policy should be coordinated. Even if all the literature can be searched by an on-line catalog, it’s only a seeming progress. The traditional arrangement of the library according to the principle of disciplines and academics is only generally covered by the OPAC. The old order has been covered only with a "veil" under which still exists a structure that brings all produced knowledge into the form of bibliographical data in a strict system. The respective catalog system so always reflects concrete historical, cultural and philosophical-methodical principles of construction. Historically more obliged to the principle of disciplines and fields, today it is obvious for the libraries: "The problem of interdisciplinarity is the problem of fit." (s. Klein, 1996, 135)

For Women’s and Gender Studies these problems of fitting into the given system are the special linchpin. This concerns such questions as: How are the documents indexed? How do they fit into the existing classification systems? How are they shelved?
Susan Searing (1992) described in an article how librarians have coped with Women's Studies as an interdisciplinary field and ascertained: "... interdisciplinary approaches call into question the familiar verbally, numerical, and spatial systems on which we rely. Classification systems function as a hegemonic representation of human knowledge. Interdisciplinary studies and many modern subjects, must be squeezed into pre-existing outlays of knowledge that no longer fit the shape of current scholarly output."

In another article Searing (1996, 320) describes the classification structure as a theoretical map of human knowledge, but in practical terms, however, it is map of stacks, guiding users to places where books on similar topics can be found in the library. Because every book requires its own physical place in the library in order for it to be found, and because one book can only stand at one place, fixed and variable factors collide with each other. For a storage library the signature (call number) isn’t such a big problem, but it will be for an open-access library where all books are shelved by notations or call numbers. This classification structure is based namely on the principle of disciplines. Therefore, new forms of representing and classifying the literature in the libraries should be created for users working in interdisciplinary fields. For example, references could stand as signs on the shelves like in old card catalogues.

Above all, however, libraries should meet users’ search needs, while indexing more bibliographical data than is done today - especially in terms of keywords. Only 5 gender institutions mentioned in the survey that their libraries continue to index books (Bielefeld, Bremen, Graz, Hamburg, Hannover); all the other eight libraries lack this service, which is a key asset of libraries because it creates an increase of information. Searing (1996, 320) describes a procedure that enriches catalogue records with keywords from table of contents and indexes. This is especially important for symposium papers, collections and anthologies. Such papers are a special resource for users working interdisciplinarily because anthologies „constitute a significant portion of the total book output in women’s studies“. Searching with keywords is especially difficult if the keywords to be used in the search do not appear in the title of the document. It therefore becomes the author’s problem whether or not their books or articles will be found as a result of the words in the title. Otherwise these works get lost in the depths of the catalogue, because only few users search literature by notations. And also, unfortunately, this
does not reflect the ongoing state of research - on the contrary. Classification systems and magnetic
tape service are still constructed patriarchaly and change very slowly. Although the survey revealed
that the Gender Studies institutions criticized the inadequate subject indexing in Women’s and Gender
Studies, and that there are different projects and suggestions for its improvement worldwide, the basic
restructuring still is not in sight. Above all the retrospective changes would have to be very extensive.
Nevertheless, the work may not be stopped, and new ways should be found to facilitate the searching
for literature. Searing (1996, 321) suggested new approaches to classification. Further, the electronic
bibliographic access may someday replace browsing. Finally, it is the library’s obligation to serve the
users’ needs - and not the contrary.

Hope Olson, University of Alberta, Canada, works on interesting new projects. In the project "Finding
Spaces for Feminism in Traditional Library Classification" terms from „A Women's Thesaurus“ were
linked to the numbers of the Dewey Decimal Classification (DDC). As a result a special Women's
Studies/feminism index to this classification system was established. The result was a link between the
feminist naming of subjects and the mainstream mapping of knowledge. The main purpose of their
study was to identify the main areas of the DDC that required revision or expansion.

Center/Institute library or university library?
The question of interdisciplinarity also touches upon the question of where to locate the collection.
According to the survey all institutions have their own institute libraries, center libraries or branch
libraries of Gender Studies in addition to the university libraries. Their purpose is to collect literature
mostly for local use and to acquire titles outside the traditional fields that therefore still are not
covered by the university library (Graz - Media Studies). Unfortunately, nothing is known yet about
the classification systems used in these special libraries. Some institutions argued that it must be
urgently revised. In the university branch libraries the literature is often presented as a special
collection or on special labeled shelves (Bremen, Hannover, Bielefeld, Graz, Berlin). On the one hand
this method indeed meets the needs of students, but on the other hand it only confirms what Margaret
Rodgers already in 1993 puts up the paradox of Women's Studies: "The paradox of women's studies is
that while feminists would like to see an end to discriminatory identification of women by gender
rather than by more individual characteristics such as occupation or abilities at the same time, women's studies is concerned precisely with studying women as a group identified by gender. Thus, the collacation of materials on women is at once problematical ... and important to retain." (Rodgers, 1993)

In the branch libraries the specially labeled shelves for Women's and Gender Studies often attract attention as a special collection, because there are no or too few notations for these titles in the classification system to include them with others. Therefore titles are listed under only a few notations although they cover a wide range of content. This practise is a stopgap. In this respect it is necessary to stress again how important it is to revise the classification systems in order to integrate the literature into the structure of the single disciplines.

The Gender Studies program in Oldenburg answered the question "Where should the literature be shelved?": This is and remains a problem - the literature must appear under single disciplines. This answer is to be interpreted as ambivalent. On the one hand it can unfortunately mean that there should be a special collection of Women's and Gender Studies established, in which all obstacles of the individual discipline can be negotiated. On the other hand, the statement could also demand that all special literature of Women's and Gender Studies be arranged among the disciplines to which it contributes, while special inter- and transdisciplinary literature be shelved separately under a special notation. In doing so, libraries could avoid the danger that Pierre Bourdieu (Dölling; Krais, 1997,) saw when he said, "that the constitution of women's studies as a separate collection is something very dangerous: One extracts a special object and separates it from a whole class of subjects which theoretically seen belongs to the same category."

Of course there are also advantages and disadvantages to each of these solutions (Searing, in 1986). A separate collection with Women's/Gender studies literature shows everybody what exists, above all in the open-access library. However, as a special collection it mostly has field-restricted content and no longer follows the interdisciplinary character this way. Even a multidisciplinary ordering within the individual collection would make searching easier for students, but at the same time it would make access to gender-specific literature difficult for those persons browsing in their own special fields. In
addition, the advantage for the students has a negative aspect too, to which I will return in the next section of my discussion.

We have had good opportunities to centrally collect literature in the university library (UL) of the Humboldt University. In the reading room „Sociology“ there are specially labeled shelves "Sociology/Gender Studies" with basic literature, reference books and encyclopedias and all necessary literature for exam preparation. This collection of texts has been compiled by the committee of Gender Studies instructors at the request of the students and was available for use in 2000.

Most of the programs use readers, books on reserve or copies, so that students can prepare for the courses. Of course, the problem that certain books and articles have not been ordered in time for the library, are unavailable, or are only in the scholar’s private possession is only temporarily solved in this way. It is also more comfortable and, besides, takes care of the books and journals. But this advantage is bought at a serious disadvantage: the students are not required to acquaint themselves with library at all! They are not required to search for the literature themselves because the readers are also available in copy-shops near the university and can be ordered simply as a copy. My experience has been that students only come to the library when they have to study for an exam, write an essay or even their final thesis. Only a few come to search for a seminar talk. However, the acquired skills needed to use a library and its services is a something that must be learned during the period of study, and certainly within an inter- and transdisciplinary program.

User training

Finally I come to the question of how to qualify the "information literacy" of the students, a question that I will venture to answer based on our experience with courses designed to teach students how to perform searches electronically. If we, as shown above, criticize how Gender Studies literature is involved in the traditional catalogues how do we help students to find their way in these structures?

In our center these courses were already established at the beginning of the program in 1997 in our own computer pool. We had raised funds for teaching students. The first students came from the departments of library and information science and information. After running out of the funds they transmitted their experiences to student helpers who continue to teach today. They teach two 4-hour
seminars where the students learn about catalogues, data banks, CD-ROMs and other resources of information and how to search them. The courses are well visited, the feedback is also good. Compared to user classes in US-libraries our classes are need improvement. While some universities are developing courses that offer a certificate upon completion (s. Kutner, 2002), our courses get stuck too much in the simple librarian’s tool box. It is not sufficient to only show students the search possibilities. Classes for learning how to access the OPAC and data banks etc. are also offered by the university library. Our classes must deal better with our claim to teaching students how to navigate the field of Women's and Gender Studies. This includes teaching them how to criticise existing library systems and search tools from the standpoint of Gender Studies. For instance, how can you use the traditional structures of the catalogues to get results, regardless of the limits of the system? How can you search interdisciplinary subjects? While such questions are discussed and suitable strategies are practised, students also learn problem-oriented searches in contrast to commonly used questions of single keywords or terms, persons or known titles. Before you can do the research, concept work has to be done. It must be clear to the student what is being searched for and what is not. Another important point is to provide them with the ability to assess and evaluate resources. Which criteria show whether a book, an article or an internet page is valuable to my work? What is a citation index? Where does one find reviews?

Finally we must work with the libraries to find new ways for users to access the on-line texts researched. You may arrive at a result online, but the thesis from the USA, for example, may not accessible or lendable. All these questions should be treated in the classes. It would be most favorable to offer such classes as a component of the curriculum, for different skill levels in several semesters. Such classes correspond with the intellectual training in Gender Studies, because they illustrate the political and systemic nature of libraries, that is "that knowledge organization is not a neutral act, that it does shape our thinking, and that we can inspire thoughtful use of language and of information in the ways that we organize for retrieval" (Olson, 2002, 112).

**Suggestions for ideally providing literature to Gender Studies programs**
Finally I have arrived at questions of ideal and desired suggestions for improvement. Concluding from the results of the survey and the experiences in the program of Humboldt University of Berlin I suggest the following:

1. The literature should be collected and provided in a central (university) library. This library should be an open-access library with enough reading room seats and workplaces for researchers with good electronic equipment.

2. The Gender Studies literature should be selected by special bibliographers who are also educated in Women's and Gender Studies. They would work closely together with the Gender Studies programs and centers at the university, especially with the instructors, who cooperate to suggest the book lists for their courses.

3. The budget for literature should be based on the number of students, by the growth of the information resources as well as the prices, and should be negotiable.

4. In addition to their professional education the students should also be trained in research strategies in the field of Gender Studies, ideally as an ongoing component of the curriculum.

5. There should be a regular exchange of experience on subjects of library organization and providing and assessment of literature within the committees of the program, but also nationwide and internationally.

6. There should be continuous collaboration with the university library to divide service tasks (for example education and training classes) and to develop new service offers.

7. The challenges faced by Gender Studies programs and inter- and transdisciplinary centers at universities should be more thoroughly discussed and met by library science and Gender Studies in order to change the practice as soon as possible.

Thank you for your attention. I would be very interested in any questions or suggestions you might have.
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