

From Early Warning Signs to Institutional Action: An Innovative Teaching Method to Address Gender- Related Violence in Universities

Lara Murvartian

University of Granada, Spain

Abstract

Within the framework of projects 16-2ACT-23 and YOU.TH, funded by the Spanish Women's Institute and the European Commission, this study presents an innovative teaching methodology designed for higher education classrooms with the aim of promoting sensitive responses among university students to cases of gender-related violence (GRV). The methodology is based on the use of four videos which depict a GRV situation unfolding within a university context. The scenes follow a temporal sequence that moves from early warning signs to institutional responses. The first scene examines early signs of emotional distress within an ambiguous situation in a public university setting, encouraging consideration of bystanders' roles and the factors that enable or hinder intervention and support-seeking. The second scene revisits the events leading up to the initial situation by presenting the viewpoints of the victim, the aggressor, associated peers, and witnesses, allowing analysis of how violence becomes normalized. The third scene addresses close interpersonal relationships through an exchange between the victim and a trusted peer, fostering reflection on effective support and common emotional and cognitive obstacles when offering help. The fourth scene focuses on institutional responses by simulating a faculty-level meeting in which participants take on the roles of academic staff and authorities, facilitating critical discussion of institutional silence, reputational concerns, power relations, and responsibility. Through the combined use of audiovisual materials, debate, and role-playing, the methodology seeks to foster empathy toward victims, critical self-reflection on myths and negative attitudes surrounding GRV, a sense of responsibility, and self-efficacy to intervene.

Keywords: gender-based violence; higher education; university; audiovisual; bystander intervention