

Epistemic Courage and Literary Instruction: An Exploratory Conceptual Discussion Addressing Contemporary Challenges in Swedish High Schools

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Introducing the problem and framing the context of transformative literary education

The Swedish National Agency for Education's latest status report highlights that students are increasingly exposed to political pressure, extremism, and fake news, emphasizing the urgent need for schools to foster democratic abilities and resilience (Skolverket, 2023). After several decades of teaching high school students and supervising student teachers during their practicum, I share Skolverket's concern. In my experience, Swedish high school students have much to contribute in class, and many are both informed and engaged. Yet the classroom discussion climate sometimes discourages open dialogue and personal input, particularly when such contributions challenge outspoken students who are accustomed to dominating the conversation.

In response, it is essential that students develop critical thinking, personal autonomy, and dialogical agency. Although this argument primarily draws on the Swedish educational context, the challenges posed by misinformation and the broader need for independent thinking and open dialogue are by no means uniquely Swedish. Even today, a surprising number of U.S. citizens, for example, continue to endorse scientifically discredited claims—such as the belief that the Earth is flat, that the moon landings were staged, or

that COVID-19 vaccines contain microchips for surveillance purposes (Hamilton, 2022).

Strengthening epistemic and dialogical courage in schools also aligns with the concept of pedagogical rights, which asserts that every student, regardless of social, economic, or cultural background, has the right to both enhancement and participation (Bernstein, 2000). Students should not be left to navigate the current political turbulence and insecurity on their own; rather, the school system has the responsibility to empower them and support the expression of their subjectivity. This is especially crucial in today's increasingly polarized world, where echo chambers and extremism present growing challenges.

Although evidence suggests that Swedish students possess a strong theoretical understanding of democracy, this knowledge does not consistently translate into democratic practice. Paradoxically, the emphasis on democratic values within schools has contributed to the emergence of "classroom opinions"—views that align with the perceived norms of the school environment (Molloy, 2017). Instead of taking the risk to express individual perspectives, many students opt for silence or mirror what they assume aligns with the teacher's expectations. The teacher's instructional design and attitude are crucial in transforming the classroom into a dialogic space where students can express themselves more freely.

At the same time, I have seen overconfident or bullying student clusters emerge: students who spread misinformation from internet forum echo chambers and/or aggressively suppress other students' conflicting opinions. While everyone has the right to express their views, classroom challenges arise when isolated perspectives reinforce misinformation or discriminatory attitudes without allowing counterarguments to be voiced. This issue is amplified by an increasingly widespread self-centered communicative style—sometimes referred to as the 'Generation Me' phenomenon—where active listening is replaced by self-presentation (Twenge, 2013).

There is evidence suggesting that subversive literature education can foster more open, attentive, and dialogic classroom environments (Bradling, 2026; Hoggan & Cranton, 2014; Ågerup, 2023). Fictional narratives can activate cultural translation processes that reduce social distance, and literature discussions provide ideal opportunities to practice these abilities since literary worlds can function as safe spaces for expressing otherwise unapproachable positions (Hakemulder, 2000; Keen, 2007; Steiner, 2014; Svensson, 2010).

As Gert Biesta has emphasized, rather than lecturing democratic values, it is preferable for teachers to create the conditions in which students can develop their own subjectivity and social agency (Biesta, 2006). In such a process, it can be advantageous to use narratives that do not themselves express good values, but instead compel discussion in which democratic values are enacted (Biesta, 2013). The risk that such discussions may produce opinions that conflict with the school's core values is inherent in any democracy. Ideally, the classroom becomes a forum for dialogue that can strengthen students' confidence in themselves, in one another, and in discussion as a method. In this line of thought, consensus need not be actively pursued by the teacher; even a conversation that ends in disagreement provides valuable practice (Trygvasson, 2019).

Transformative learning is a theory that explains how individuals can adopt more reflective perspectives and express themselves more freely. This process begins when students encounter a "disorienting dilemma"—an experience that challenges their existing beliefs and assumptions. Through critical reflection, they examine these beliefs and explore new ways of thinking and acting. This process includes engaging in dialogue with others, which helps test and validate new perspectives, leading to more autonomous and empowered ways of interacting with the world (Cranton, 2012; Cranton, 2016; Jarvis, 2012; Mezirow, 1991).

Transformative learning is inherently student-centered, relying on the learners' openness to revision and self-development. Transformation should not be imposed on students; instead, it

should be presented as an opportunity for growth. A pragmatic pedagogy should guide these learning activities, recognizing emotions as valuable sources of engagement.

To foster autonomy rather than politically correct classroom opinions, the teacher's role should be understood as one of active and equal participation within what Lipman (2003) describes as a "community of inquiry," where both students and teachers collaboratively formulate questions and seek answers without imposing consensus. This approach implies that lessons cannot be designed or managed to guarantee predetermined outcomes.

Although the process is not controlled, teachers can act as facilitators or coaches, helping students progress at their own pace and in their own direction (Lipman, 2003). The key question is identifying texts and practices that can make the studied issue accessible to each student—not necessarily from the perspective they are accustomed to, but from a more autonomous and multifaceted angle developed through discussions with a more diverse group than their family and friends. Also, it is important to foster a sense among students that the classroom is a safe space where diverse opinions are allowed and welcomed. Indeed, remaining silent in the face of certain topics is a democratic right. My point is not that every student should speak more, but that those who are hesitant to form and voice new ideas should be supported in stepping forward and developing self-confidence.

In this essay, I explore the relevance of Jonathan Ichikawa's notion of epistemic courage in relation to a pedagogy aimed at cultivating students who are more self-empowered, capable of critical thinking, and unafraid to speak their minds (Ichikawa, 2024). Grounded in my own experiences of teaching and supervising teachers, this essay discusses possible educational choices aimed at encouraging open dialogue while at the same time counteracting epistemic recklessness and harmful prejudice in Swedish high schools.

Epistemic anxiety, courage, and recklessness

In this section, I will discuss the concept of epistemic courage, a concept that may support scholars and teachers who seek to develop transformative instructional designs. Before addressing its pedagogical potential, however, it is essential to define epistemic courage and position it in relation to the adjacent constructs of epistemic anxiety and epistemic recklessness.

Epistemic anxiety is a sense of doubt, prompting an individual to withhold judgment and leave questions unresolved in face of social risks (Newton, 2022). Powerful social stereotypes and scripts can make suspension seem reasonable, such as the common refrain, “Let’s not jump to conclusions.” By not taking a stance or critically evaluating situations, people may unknowingly allow falsehoods, harmful beliefs, and prejudice to persist. In essence, not questioning misleading information or refraining from challenging harmful ideas can be just as detrimental as endorsing them. It emphasizes the idea that silence in the face of injustice or deception is not neutral; it can be a passive form of support for those who promote falsehoods or biases (Arendt, 1963; Ichikawa, 2024).

Epistemic courage, on the other hand, is the capacity to acquire knowledge and to take a stand in the face of uncertainty. We exhibit epistemic courage by participating in public discourse despite the risk of being wrong. In his book *Epistemic Courage*, Jonathan Ichikawa demonstrates that silence is not always without cost, even if it may appear to be. He argues that we tend to underestimate the dangers of passivity compared to the more visible risks of acting prematurely. Failing to take a position can be perilous. Ichikawa wrote the book during the COVID-19 pandemic, drawing some of the most illustrative examples from that period. Before exploring the pedagogical implications of epistemic courage, it is instructive to consider one of Ichikawa’s examples from the field of medicine, as it clearly delineates the distinction between epistemic courage and epistemic recklessness.

When COVID-19 first emerged, American physician Pierre Kory was working as an emergency doctor at the University of Wisconsin Hospital and Clinics. From his vantage point, Kory quickly recognized the severity of the virus's lethality. He had previously treated similar symptoms using corticosteroids, but was prevented from applying the same method to COVID-19 patients. His belief in the efficacy of steroid treatment was dismissed as wishful thinking. Kory resigned from his position and moved to New York, where he was able to provide the care he deemed appropriate. Owing to Kory's epistemic courage—his willingness to trust his judgment and take personal risks—many lives were likely saved under his care. Subsequent clinical trials would vindicate him: corticosteroids were later approved for treating COVID-19 symptoms after demonstrating efficacy.

However, Ichikawa goes on to say that Kory later advocated for the use of ivermectin—a drug typically used to treat parasitic infections—as a treatment for COVID-19. Inspired by some early signs of patient recovery, Kory authored articles and appeared on *The Joe Rogan Experience*, promoting ivermectin. Desperate patients obtained veterinary versions of the drug and, according to Ichikawa, consumed doses intended for horses and cattle. As more studies were completed, it became evident that Kory was mistaken about ivermectin's effects, and he is now remembered as one of the figures who contributed to the spread of COVID-19 misinformation, Ichikawa notes. The case of Pierre Kory thus exemplifies both socially beneficial epistemic courage and its excessive counterpart: epistemic recklessness (Ichikawa, 2024).

As the example illustrates, there are risks associated with hastily taking a stance on a difficult issue with potentially serious consequences. Beyond medical malpractice, polarization and extremism could also increase when we hastily form beliefs instead of waiting for verified knowledge. However, there are two objections to overly emphasizing this risk. First, it is precisely verified knowledge that extremists tend to use, albeit repackaged, to build their positions. Second, as Ichikawa also argues in his book, becoming a skeptic is not much better, as this also carries

significant risks. The way forward is to gradually develop the ability to listen and adapt to each situation's demands for engagement.

Drawing from Aristotle's *Nicomachean Ethics*, virtues such as epistemic courage can be seen as balance points between two vices. Generosity is the virtuous middle ground between greed and wastefulness, intimacy lies at the boundary between brazenness and avoidance, humility is found in the tension between shamelessness and shyness, and so on. Similarly, epistemic courage can be placed between epistemic cowardice and recklessness (Ichikawa, 2024). Epistemic recklessness is described in more detail in Quassim Cassam's book *Vices of the Mind*, which reminds us of the United States' invasion of Iraq, a situation in which the leaders underestimated local resistance. Contrary to expert predictions, Donald Rumsfeld and George W. Bush believed they could walk in as saviors and be greeted with public jubilation, Cassam points out. This is not epistemic courage; rather, the American leaders displayed epistemic recklessness (Cassam, 2019).

Following this exploration of epistemic courage and its democratic value, I will now discuss how this concept can be applied within educational practice. If we can inspire young people to take the risk of being partly wrong, to speak out, and to listen to the reactions of others, we may reduce the spread of prejudice, while fostering more free-thinking citizens.

The potential of positive epistemology in educative settings

In educational contexts, particular interest lies in concepts and methods that support the initiation and sustenance of active knowledge-seeking, as well as models that highlight the significance of stances and beliefs in collective learning processes. The concept of epistemic courage appears especially valuable in pedagogical discussions concerning conflict, emancipation, and political emotions within the classroom, among other relevant themes.

Research in psychology supports the idea that positive affirmation can enhance self-esteem and build resilience. The brain is adaptable and capable of being reoriented toward positive values rather than fear-based avoidance (Koosis, 2024). In educational settings, studies have shown that affirmation-based exercises can help minority students feel more confident and perform better academically—partially in response to the heightened stress levels often reported among these groups (Parker Goyer et al., 2017). It seems reasonable, then, to suggest that an overemphasis on caution and skepticism can inadvertently inhibit students’ development of self-awareness and their belief in their ability to effect change.

To clarify the distinction between negative and positive epistemology, Ichikawa presents six norms, each articulated in both a negative and a positive form (see Table 1). The first column outlines the negative epistemic norms, which discourage or prohibit belief formation, often emphasizing caution and avoidance of error. In contrast, the second column presents the positive epistemic norms, which encourage or promote belief, highlighting the value of embracing justified beliefs even in the face of uncertainty.

Negative norms	Positive norms
Don't be too hasty	Don't be too skeptical
Be careful in forming beliefs	Be careful in withholding beliefs
Make sure you have enough evidence before believing	Make sure you believe that your evidence dictates
Don't believe the products of unreliable sources	Believe the products of reliable sources
Make sure your beliefs are justified	Make sure you believe what is established
Don't believe something unless it is knowledge	Acquire the available knowledge

Table 1: Negative and positive epistemic norms (Ichikawa, 2024, p. 42)

It is noteworthy that most positive epistemic norms are constructed using active verbs without negation—for example, believe and acquire knowledge. This grammatical structure

underscores a proactive orientation, which is central to the concept of epistemic courage. Of particular importance is the encouragement to actively seek knowledge, rather than merely reject propositions presented by others.

By this point in the essay, it should be evident that epistemic courage does not entail the uncritical acceptance of all statements and beliefs. Rather, it involves confronting facts and making an active, deliberate choice to endorse them—while accepting the potential consequences of doing so. A key pedagogical implication is the proposal to recalibrate the prevailing bias toward passive, silent reflection and to gently redirect it toward action—action undertaken only when a belief appears epistemically warranted, and only in the form of provisional beliefs to be tested and explored within the classroom. This latter point is particularly significant, as it introduces an implicit form of quality control: when students articulate their current beliefs among peers—much like an explorative line of thought is presented to the research community—they not only communicate their present stance, but also demonstrate a readiness to revise their positions in response to alternative perspectives. In this way, the act of speaking functions simultaneously as an expression of belief and an invitation to dialogue.

This view aligns with Gregory Currie's conceptualization of knowledge as something that exists in degrees; we gradually form better beliefs about the world. Of course, certain facts appear to remain constant in modern life—heliocentrism, Bob Beamon's long jump gold at the 1968 Olympics, or Sirhan Sirhan's assassination of Robert F. Kennedy. Yet even these are not immune to denial or conspiracy, which continue to circulate in various forms. Moreover, as Currie notes, even our understanding of well-established facts—such as the structure of the solar system—has evolved over time. We now hold better beliefs about planetary orbits than earlier generations did (Currie, 2020).

All of this underscores the importance of collective epistemic processes—such as classroom dialogue—in refining and improving knowledge. Voicing our beliefs, even when tentative,

allows them to be shaped, challenged, and ultimately strengthened through interaction with others.

Dialogical courage as an extension of epistemic courage

I see dialogical courage as an essential extension of epistemic courage, emphasizing the importance of engaging with others in the testing and refinement of one's beliefs.

An illustrative example from educational practice can be drawn from the supervision of teacher candidates during their school placements. Some years ago, I visited a high school where a student teacher was practicing. The U.S. presidential election served as the topic of classroom discussion. During the lesson, a group of male students expressed the firm belief that a woman could not become president of the United States due to an inability to engage in warfare. "Women can't fight wars," one student stated, prompting agreement among his peers. Notably, no dissenting views were expressed, although some students shifted in their seats, vaguely signaling opposition or hesitation. There may have been epistemic courage in the room, but it was not voiced or transformed into *dialogical* courage that could have launched a productive conflict.

The student teacher thus encountered a challenge during this session, while my role was limited to observation. Later, we discussed the situation, and the regular teacher made clear that the issue of sexism would be addressed. Deliberating possible actions, we considered applying a negative epistemological approach by encouraging students to critically examine the sources underlying their judgment that women are incapable of conducting warfare. Such a response can be considered a standard pedagogical instinct. A bias toward skepticism—prominent both in academic epistemology and in popular conceptions of rationality—is evident among many Swedish educators, myself included.

However, it was evident that prior instruction had not had a substantial impact on this class, creating an opportunity to explore alternative strategies. It may be beneficial, in such cases, to incorporate more positive epistemological approaches when

addressing difficult and ideologically charged questions. Reflecting on the one-directional communication in this class, and recalling many other classrooms where dominant students took up most of the space without inviting dialogue, I felt it was necessary to consider alternative ways of addressing sexism and other forms of prejudice beyond simply correcting it. What follows is a suggested way forward and an invitation to further explore how such challenges might be met.

Encouraging Continued Scholarly Discussion and Empirical Research

From a theoretical perspective, it has been argued that ethically and politically challenging literary texts can animate discussions in Swedish schools on issues such as gender, class, and cultural topics (Alkestrand, 2016; Almqvist, 2024; Johansson, 2017; Persson, 2012). While the methodology of book discussions on challenging themes has been examined at length (e.g., Lyngfelt & Nissen, 2018; Franck & Lilja, 2023; Tengberg, Johansson & Sønneland, 2023), further empirical research is needed to learn more about which combinations of literary texts and educative methods most effectively encourage students to take an active role in their development as autonomous subjects.

The observation of sexist comments about female politicians will serve as a reference point for tentatively suggesting a potential pedagogical approach that incorporates principles of positive epistemology and literature education. It is important to emphasize that the biased comments themselves are not the main problem—if they were, a simple correction of the speakers might be sufficient. Rather, my focus is on pedagogical strategies that empower the group, create space for the expression of alternative perspectives, and allow erroneous assumptions to be gradually undermined through dialogue and reflection. Like moral courage, epistemic courage can be cultivated through practice. The Chinese philosopher Mencius emphasized that “repeated intentional performance of explicitly ethical, often political, actions builds up and fortifies one’s courage” (Ivanhoe, 2006, p. 225). In other words, to increase the capacity to form and voice new ideas, it is necessary

to repeatedly try articulating them out loud. Over time, epistemic and dialogical courage may come more naturally and become an embodied part of the individual's character.

The likelihood that degrees of courage vary within each classroom presents a challenge for group activities, as students' developmental needs can differ considerably. However, the use of fictional narratives offers a promising solution. Literature allows for multiple levels of epistemic courage to be activated through engagement with the same text, as each reading experience is uniquely shaped by the reader's prior experiences, emotional dispositions, and personality traits.

Using positive epistemology and disconcerting ideas as a vantage point, the following design sketch is proposed as an exploratory model. The imagined group is based on the class referenced earlier, and educators are encouraged to adapt the proposed sketch according to the specific needs and characteristics of their own groups.

Given the perceived ideological homogeneity of the group on this topic, the first step must involve challenging the status quo. As an initial activity, reading Valerie Solanas's SCUM Manifesto is suggested to introduce the ideas that men are obsolete and women aggressive. SCUM Manifesto is a self-published radical feminist text released in 1967. It presents an extreme critique of men and argues that women must reshape society. The manifesto calls for the creation of SCUM, a "Society for Cutting Up Men," aimed at dismantling existing social structures and exterminating all males in the best interest of humanity.

Rather than assigning complex argumentative texts, Solanas's brief manifesto may serve as a deliberately disorienting text. The aim is to disrupt prevailing assumptions, stimulate curiosity and reflection, thus providing a vantage point from which new ideas might emerge.

A possible next step could be to engage with Mikael Niemi's (2003) novel *Popular Music from Vittula*. Set in the north of Sweden, many

of the events in the book reflect macho attitudes and heavy drinking, which are also portrayed as underlying causes of many personal tragedies. At the same time, Niemi draws on stereotypical images of the region found elsewhere in Sweden. An important part of the story is how popular music and rock 'n' roll enter the boys' lives and come to play a major role.

As highlighted by Louise Almqvist (2024), this novel has the potential to generate a disorienting dilemma—particularly by drawing attention to a violent sexual encounter with the woman cast as the perpetrator. In this narrative, both male and female characters are portrayed as ferocious, challenging the previously expressed classroom assumption that women are inherently incapable of warfare. Furthermore, the story's realistic yet subtly absurd tone may encourage students to connect fictional events to personal experiences, facilitating a fluid interchange between fiction and reality.

As a third component, depending on students' level of experience with literature, the class could engage with a story that features a compelling life journey with an active heroine courageously expressing her subjectivity among both male and female peers. The story should avoid being overly schematic, but it should inspire students to think positively about human agency, regardless of sex. In the class described above, something along the lines of, to name two extremely well-known works, *The Hunger Games* by Suzanne Collins (2008) or Khaled Hosseini's *A Thousand Splendid Suns* would possibly be effective (Hosseini, 2007). This material would serve as a foundation for critical discussions about differing social conditions between the sexes. Such encounters can lead to an emergent understanding of systemic injustice, even among students who did not initially perceive themselves as holding biased views. In any case, engaging with such literature can spark classroom discussions where learners are activated as subjects and given opportunities to develop both epistemic and dialogical courage.

A key aspect of this approach is that the literary narrative is liberated from the immediate demands of fact-checking that

characterize documentary storytelling. While factual inaccuracies—though not formally incorrect within the framework of fiction—may affect a narrative’s perceived credibility, they do not, as in documentary accounts, provide grounds for questioning the narrative in its entirety.

Another advantage is that fictional characters are not referential in the same way as documented real people who express political opinions. (The Solanas example, though not strictly fictional, is sufficiently imaginative to bypass the documentary discourse being referenced here.) When political figures or current issues are mentioned, every utterance risks becoming subject to the interpretive frameworks shaped by each student’s social environment, including family, peers, and local communities. Changing one’s stance in such a context may resemble a form of betrayal. In contrast, fictional characters do not seem to automatically trigger this “loyalty mechanism” or social surveillance apparatus—at least not to the same extent.

Teachers are thus encouraged to consider the possibility that reading fiction containing disturbing or challenging scenes can serve as a powerful starting point for deliberative discussions that engage students across both high- and low-energy classroom environments. When reading and discussion are interwoven in a cyclical process, students are encouraged to seek out information, consider the experiences of others, and reflect on how these relate to their own life worlds. This process can foster epistemic courage by prompting students to articulate and explore their beliefs in a shared space.

Such an approach holds potential benefits for a wide range of learners, including shy students and those who may exhibit epistemically or ethically reckless behavior. Both groups can benefit from being exposed to alternative perspectives, enabling them to reconsider and refine their previously held views. Engaging with unsettling or provocative literature can thus support a broader transformation toward more open-minded and reflective attitudes, potentially initiating a positive cycle of curiosity, dialogue, and growth.

I do not mean to suggest that epistemic courage will develop naturally or quickly for everyone through such a process. Rather, I argue that engaging with provocative literature in a safe space—within a teacher-guided community of inquiry of the kind described above—is a strategy worth exploring in the pursuit of such courage.

Epistemic and dialogical courage are essential capacities and schools need to provide opportunities to practice them. At the same time, more empirical research is needed to clarify how best practices in this area can be developed. Accordingly, this essay does not present a finalized model, but rather an exploratory proposal intended to inspire more concrete ideas, frameworks, and instructional designs to be tested. In this way, I hope to have practiced a form of dialogical courage within the research field of literature instruction.

Conclusion

This exploratory essay aims to connect literature instruction with epistemic courage to suggest a pathway for counteracting both overly cautious and over-confident attitudes and fostering dialogical competencies in high school students. It takes as its point of departure the growing challenges students face in today's political climate, particularly their increasing exposure to discriminatory discourse and misinformation. The discussion is grounded in personal experiences of teaching and teacher supervision, which indicate a need for freer and more critical dialogue in school settings.

The essay seeks to support teachers in challenging the passive, silence-oriented culture prevalent in many classrooms, where students—despite an understanding of democratic principles—sometimes refrain from expressing personal views out of fear of deviating from norms or losing face. It also addresses the challenge posed by students who communicate with excessive confidence and ideological rigidity, and who show limited willingness to listen seriously to either teachers or classmates.

The essay advocates for dilemma-centered literature as a means of engaging students emotionally and encouraging participation in discussions of complex and ethically challenging issues—topics that are otherwise left to a small number of epistemically reckless peers.

In Sweden, as in many other parts of the world, there is a strong emphasis on combatting intolerant views, which, while well-intentioned, may unintentionally stifle student expression and hinder democratic engagement. Instead of merely discouraging certain beliefs, promoting positive epistemic norms that encourage active belief formation, the essay suggests, could help foster greater self-confidence, resilience, and engagement. This is particularly relevant for marginalized groups, for whom affirmation-based approaches can enhance self-esteem and academic performance. By distinguishing between negative and positive epistemic norms, the essay stresses the importance of cultivating a proactive approach to knowledge, where students are encouraged to seek out and test beliefs in an environment that values dialogue and critical reflection. This approach aligns with the idea that knowledge is dynamic and refined through social processes, such as classroom dialogue, where students' beliefs are tested, challenged, and improved in collaboration with others.

Dialogical courage thus extends epistemic courage by emphasizing the importance of engaging with others to test and refine one's beliefs. The relevance of epistemic and dialogical courage is illustrated by a situation during the supervision of a teacher candidate who faced sexism in a high school class. Although teaching skepticism was initially considered—specifically by building on negative epistemological norms such as, “Be careful when inheriting and spreading beliefs about differences between the sexes”—this educational strategy had already proven ineffective. Drawing on the concept of epistemic courage, a more positive epistemological approach—one that encourages belief formation and engagement with alternative viewpoints—is proposed. This approach does not dismiss critical thinking but suggests a more dialogical method for addressing difficult and ideologically charged topics. Rather than focusing on correcting

misconceptions, the goal is to empower students to engage in thoughtful dialogue, reconsider their assumptions, and develop the ability to navigate the diverse viewpoints and challenges they will encounter in society.

Three texts were tentatively proposed as vantage points for addressing sexism in high school classroom discussions. Varying in provocation, sensitivity, and suspense, they were selected for their combined potential to challenge students' conceptions of gender roles and assumptions about school-sanctioned texts and teacher authority. They can thus encourage reflection on power dynamics and personal agency. The suggested process involves reading and discussing literary texts in a classroom setting, with a focus on creating space for students to express their views and engage with alternative perspectives. Through guided discussions, students can reflect on the narratives, confront their own biases, and explore the ethical dilemmas presented by the literature. This didactic design sketch, intended to invite collaboration from teachers and fellow scholars, is developed exploratively to suggest how dialogue might be promoted in ways that encourage students to deepen their understanding of themselves and the world around them, ultimately fostering the development of epistemic and dialogical courage.

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