

## The Dreaded Discussion: Ten Ways to Start

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The only privilege a student had that was worth his claiming, was that of talking to the professor, and the professor was bound to encourage it. His only difficulty on that side was to get them to talk at all. He had to devise schemes to find what they were thinking about, and induce them to risk criticism from their fellows.

--*The Education of Henry Adams*

The conspiracy of silence is breaking up: we are learning to talk more openly about our joys and fears as teachers, our achievements and frustrations in the classroom. As I have listened to my colleagues talk about their students and their classrooms, the one fear and frustration mentioned more than any other, as for Henry Adams, was in leading a discussion. No matter how many articles on technique we read, or workshops we attend, the dreaded discussion continues to bother us more than any other part of our daily teaching lives. Freshman seminar and discussion-based core programs continue to develop. Pressures not only to "do more discussion" but to do it well, reinforced by student evaluations and faculty development centers, do not go away. We are learning, alas, that to walk into class and hold up one's copy of the assigned text, asking, "How'd you like it?" does not necessarily guarantee an enthusiastic, rewarding discussion.

We need, first of all, to acknowledge our fears in facing discussion classes: The terror of silences, the related challenges of the shy and dominant student, the overly-long dialogue between oneself and one combative student, the problems of digression and transitions, student fear of criticism, and our own fear of having to say "I don't know." Worst of all, perhaps, is the embarrassment of realizing, usually in retrospect, that "about half way through the period I lapsed, again, into lecture." I suspect that our fears about discussion (and our lapses) have a great deal to do with the issue of who controls the classroom. Although psychologically rooted, the control issue is best dealt with as a nitty-gritty practical question of how to plan and how to begin.

My first assumption is that an effective discussion, like most anything, depends upon good planning. The content goals for any given class period usually suggest employing different teaching strategies. We would like to be able to select from among many discussion possibilities with confidence. The purpose of this article is to expand the range of the options by describing very precisely several different ways of starting a discussion. Like Henry Adams, we "devise schemes" to find out what our students are thinking.

The following assumptions and principles about discussions guide my particular schemes:

§ Because we have much to learn from each other, all must be encouraged to participate.

- § It is important to devise ways in which each student has something to say, especially early in the class period.
- § Students should be expected to do some (often highly structured) thinking about a text or issue before the discussion class begins.
- § Students should know and feel comfortable with each other and with the teacher. As Carl Rogers and others keep reminding us, learning is aided perhaps most of all by the quality of personal relationships.
- § Those relationships are enhanced by a climate of trust, support, acceptance, and respect: even "wrong" answers are legitimate.
- § A student's self-image is always affected by his or her participation in discussions: feedback, therefore, is crucial for self-esteem.
- § The primary goal in any discussion is to enhance the understanding of some common topic or "text" (in the broadest sense).
- § Different kinds of texts, purposes, and faculty teaching styles suggest using different kinds of discussion schemes.

My hope and expectation is that other teachers will adapt these suggestions and devise schemes for their own texts, purpose, and teaching styles.

#### (1) Goals and Values Testing

The students are asked to pair off and decide together what they think is the primary value of the particular text for the day, and how their consideration of it meshes with course goals. "Why are we reading this?" "Why now?" After five minutes or so, invite reactions. It is not necessary to hear from each pair, but hearing from a few provides a public reality test for the teacher's course goals ("is this text serving the purpose I had hoped it would?"), as well as providing a mutual basis for further probing into the text. An alternative initial question for the pairs is to ask for a list of relationships (comparisons and contrasts) between this text and another, usually the most recent one. Make the instructions explicit: "identify three themes common to both texts"; "suggest the two most obvious differences between the two texts"; "which did you like best and why?"; "make a list of as many comparisons (or contrasts) as you can in ten minutes." In this case, in order to benefit from the richness of diversity, as well as to confirm similar insights, it is probably best to check in with each pair.

#### (2) Concrete Images

It is obvious, of course, that discussions go better when specific references are made. Yet I think we often need help remembering the content of our text. A few minutes at the beginning can guarantee that the sophisticated analysis we seek will be based on specific facts. Go around the table and ask each student to state one concrete image/scene/event/moment from the text that stands out. No analysis is necessary, just recollections and brief description. As each student reports, the collective images are listed on the board, thus providing a visual record of selected content from the text as a backdrop to the following discussion. Usually the recall of concrete scenes prompts further recollections, and a flood of images flows from the students. A follow-up question is to invite the class to study the items on the board, and ask: "what themes seem to emerge from these items?"; "what connects these images?"; "is there a pattern to our

recollected events?"; "what is missing?" This is, obviously, an inductive approach to the text. Facts precede analysis. But also, everyone gets to say something early in class and every contribution gets written down to aid our collective memory and work.

### (3) Generating Questions

We have our own important questions to ask about a text. And we should ask them. But students also have their questions and they can learn to formulate better ones. Being able to ask the right questions about a particular text may be the first way of coming to terms with it. There are many ways of generating questions:

A. Ask students ahead of time (Wednesday for Friday's class) to prepare one or two questions about their reading. One can vary the assignment by specifying different kinds of questions: open-ended, factual, clarifying, connective and relational, involving value conflicts, etc.

B. As students walk into the classroom ask them to write down (probably anonymously early in the term) one or two discussible questions about the text. "What questions / issues/ problems do you want this group to explore in the next hour about this reading?" Hand all questions to one student (a shy one, perhaps) who, at random, selects questions for class attention. Do not expect to get through all of them, but the discussion of two or three questions usually will deal with or touch on almost every other one. Students, like all of us, ask questions they really want to answer themselves, and they will make sure their point is made somehow.

C. Same as B, except the teacher (or a student) takes a minute or two to categorize the questions and deals with them more systematically.

D. Ask each student to write down one or two questions (either ahead of time or at the start of class), but in this case the student owns his/her questions and is in charge of leading the discussion until he/she feels there has been a satisfactory exploration of the issues. Start anywhere and go around the table. This obviously works best in smaller groups with longer periods than 50 minutes.

E. Divide the class into pairs or small groups and charge each group to decide upon one salient question to put to the rest of the class.

### (4) Finding Illustrative Quotations

We do not often enough go to the text and read passages out loud together. Students, we are told, do not know how to read any more. If so, they need to practice and to see modeled good old-fashioned explication de texte. Ask each student, whether ahead of time or at the start of class, to find one or two quotations from the assigned text that he/she found particularly significant. There are many ways in which the instructions may be put: "find one quotation you especially liked and one you especially disliked." Or, "find a quotation which you think best illustrates the major thesis of the piece," or, "select a quote which suggests, to you, the key symbol of the larger text." After a few minutes of browsing (perhaps in small groups of three to four), the students will be ready to turn to

specially marked passages, read out loud, and discuss. Be sure to pause long enough for everyone to find the right spot in their book: "start with the middle paragraph on page sixty one. Are you all with us?" Lively and illuminating discussion is guaranteed because not all students will find the same quotations to illustrate various instructions, nor, probably, will they all interpret the same passages the same way.

It is during this exercise that I have had the most new insights into texts I had read many times previously. And there may be no more exciting (or modeling) experience than for students to witness their teacher discovering a new insight and going through the process of refining a previously held interpretation. "Great class today! I taught Doc Frederick something he didn't know."

#### (5) Breaking Into Smaller Groups

No matter the size of a class, sixty or six or one hundred and sixty, it can always be broken down into smaller groups of four, five, eight, fifteen, or whatever. The purpose, quite simply, is to enable more people to say something and to generate more ideas about a text or topic. Also, groups lend themselves usually to a lively, competitive spirit, whether asked to or not. We are interested not only in the few people we are grouped with but also in "what they're doing over there." Furthermore, reticent students often feel more confident in expressing themselves in a larger group after they have practiced the point with a safer, smaller audience. There are three crucial things to consider in helping small groups to work well. First, the instructions should be utterly clear, simple, and task oriented. Examples: "Decide together which of the brothers is the major character in the novel." "Which person in the Iliad best represents the qualities of a Greek hero?" "Which person, the same or different, best represents a hero by your standards?" "Why did the experiment fail?" "What would you suggest changing?" "Identify the three main themes of this text." "What is Picasso's painting saying?" "Identify three positive and three negative qualities of King David's character." "What do you think is the crucial turning point in Malcom's life?" "If you were the company treasurer (lawyer), what decision would you make?" "Generate as big a list as you can of examples of sex role stereotyping in these first two chapters." "If you were Lincoln, what would you do?" In giving these instructions be sure to give the groups a sense of how much time they have to do their work. Second, I believe in varying the ways in which groups are formed in order to create different constituencies. Pair off ("with someone you don't know") one day; count off by fives around the room another; form groups of "about eight" around clumps of students sitting near one another on a third day. And third, vary the ways in which groups report out when reassembled. Variations include:

§ Each group reports orally, with the teacher recording results (if appropriate) on the board

§ Each group is given a piece of newsprint and felt pen upon which to record its decisions, which are then posted around the room.

§ Space is provided for each group, when ready, to write their results on the blackboard

§ Each group keeps notes on a ditto master, which the teacher runs off and distributes to everyone for continuing discussion the next meeting

§ No reporting out is necessary, or reactions are invited from several groups, but not necessarily from all of them



Further possibilities for small groups are described in the suggestions that follow:

#### (6) Generating Truth Statements

This exercise develops critical skills and generates a good deal of friendly rivalry among groups. The instructions to each group are to decide upon three statements known to be true about some particular issue. "It is true about slavery that..." "We have agreed that it is true about the welfare system that..." "It is true about international politics in the 1950s that..." "We know it to be true about the theory of relativity that...", and so on. I have found this strategy useful in introducing a new topic, slavery, for example, where students may think they already know a great deal but the veracity of their assumptions demands examination. The complexity and ambiguity of knowledge is clearly revealed as students present their truth statements and other students raise questions about or refute them. The purpose of the exercise is to develop some true statements, perhaps, but mostly to generate a list of questions and of issues demanding further study. This provides an agenda for the unit. Sending students to the library is the usual next step, and they are quite charged up for research after the process of trying to generate truth statements.

#### (7) Forced Debate

Although neither one of two polar sides of an issue obviously contains the whole truth, it is often desirable to force students to select one or the other of two opposite sides and to defend their choice. "Burke or Paine?" "Booker T. Washington or W.E.B. Du Bois?" "Are you for or against achieving racial balance in the schools?" "Should Nora have left or stayed?" "Who had the better argument: Creon or Antigone?" "Capitalism or Socialism for developing nations?" Once students have made their choice, which may be required prior to entering the room for class that day, I ask them to sit on one side of the table or room to represent their decision. Physical movement is important and sides need to face each other. Once the students have actually, as it were, put their bodies on the line, they are more receptive to answering the question: "Why have you chosen to sit where you are?" Inevitably, there may be some few students who absolutely refuse (quite rightly) to choose one side or the other. If they persist, with reasons, create a space for a middle position. This adds a dimension to the debate and, as in the case of deciding between Burke and Paine on whether or not to support the French Revolution, those in the middle find out what it is like to attempt to remain neutral or undecided in heated, revolutionary times. I also invite students to feel free to change their place during a debate if they are so persuaded, which adds still another real (and sometimes chaotic) aspect to the experience.

#### (8) Role Playing

This is a powerful learning strategy, guaranteed to motivate and animate most students and to confuse and make nervous many. Role-playing is tricky. It can be as simple (deceptively so) as asking two members of the class to volunteer to adopt the roles of two characters from a novel at a crucial point in their relationship, discussing how they feel about it, or what they should do next.

Or two students can act out the President and an advisor debating some decision, or two slaves in the quarters at night discussing whether or not to attempt to run away, or a male and female (perhaps with reversed roles) discussing affirmative action or birth control.

Issues involving value conflicts, moral choices, and timeless human dilemmas related to a student's world usually work best, but role playing need not be so personal. A colleague of mine in biology creates a student panel of foundation grant evaluators before whom other students present papers and make research proposals. Or, as students walk into class and sit down, they find a card in front of them which indicates the name of a character from a novel, or an historical personage, or even a concept. For the discussion that follows they are to be the role indicated on their card. Knowing this might happen is not a bad motivator to make sure students get their reading done.

Any situation involving multiple group conflicts is appropriate for role-playing. There are many simulation games for contemporary issues in the social sciences. But for history I like to create my own somewhat less elaborate "games" putting students into the many roles represented in some historical event or period. One of my favorites is a New England town meeting in 1779, in which a variety of groups (landed elite, yeoman farmers, Tory sympathizers, soldiers and riff-raff, artisans, lawyers and ministers, etc.) are charged with drafting instructions for delegates to a state constitutional convention. Another is to challenge several groups in 1866, defeated Confederates, southern Unionists, northern Radical Republicans, northern moderates, and Black freedmen, to develop lists of goals and strategies for accomplishing them. I play an active role, as moderator of the town meeting or as President Johnson, organizing and monitoring the interactions that follow group causes. Our imagination can create many appropriate examples for role-playing. You have, I am sure, your own. But because role playing can be traumatic for some students and because a poorly-planned or poorly-monitored role play can get out of control, I want to make a few cautionary suggestions that I have found helpful, if not crucial. First, except for finding the cards at the beginning of class which compel playing a role, in most role playing activities students should have some choice in how much to participate, either by deciding whether or not to volunteer or by being part of a group large enough to reduce the pressures on any one individual. Teachers should monitor carefully the unspoken signals of students who may find their role uncomfortable, and intervene, often by skillfully pursuing their own role, to extricate or reduce the pressures on an actor. Generally, however, I have found role playing to be an effective way for the normally shy student, who has said little or nothing in class, to unblock in the new role and participate more readily in conventional discussions afterwards. Second, give students some time (how much depends upon the nature of the particular role-play) to prepare themselves for their role. This might mean two days or more in order to do some research, or fifteen minutes in groups to pool information, or five minutes to refresh one's memory about a character in a novel, or a couple of minutes simply to get in touch with the feelings of a character and situation. Third, in giving instructions the definition of roles to be played should be concrete and clear enough for students to get a handle on who they are playing, yet open enough for the expression of their own personality and interpretation. If the roles are prescribed too clearly, students merely imitate the character described (although sometimes this is the requirement) and have difficulty going beyond it with anything of themselves. If the roles are described too loosely, without a clear context, students will stray too far from the actual situation to be experienced and learned. And finally, and most importantly, in any role-play experience as much (if not more) time should be devoted to debriefing afterwards as for the exercise itself. This is when the substantive lessons of the experience are discovered, explored and

confirmed. This is when those students who may have served as observers will offer their insights and analysis of what happened.

Above all, this is when the actors will need an opportunity to talk about how they felt in their roles and what they learned, both about themselves and about the substantive issues involved.

#### (9) Non-structured Scene Setting

Most of the ways of starting a discussion described thus far involve a great deal of structure and direction. But inevitably, when teachers suspect that they have been dominating too much ("I blew it again, talked most of the hour!"), it is clearly time to give students an opportunity to take a discussion in their directions, and to do most, if not all, of the talking. The teacher, however, has a responsibility for setting the scene and getting class started. There are a variety of ways to do this, some more directive than others. Put some slides on a carousel and, without a word, show them at the beginning of class. Or, as the students walk into the classroom, the teacher plays a piece of music or a speech on a tape recorder. Or, on the board before class the teacher writes a quotation or two, or two or three questions, or a list of words or phrases or names, or even an agenda of issues to be explored. The only necessary verbal instructions are to make it clear to the students that until a defined time (perhaps the last five minutes) you, the teacher, intend to stay out of the discussion entirely. Even having said that, I have still found that I am capable of breaking my own contract and intervening or, more likely, affecting the class by non-verbal signals. I tell my students that I find it extremely difficult to stay uninvolved, and that I need their help in making sure I stay out of the discussion. They are usually happy to oblige. If possible, adopt an utterly non-evaluative observer role and take descriptive notes on the course of the discussion. To read your notes back to the students may be the most helpful feedback you can give them.

#### (10) A Tenth Way to Start

As the term progresses students will have experienced many different exciting ways to start a discussion, most of which, we hope, enhance their understanding of a text or issue. Once the expectation of variety has been established there is even a legitimate place for the following strategy: stroll into class with your book, sit on the edge of the table, hold the book up, and ask: "How'd you like it?"

Although it has not been my primary purpose in this article to extol the many values of discussion, I assume that my basis has been implicitly clear. The key to effective retention of learning, I believe, is in owning the discovery. Emerson wrote in his journals that a wise person "must feel and teach that the best wisdom cannot be communicated (but) must be acquired by every soul for itself." My primary strategy as a teacher is to structure situations in which students have as many opportunities as possible to acquire wisdom for themselves; that is, to own the discovery of a new learning insight or connection and to express that discovery to others. In this way their substantive learning is increased and their self-esteem is enhanced. How we plan the start of class is crucial in achieving this goal. "Hey, roomie, I now know what Emerson meant by self-reliance. What I said in class about it today was that..." Which translated means: "Hey, I'm OK, I

understand this stuff. I said something today others found helpful." Which translated means: "Class was good today: he let me talk."

References:

Neff, Rose Ann and Mary Ellen Weimer, , eds. Classroom Communication: Collected Readings for Effective Discussion and Questioning. Magna Publications, Madison Wisconsin: 1989. (Available at IRC)

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## Improving Discussions

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"I have come to feel that the only learning which significantly influences behavior is self-discovered, self-appropriated learning."  
Rogers (1969, p. 153)

Although such learning can take place during a lecture, it is more likely to occur in discussion classes where there is give and take. Everybody knows what a discussion is, but try to find a good definition or description. In this paper we will use "discussion" to include a variety of teaching approaches which focus on two-way, spoken communication between the teacher and the students, and more importantly among the students themselves, for example, recitation, dialogue, and guided and pure discussions.

### Strengths of Discussion Approaches

As was suggested in the previous IDEA Paper on improving lectures (Cashin, 1985), what constitutes effective teaching, that is, what best fosters learning, depends upon your instructional goals. Discussion approaches are well suited to a variety of course goals.

1. Discussions provide the instructor with feedback about student learning. A major limitation of lectures (one-way communication) is the lack of information about what the students are learning. Discussions overcome this by using both instructor and student questions, student comments, elaborations, justifications, etc. These interactions allow the instructor to plumb the depths of the students' understanding.
2. Discussions are appropriate for higher-order cognitive objectives: application, analysis, synthesis, evaluation (Bloom et al, 1956; Gronlund, 1978). Discussions permit and encourage the student to introduce, explore, and refine ideas in ways which are impossible in a lecture.
3. Discussions are appropriate for affective objectives: to help students develop interests and values, to change attitudes (Krathwohl et al, 1964; Gronlund, 1978). Discussions can do more than change minds; they can change hearts, the way we feel about an issue and our appreciation of it.
4. Discussions allow students to become more active participants in their learning. This increases their motivation to learn and makes the learning more interesting.

### Weaknesses of Discussion Approaches

Like everything in life, discussions have not only advantages, but disadvantages.

1. It may be difficult to get student participation. First, discussions can be threatening to students. In lectures the student's ignorance can go undiscovered. To participate in a discussion means to run the risk of both being wrong and being found out. Also, there may be peer pressure not to excel. There are still students who prefer the "gentleman's (or gentlewoman's) C." Further, in some cultures it is considered inappropriate for the individual to stand out, for example, in some Asian countries and some Native American tribes. Other subcultures do not place a high value on intellectual achievement in general.
2. Discussions are more time consuming. The pace seems slower, not much may appear to be happening.
3. Discussions are not well suited to covering significant amounts of content. As instructors, we must wrestle with the issue of how much of the content we cover versus the depth of the students' learning.
4. Effective discussions require more forethought than do lectures. They are not opportunities for the instructor to take a break. Yet preparation cannot ensure that the discussion will follow the anticipated direction. After a few bad experiences, the instructor may take refuge in a more predictable method—lecturing.
5. In discussions the instructor has less control. To some extent we must go where the students' questions and interests take the group. We must allow the students to speak.

### Recommendations

This part of the paper will summarize recommendations regarding three aspects of discussions: improving cognitive or intellectual learning, improving the affective or interest/value aspects of learning, and increasing participation. The authors included in the Further Readings section at the end of this paper treat most of these topics. Individual authors will only be cited where their treatment seems to be of special interest.

## Cognitive Aspects

1. **Define the topic.** The topic for discussion should be relatively clear, that is, limited enough to focus the students' attention. "Real" or relevant issues rather than abstract or academic ones are more likely to engage the students. It is desirable to give students the topic a class or two before the discussion so that they may prepare. Often assigned readings and study questions help.

2. **The instructor must be prepared.** It is our contention that an effective discussion requires much more preparation than an effective lecture. In a lecture the instructor can decide what he or she will cover. In a discussion you should be prepared to explore any issue reasonably related to the discussion topic. This means you must know the topic very well. It is advisable to list possible issues or questions which the students might bring up and to outline possible answers or responses and if necessary, do some more reading or studying yourself.

3. **Use a common experience.** Discussions are likely to be more focused and therefore more productive if they deal with something the students have all experienced. Choosing something from the students' "real life" is one tactic. Providing a common experience by means of readings, a film, etc. is another. Ensure that the students have sufficient information to make the discussion productive—simply sharing ignorance is in no one's best interest. During the discussion you may have to provide additional information if lack of data is hindering or sidetracking the discussion.

4. **Acting as a facilitator is the instructor's primary role in a discussion.** Most of the content should be covered before the discussion, either in previous lectures, readings, films, or other sources, including the students' experience. The following behaviors tend to be facilitative:

a. **Listen**—attend to the points the students are trying to make, not just your points. (Attend to their feelings as well as their thoughts.)

b. **Observe**—pay attention not only to the content but to the group process, for example, who is responding to whom, and who is typically ignored by the rest of the group.

c. **Allow for pauses and silence.** Students need to be given time to think. So we must exercise that most difficult skill for college teachers, keeping quiet. This is necessary if students are to answer complex, higher order questions.

d. **Post and verify what individuals are saying.** Periodically take time to summarize or write on the chalkboard your understanding of the problems or positions, solutions or responses, being put forth by the students. Then check if your understanding is correct. When writing on the chalkboard, try to use simple phrases. Show relationships between ideas by using diagrams, etc.

e. **Request examples or illustrations.** Almost all writers agree that using examples helps people learn. The more complex or abstract the material becomes, the more helpful illustrations become.

f. **Encourage and recognize students' contributions.** Broad student participation in discussions enhances their value. Be especially alert to nonverbal clues that students who do not participate much have something to say; when they do, call on them. Occasionally comment positively on students' contribution, but do not do it every time. Otherwise, it becomes a dialogue between you and individual students rather than a discussion among the students.

g. **Test consensus.** If everyone agrees, then there will be no discussion. Beware of premature agreement. If the group seems to have reached a consensus, test this by paraphrasing your understanding of that agreement. Often only the talkers have agreed and there are still opposing positions to be explored.

h. **Provide a summary and/or conclusion.** By taking a few minutes throughout the discussion or at least at the end to summarize the main points which have been discussed, you provide the students with a sense of closure and help them remember. Making explicit any conclusions which have been reached is also very helpful if the topic will not be discussed further.

5. **Regarding questioning,** the following are some suggestions which encourage interaction among the students:

a. **Ask students for clarification** if their comments seem to you (and so probably to many others) to be incomplete or unclear.

b. **Ask students to support their opinions.** Sometimes students, especially freshmen, think it is sufficient simply to have an opinion. But in most college-level courses one's opinion is less important than the reasons behind it. You are not so much interested in what they think, as why. Make the students go beyond their initial, perhaps superficial reactions.

c. **Use open-ended questions,** that is, questions which permit the students to elaborate and think through their answer rather than just give a brief response, or a "yes" or "no." Use questions like, "What are the causes of . . . ?" or, "What is your opinion about . . . ?"

d. **Use divergent questions,** that is, questions to which there is no single, correct answer. Questions like "What were the causes of the American Revolution?" are both open-ended, and convergent—the student is likely to respond with a set of causes generally agreed upon by historians. Questions like "What is your opinion about the greenhouse effect? . . . or capital punishment?" permit the students to talk about what they think. They can explore one position without having to cover others.

e. **Rephrase questions** if students cannot respond to your first question. Your second question can help the students to focus on previous material that might be relevant, or to draw their attention to some limitation or inconsistency in a previous response, etc.

f. **Pause, give the students time to reflect and think** through their responses, especially with higher order concepts. In our culture, silence is socially awkward. You may need to train your students (and yourself) to feel comfortable with silences.

6. **Possible stages to follow.** There are many paths which a discussion might productively travel. The following is one general plan:

a. **Define the problem.** Until there is some agreement about what the problem, question, or issue is, the discussion is likely to make little progress.

b. **Have students suggest possible solutions.** Brainstorming—having the group suggest as many solutions as possible without any discussion of their feasibility—is one approach. The group should avoid criticizing or making evaluative judgments at this point.

c. **Collect relevant data or comments from the students** about the relative advantages and disadvantages of the proposed solutions. At this stage the focus is still on elaboration rather than evaluation.

d. **Evaluate the various solutions, positions, and conclusions.** Now is the time to judge, compare, weigh, and evaluate.

e. **Decide upon a solution, position, etc.** If at the end of the previous stage one position clearly is better than the other alternatives, then you are already finished. But most questions have more than one "good" answer. In such cases, the group, or the various individuals, must decide which position they choose to embrace at least for now.

## Affective Aspects

Many academics tend to conceive of college as primarily, if not exclusively, an intellectual or cognitive experience. Such a conception of college ignores at least two considerations. First, individual students often bring to college feelings, interests, and values that hinder their learning or understanding of content which we may consider objective. Second, college is about values, at least values like logical thinking, clear expression, knowing the data or literature, and even appreciating the subject and being responsible for one's own work. At a more profound level, college is also about what kind of person one aspires to be, what kind of world the student wants, and what life is about. Our teaching is value-laden, and appropriately so. Discussion approaches are well suited to many of these concerns about feelings, interests, and values; hence, this section on affective aspects of discussions is included.

7. **Know your students.** Start the discussion with something relevant to the students' interests and goals, something out of their experience.

8. **Be patient.** Discussion classes take more time to get going. Therefore, be careful you do not talk too much, especially at the beginning.

9. **Be sensitive to student feelings.** Sometimes students suppress their negative feelings. But those feelings still remain an obstacle to learning. Sometimes students get into arguments (vs. discussion); this does not foster learning. Sometimes students attack the professor. Do not take it personally. You may want to get these feelings out in the open and talk about them.

10. **Challenge the students, but do not threaten them.** This can be a very difficult balance to achieve. You want to arouse the students enough to stretch themselves, but not so much that it becomes counterproductive. What makes it especially difficult is that what challenges one student may distress another. Some suggestions are:

a. **Do not question a single student for too long.** If the student cannot respond after a second, focusing question, move on to other students. Demonstrating how much an individual student does not know rarely serves a useful purpose.

b. **Use personal anecdotes.** Using your own experiences and showing that you are human can facilitate the discussion if done in moderation.

11. **Avoid premature agreement.** We have already talked about testing for consensus (4g above). You may wish to ask a student or group to argue against the apparent consensus. Or you may want to play devil's advocate—very carefully; avoid being so convincing that later some students will consider you to be intellectually dishonest. (See McKeachie, 1986, pp. 33 – 34 for an extended discussion.)

12. **Deal with conflicts, do not ignore them.** A helpful first step is to define the apparent areas of conflict. The problem may simply be cognitive misunderstanding, although often not. You may want to write the pros and cons on the chalkboard, or you may want to arrange for the two sides to debate the issue. At least in some way explicitly address the conflict.

13. **Recommended instructor behaviors are:**

a. **Be silent; when in doubt, keep quiet.** (See 5f above.)

b. **Hear the students out.** Concentrate on the points the students are trying to make more than on the points you want to make.

c. **Inquire,** ask the student to elaborate, clarify, expand, explain, explore, etc.

d. **Paraphrase** what a student has said, first, to check your understanding, and second, to show that you are listening. This is helpful behavior for the other students also.

e. **Be accepting** rather than judgmental or evaluative. Try to focus on the "correct" part of the student's response. Positive reinforcement will foster more learning than negative reinforcement. (Eventually your grading criteria will have to be taken into consideration, and they will have an important influence. See 15 below.)

## Regarding Participation

The following are some suggestions about what you might do to increase student involvement and interaction in your discussions.

14. **Create the expectation of participation.** Arrange the seating so it is easy for everyone to see one another, e.g., around a table or with a circle of chairs. Make the instructor part of the group, e.g., not behind a desk, but seated in same kind of chair, etc. Help students to get to know one another, e.g., have them interview someone they do not know. Get the students to talk, e.g., have them introduce the person they interviewed. Help them learn each other's name.

15. **Clarify how participation will influence grades, and do this early and clearly.**

16. **Avoid always looking directly at the student speaking.** Socially we are conditioned to look at the person who is speaking. If you, as the instructor, typically do this, the students will speak to you, not the group. If Student B is responding to something Student A said, you might look at Student A. Also, look at the other students to see how they are reacting to the speaker. Use gestures and nods to direct the students' attention to other students, not to you, or simply say, "Talk to him (or her)."

17. **Control excessive talkers, by, for example:**

a. **Do not call on the "talkers" first.** Wait to see if someone else raises a hand or volunteers a comment.

b. **Solicit responses from the "nontalkers."** Be alert to nonverbal cues indicating that they have something to say and call on them: "Did you want to say something . . . ?" or "Let's hear from some of you who haven't said anything yet."

c. **Have the class observed by someone assigned as an observer,** then discuss who is talking, how often, to whom, etc. Often this will make both the "talkers" and "nontalkers" modify their behavior.

d. **Talk to the student outside of class** if all else fails.

18. **Instructor's role as group leader.** Many of the "gate-keeping" responsibilities in the group process literature are also appropriate in discussion groups.

a. **Call the class to order.**

b. **Help the group clarify its goals.** Even if the goals are primarily the instructor's, it helps to make them clear. In more flexible groups where the students have a major voice in determining the goals, such clarification becomes essential.

c. **Keep the group on track.** Sometimes this can be done by simply calling attention to the fact that the individual or group is getting off the point.

d. **Clarify and mediate differences.** (See 12 above, on dealing with conflicts.)

e. **Summarize and draw conclusions.** (See 4h above.)

# Conclusions

As with the IDEA Paper on improving lectures, the recommendations in this paper are suggestions of things that may help create and maintain an effective discussion. They are not prescriptions—things that you must do. If these recommendations are helpful, use them. If not, perhaps some of the further readings will be of help.

## References and Further Readings

All of the citations which follow, if they have specific page numbers listed after them, are recommended for further reading. The recommended first choice has two asterisks after it; a single asterisk follows recommended second choices

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# Tools for Teaching

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## Encouraging Student Participation in Discussion

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Students' enthusiasm, involvement, and willingness to participate affect the quality of class discussion as an opportunity for learning. Your challenge is to engage all students, keep them talking to each other about the same topic, and help them develop insights into the material. Roby (1988) warns against falling into quasi discussions – encounters in which students talk but do not develop or criticize their own positions and fail to reflect on the process and outcomes of the session. Two common forms of quasi discussion are quiz shows (where the teacher has the right answers) and bull sessions (characterized by clichés, stereotypes, empty generalizations, lack of standards for judging opinions, and aimless talking). The following suggestions are intended to help you create a classroom in which students feel comfortable, secure, willing to take risks, and ready to test and share ideas.

### General Strategies

**Encourage students to learn each other's names and interests.** Students are more likely to participate in class if they feel they are among friends rather than strangers; so at the beginning of the term, ask students to introduce themselves and describe their primary interests or background in the subject (Tiberius, 1990). These introductions may also give you some clues about framing discussion questions that address students' interests. See "The First Day of Class" for ideas on helping students get to know one another.

**Get to know as many of your students as class size permits.** In classes of thirty or less, learn all your students' names. ("The First Day of Class" lists several ways to do this.) If you require students to come to your office once during the first few weeks of class, you can also learn about their interests. Class participation often improves after students have had an opportunity to talk informally with their instructor.

**Arrange seating to promote discussion.** If your room has movable chairs, ask students to sit in a semicircle so that they can see one another. At a long seminar table, seat yourself along the side rather than at the head. If appropriate, ask students to print their names on name cards and display them on their desk or the table. Research reported by Beard and Hartley (1984) shows that people tend to talk to the person sitting opposite them, that people sitting next to each other tend not to talk to one another, that the most centrally placed member of a group tends to emerge as leader, and that leaders tend to sit in the least crowded parts of a room.

**Allow the class time to warm up before you launch into the discussion.** Consider arriving two to three minutes early to talk informally with students. Or open class with a few minutes of conversation about relevant current events, campus activities, or administrative matters. (Sources: Billson, 1986; Welty, 1989)

**Limit your own comments.** Some teachers talk too much and turn a discussion into a lecture or a series of instructor-student dialogues. Brown and Atkins (1988) report a series of studies by various researchers that found that most discussion classes are dominated by instructors. In one study (p. 53) faculty talked 86 percent of the time. Avoid the temptation to respond to every student's contribution. Instead, allow students to develop their ideas and respond to one another.

## **Tactics to Increase Student Participation**

**Make certain each student has an opportunity to talk in class during the first two or three weeks.** The longer a student goes without speaking in class, the more difficult it will be for him or her to contribute. Devise small group or pair work early in the term so that all students can participate and hear their own voices in nonthreatening circumstances.

**Plan an icebreaker activity early in the semester.** For example, a professor teaching plant domestication in cultural geography asks students to bring to class a fruit or vegetable from another culture or region. The discussion focuses on the countries of origin and the relationship between food and culture. At the end of class students eat what they brought. See "The First Day of Class" for other suggestions.

**Ask students to identify characteristics of an effective discussion.** Ask students individually or in small groups to recall discussions and seminars in which they have participated and to list the characteristics of those that wereworthwhile. Then ask students to list the characteristics of poor discussions. Write the items on the board, tallying those items mentioned by more than one student or group. With the entire class, explore ways in which class members can maximize those aspects that make for a good discussion and minimize those aspects that make for a poor discussion.

**Periodically divide students into small groups.** Students find it easier to speak to groups of three or four than to an entire class. Divide students into small groups, have them discuss a question or issue for five or ten minutes, and then return to a plenary format. Choose topics that are focused and straightforward: "What are the two most important characteristics of goal-free evaluation?" or "Why did the experiment fail?" Have each group report orally and record the results on the board. Once students have spoken in small groups, they may be less reluctant to speak to the class as a whole.

**Assign roles to students.** Ask two or three students to lead a discussion session sometime during the term. Meet with the student discussion leaders beforehand to go over their questions and proposed format. Have the leaders distribute three to six discussion questions to the class a week before the discussion. During class the leaders assume responsibility for generating and facilitating the discussion. For discussions you lead, assign one or two students per session to be observers responsible for commenting on the discussion. Other student roles include periodic summarizer (to summarize the main substantive points two or three times during the session), recorder (to serve as the group's memory), timekeeper (to keep the class on schedule), and designated first speaker. (Source: Hyman, 1980)

**Use poker chips or "comment cards" to encourage discussion.** One faculty member distributes three poker chips to each student in her class. Each time a student speaks, a chip is turned over to the instructor. Students must spend all their chips by the end of the period. The professor reports that this strategy limits students who dominate the discussion and encourages quiet students to speak up. Another professor hands out a "comment card" each time a student provides a strong response or insightful comment. Students turn back the cards at the end of the period, and the professor notes on the course roster the number of cards each student received. (Source: Sadker and Sadker, 1992)

**Use electronic mail to start a discussion.** One faculty member in the biological

sciences poses a question through electronic mail and asks the students to write in their responses and comments. He then hands out copies of all the responses to initiate the class discussion.

## Tactics to Keep Students Talking

**Build rapport with students.** Simply saying that you are interested in what your students think and that you value their opinions *may* not be enough. In addition, comment positively about a student's contribution and reinforce good points by paraphrasing or summarizing them. If a student makes a good observation that is ignored by the class, point this out: "Thank you, Steve. Karen also raised that issue earlier, but we didn't pick up on it. Perhaps now is the time to address it. Thank you for your patience, Karen" (Tiberius, 1990). Clarke (1988) suggests tagging important assertions or questions with the student's name: the Amy argument or the Haruko hypothesis. Tiberius (1990) warns against overdoing this, however, because a class may get tired of being reminded that they are discussing so-and-so's point.

**Bring students' outside comments into class.** Talk to students during office hours, in hallways, and around campus. If they make a good comment, check with them first to see whether they are willing to raise the idea in class, then say: "Jana, you were saying something about that in the hall yesterday. Would you repeat it for the rest of the class."

**Use nonverbal cues to encourage participation.** For example, smile expectantly and nod as students talk. Maintain eye contact with students. Look relaxed and interested.

**Draw all students into the discussion.** You can involve more students by asking whether they agree with what has just been said or whether someone can provide another example to support or contradict a point: "How do the rest of you feel about that?" or "Does anyone who hasn't spoken care to comment on the plans for People's Park?" Moreover, if you move away from – rather than toward – a student who makes a comment, the student will speak up and outward, drawing everyone into the conversation. The comment will be "on the floor," open for students to respond to.

**Give quiet students special encouragement.** Quiet students are not necessarily uninvolved, so avoid excessive efforts to draw them out. Some quiet students, though, are just waiting for a nonthreatening opportunity to speak. To help these students, consider the following strategies:

- Arrange small group (two to four students) discussions.
- Pose casual questions that don't call for a detailed correct response:
- "What are some reasons why people may not vote?" or "What do you remember most from the reading?" or "Which of the articles did you find most difficult?" (McKeachie, 1986).
- Assign a small specific task to a quiet student: "Carrie, would you find out for next class session what Chile's GNP was last year?"
- Reward infrequent contributors with a smile.
- Bolster students' self-confidence by writing their comments on the board (Welty, 1989).
- Stand or sit next to someone who has not contributed; your proximity may draw a hesitant student into the discussion.

**Discourage students who monopolize the discussion.** As reported in "The One or Two Who Talk Too Much" (1988), researchers Karp and Yoels found that in classes with fewer than forty students, four or five students accounted for 75 percent of the total interactions per session. In classes with more than forty students, two or three students accounted for 51 percent of the exchanges. Here are some ways to handle dominating students:

- Break the class into small groups or assign tasks to pairs of students.

- Ask everyone to jot down a response to your question and then choose someone to speak.
- If only the dominant students raise their hand, restate your desire for greater student participation: "I'd like to hear from others in the class."
- Avoid making eye contact with the talkative.
- If one student has been dominating the discussion, ask other students whether they agree or disagree with that student.
- Explain that the discussion has become too one-sided and ask the monopolizer to help by remaining silent: "Larry, since we must move on, would you briefly summarize your remarks, and then we'll hear the reactions of other group members."
- Assign a specific role to the dominant student that limits participation (for example, periodic summarizer).
- Acknowledge the time constraints: "Jon, I notice that our time is running out. Let's set a thirty-second limit on everybody's comments from now on."
- If the monopolizer is a serious problem, speak to him or her after class or during office hours. Tell the student that you value his or her participation and wish more students contributed. If this student's comments are good, say so; but point out that learning results from give-and-take and that everyone benefits from hearing a range of opinions and views.

**Tactfully correct wrong answers.** Any type of put-down or disapproval will inhibit students from speaking up and from learning. Say something positive about those aspects of the response that are insightful or creative and point out those aspects that are off base. Provide hints, suggestions, or follow-up questions that will enable students to understand and correct their own errors. Billson (1986) suggests prompts such as "Good—now let's take it a step further"; "Keep going"; "Not quite, but keep thinking about it."

**Reward but do not grade student participation.** Some faculty members assign grades based on participation or reward student participation with bonus points when assigning final grades. Melvin (1988) describes a grading scheme based on peer and professor evaluation: Students are asked to rate the class participation of each of their classmates as high, medium, or low. If the median peer rating is higher than the instructor's rating of that student, the two ratings are averaged. If the peer rating is lower, the student receives the instructor's rating. Other faculty members believe that grading based on participation is inappropriate, that is, subjective and not defensible if challenged. They also note that such a policy may discourage free and open discussion, making students hesitant to talk for fear of revealing their ignorance or being perceived as trying to gain grade points. In addition, faculty argue, thoughtful silence is not unproductive, and shy students should not be placed at a disadvantage simply because they are shy.

There are means other than grades to encourage and reward participation: verbal praise of good points, acknowledgment of valued contributions, or even written notes to students who have added significantly to the discussion. One faculty member uses lottery tickets to recognize excellent student responses or questions when they occur. He doesn't announce this in advance but distributes the first ticket as a surprise. Tickets can be given to individuals or to small groups. Over the term, he may hand out fifteen to twenty lottery tickets. In a small class, you may be able to keep notes on students' participation and devote some office hours to helping students develop their skills in presenting their points of view and listening to their classmates (Hertenstein, 1991).

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# Tools for Teaching

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## Diversity and Complexity in the Classroom: Considerations of Race, Ethnicity, and Gender

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Since the 1960s and the rise of the civil rights movement, American colleges and universities have been engaged in an ongoing debate about how best to enroll, educate, and graduate students from groups historically underrepresented in higher education: women, African Americans, Chicanos and Latinos, Native Americans, American-born students of Asian ancestry, and immigrants. As enrollment statistics show, changes in both the demographics of the applicant pool and college admissions policies are bringing about a measure of greater diversity in entering classes (Levine and Associates, 1990).

Once they are on campus, though, many of these students feel that they are treated as unwelcome outsiders, and they describe having encountered subtle forms of bias (Cones, Noonan, and Janha, 1983; Fleming, 1988; Green, 1989; Hall and Sandler, 1982; Pemberton, 1988; Sadker and Sadker, 1992; Simpson, 1987; Woolbright, 1989). Some students of color have labeled this bias "the problem of ignorance" or the "look through me" syndrome (Institute for the Study of Social Change, 1991). As reported by the Institute for the Study of Social Change, students talk about subtle discrimination in certain facial expressions, in not being acknowledged, in how white students "take over a class" and speak past students of color, or in small everyday slights in which they perceive that their value and perspective are not appreciated or respected. Though often unwitting or inadvertent, such behaviors reinforce the students' sense of alienation and hinder their personal, academic, and professional development.

There are no universal solutions or specific rules for responding to ethnic, gender, and cultural diversity in the classroom, and research on best practices is limited (Solomon, 1991). Indeed, the topic is complicated, confusing, and dynamic, and for some faculty it is fraught with uneasiness, difficulty, and discomfort. Perhaps the overriding principle is to be thoughtful and sensitive and do what you think is best. The material in this section is intended to help you increase your awareness of matters that some faculty and students have indicated are particularly sensitive for women and students of color. Some of these problems affect all students, but they may be exacerbated by ethnic and gender differences between faculty members and their students.

The following ideas, based on the teaching practices of faculty across the country and on current sociological and educational research, are intended to help you work effectively with the broad range of students enrolled in your classes.

### General Strategies

**Recognize any biases or stereotypes you may have absorbed.** Do you interact with students in ways that manifest double standards? For example, do you discourage women students from undertaking projects that require quantitative work? Do you undervalue comments made by speakers whose English is accented differently than your own? Do you assume that most African American, Chicano/Latino, or Native American students on

your campus are enrolled under special admissions programs? Do you assume that most students of color are majoring in Ethnic Studies?

**Treat each student as an individual, and respect each student for who he or she is.** Each of us has some characteristics in common with others of our gender, race, place of origin, and sociocultural group, but these are outweighed by the many differences among members of any group. We tend to recognize this point about groups we belong to ("Don't put me in the same category as all those other New Yorkers/Californians/Texans you know") but sometimes fail to recognize it about others. However, any group label subsumes a wide variety of individuals-people of different social and economic backgrounds, historical and generational experience, and levels of consciousness. Try not to project your experiences with, feelings about, or expectations of an entire group onto any one student. Keep in mind, though, that group identity can be very important for some students. College may be their first opportunity to experience affirmation of their national, ethnic, racial, or cultural identity, and they feel both empowered and enhanced by joining monoethnic organizations or groups. (Source: Institute for the Study of Social Change, 1991)

**Rectify any language patterns or case examples that exclude or demean any groups.** Do you

- Use terms of equal weight when referring to parallel groups: men and women rather than men and ladies?
- Use both he and she during lectures, discussions, and in writing, and encourage your students to do the same?
- Recognize that your students may come from diverse socioeconomic backgrounds?
- Refrain from remarks that make assumptions about your students' experiences, such as, "Now, when your parents were in college . . . "?
- Refrain from remarks that make assumptions about the nature of your students' families, such as, "Are you going to visit your parents over spring break?"
- Avoid comments about students' social activities that tacitly assume that all students are heterosexual?
- Try to draw case studies, examples, and anecdotes from a variety of cultural and social contexts?

**Do your best to be sensitive to terminology.** Terminology changes over time, as ethnic and cultural groups continue to define their identity, their history, and their relationship to the dominant culture. In the 1960s, for example, negroes gave way to blacks and Afro-Americans. In the 1990s, the term African American gained general acceptance. Most Americans of Mexican ancestry prefer Chicano or Latino or Mexican American to Hispanic, hearing in the last the echo of Spanish colonialism. Most Asian Americans are offended by the term Oriental, which connotes British imperialism; and many individuals want to be identified not by a continent but by the nationality of their ancestors-for example, Thai American or Japanese American. In California, Pacific Islander and South Asian are currently preferred by students whose forebears are from those regions. To find out what terms are used and accepted on your campus, you could raise the question with your students, consult the listing of campuswide student groups, or speak with your faculty affirmative action officer.

**Get a sense of how students feel about the cultural climate in your classroom.** Let students know that you want to hear from them if any aspect of the course is making them uncomfortable. During the term, invite them to write you a note (signed or unsigned) or ask on midsemester course evaluation forms one or more of the following questions (adapted from Cones, Janha, and Noonan, 1983):

- Does the course instructor treat students equally and evenhandedly?
- How comfortable do you feel participating in this class? What makes it easy or difficult for you?

- In what ways, if any, does your ethnicity, race, or gender affect your interactions with the teacher in this class? With fellow students?

**Introduce discussions of diversity at department meetings.** Concerned faculty can ask that the agenda of department meetings include topics such as classroom climate, course content and course requirements, graduation and placement rates, extracurricular activities, orientation for new students, and liaison with the English as a second language (ESL) program.

## **Tactics for Overcoming Stereotypes and Biases**

**Become more informed about the history and culture of groups other than your own.** Avoid offending out of ignorance. Strive for some measure of "cultural competence" (Institute for the Study of Social Change, 1991): know what is appropriate and inappropriate behavior and speech in cultures different from your own. Broder and Chism (1992) provide a reading list, organized by ethnic groups, on multicultural teaching in colleges and universities. Beyond professional books and articles, read fiction or nonfiction works by authors from different ethnic groups. Attend lectures, take courses, or team teach with specialists in Ethnic Studies or Women's Studies. Sponsor mono- or multicultural student organizations. Attend campuswide activities celebrating diversity or events important to various ethnic and cultural groups. If you are unfamiliar with your own culture, you may want to learn more about its history as well.

**Convey the same level of respect and confidence in the abilities of all your students.** Research studies show that many instructors unconsciously base their expectations of student performance on such factors as gender, language proficiency, socioeconomic status, race, ethnicity, prior achievement, and appearance (Green, 1989). Research has also shown that an instructor's expectations can become self-fulfilling prophecies: students who sense that more is expected of them tend to outperform students who believe that less is expected of them - regardless of the students' actual abilities (Green, 1989; Pemberton, 1988). Tell all your students that you expect them to work hard in class, that you want them to be challenged by the material, and that you hold high standards for their academic achievement. And then practice what you have said: expect your students to work hard, be challenged, and achieve high standards. (Sources: Green, 1989; Pemberton, 1988)

**Don't try to "protect" any group of students.** Don't refrain from criticizing the performance of individual students in your class on account of their ethnicity or gender. If you attempt to favor or protect a given group of students by demanding less of them, you are likely to produce the opposite effect: such treatment undermines students' self-esteem and their view of their abilities and competence (Hall and Sandier, 1982). For example, one faculty member mistakenly believed she was being considerate to the students of color in her class by giving them extra time to complete assignments. She failed to realize that this action would cause hurt feelings on all sides: the students she was hoping to help felt patronized, and the rest of the class resented the preferential treatment.

**Be evenhanded in how you acknowledge students' good work.** Let students know that their work is meritorious and praise their accomplishments. But be sure to recognize the achievements of all students. For example, one Chicana student complained about her professor repeatedly singling out her papers as exemplary, although other students in the class were also doing well. The professor's lavish public praise, though well intended, made this student feel both uncomfortable and anxious about maintaining her high level of achievement.

**Recognize the complexity of diversity.** At one time the key issue at many colleges was how to recruit and retain African-American students and faculty. Today, demographics require a broader multicultural perspective and efforts to include many underrepresented groups. Although what we know about different ethnic groups is



uneven, avoid generalizing from studies on African-American students (Smith, 1989).

## Course Content and Material

**Whenever possible select texts and readings whose language is gender-neutral and free of stereotypes.** If the readings you assign use only masculine pronouns or incorporate stereotypes, cite the date the material was written, point out these shortcomings in class, and give your students an opportunity to discuss them.

**Aim for an inclusive curriculum.** Ideally, a college curriculum should reflect the perspectives and experiences of a pluralistic society. At a minimum, creating an inclusive curriculum involves using texts and readings that reflect new scholarship and research about previously underrepresented groups, discussing the contributions made to your field by women or by various ethnic groups, examining the obstacles these pioneering contributors had to overcome, and describing how recent scholarship about gender, race, and class is modifying your field of study. This minimum, however, tends to place women, people of color, and non-European or non-American cultures as "asides" or special topics. Instead, try to recast your course content, if possible, so that one group's experience is not held up as the norm or the standard against which everyone else is defined. (Sources: Coleman, n.d.; Flick, n.d.; Jenkins, Gappa, and Pearce, 1983)

**Do not assume that all students will recognize cultural literary or historical references familiar to you.** As the diversity of the student and faculty populations increases, you may find that you and your students have fewer shared cultural experiences, literary allusions, historical references, and metaphors and analogies. If a certain type of cultural literacy is prerequisite to completing your course successfully, consider administering a diagnostic pretest on the first day of class to determine what students know. Of course, you may choose to refer deliberately to individuals or events your students may not know to encourage them to do outside reading.

**Consider students' needs when assigning evening or weekend work.** Be prepared to make accommodations for students who feel uncomfortable working in labs or at computer stations during the evening because of safety concerns. Students who are parents, particularly those who are single parents, may also appreciate alternatives to evening lab work or weekend field trips, as will students who work part-time.

**Bring in guest lecturers.** As appropriate, you can broaden and enrich your course by asking faculty or off-campus professionals of different ethnic groups to make presentations to your class.

## Class Discussion

**Emphasize the importance of considering different approaches and viewpoints.** One of the primary goals of education is to show students different points of view and encourage them to evaluate their own beliefs. Help students begin to appreciate the number of situations that can be understood only by comparing several interpretations, and help them appreciate how one's premises, observations, and interpretations are influenced by social identity and background. For example, research conducted by the Institute for the Study of Social Change (1991) shows that white students and African-American students tend to view the term racism differently. Many white students, for example, believe that being friendly is evidence of goodwill and lack of racism. Many African-American students, however, distinguish between prejudice (personal attitudes) and racism (organizational or institutional bias); for them, friendliness evidences a lack of prejudice but not necessarily a wholehearted opposition to racism.

**Make it clear that you value all comments.** Students need to feel free to voice an opinion and empowered to defend it. Try not to allow your own difference of opinion

prevent communication and debate. Step in if some students seem to be ignoring the viewpoints of others. For example, if male students tend to ignore comments made by female students, reintroduce the overlooked comments into the discussion (Hall and Sandier, 1982).

**Encourage all students to participate in class discussion.** During the first weeks of the term, you can prevent any one group of students from monopolizing the discussion by your active solicitation of alternate viewpoints. Encourage students to listen to and value comments made from perspectives other than their own. You may want to have students work in small groups early in the term so that all students can participate in nonthreatening circumstances. This may make it easier for students to speak up in a larger setting. See "Collaborative Learning: Group Work and Study Teams," "Leading a Discussion," and "Encouraging Student Participation in Discussion."

**Monitor your own behavior in responding to students.** Research studies show that teachers tend to interact differently with men and women students (Hall and Sandler, 1982; Sadker and Sadker, 1990) and with students who are - or whom the instructor perceives to be - high or low achievers (Green, 1989). More often than not, these patterns of behavior are unconscious, but they can and do demoralize students, making them feel intellectually inadequate or alienated and unwelcome at the institution.

As you teach, then, try to be evenhanded in the following matters:

- Recognizing students who raise their hands or volunteer to participate in class (avoid calling on or hearing from only males or only members of one ethnic group)
- Listening attentively and responding directly to students' comments and questions
- Addressing students by name (and with the correct pronunciation)
- Prompting students to provide a fuller answer or an explanation
- Giving students time to answer a question before moving on
- Interrupting students or allowing them to be interrupted by their peers
- Crediting student comments during your summary ("As Akim said . . .")
- Giving feedback and balancing criticism and praise
- Making eye contact

Also, refrain from making seemingly helpful offers that are based on stereotypes and are therefore patronizing. An example to avoid: an economics faculty member announced, "I know that women have trouble with numbers, so I'll be glad to give you extra help, Jane."

You might want to observe your teaching on videotape to see whether you are unintentionally sending different messages to different groups. Sadker and Sadker (1992) list questions to ask about your teaching to explore gender and ethnic differences in treatment of students. (Sources: Hall and Sandier, 1982; Sadker and Sadker, 1990; Sadker and Sadker, 1992)

**Reevaluate your pedagogical methods for teaching in a diverse setting.**

Observers note that in discussion classes professors tend to evaluate positively students who question assumptions, challenge points of view, speak out, and participate actively (Collett, 1990; Institute for the Study of Social Change, 1991). Recognize, however, that some of your students were brought up to believe that challenging people who are in positions of authority is disrespectful or rude. Some students may be reluctant to ask questions or participate out of fear of reinforcing stereotypes about their ignorance. The challenge for teaching a diverse student body is to be able to engage both verbally assertive students and those with other styles and expressions of learning. See "Leading a Discussion," "Encouraging Student Participation in Discussion," and "Learning Styles and Preferences" for suggestions on how to actively involve all students. (Source: Institute for the Study of Social Change, 1991)

**Speak up promptly if a student makes a distasteful remark even jokingly. Don't**

let disparaging comments pass unnoticed. Explain why a comment is offensive or insensitive. Let your students know that racist, sexist, and other types of discriminatory remarks are unacceptable in class. For example, "What you said made me feel uncomfortable. Although you didn't mean it, it could be interpreted as saying.... "

**Avoid singling out students as spokespersons.** It is unfair to ask X student to speak for his or her entire race, culture, or nationality. To do so not only ignores the wide differences in viewpoints among members of any group but also reinforces the mistaken notion that every member of a minority group is an ad hoc authority on his or her group (Pemberton, 1988). An example to avoid: after lecturing on population genetics and theories of racial intelligence, a faculty member singled out an African-American student in the class to ask his reactions to the theories. Relatedly, do not assume all students are familiar with their ancestors' language, traditions, culture, or history. An example to avoid: asking an American-born student of Chinese descent, "What idiom do you use in Chinese?" (Sources: Flick, n.d.; Pemberton, 1988)

## Assignments and Exams

**Be sensitive to students whose first language is not English.** Most colleges require students who are nonnative speakers of English to achieve oral and written competency by taking ESL courses. Ask ESL specialists on your campus for advice about how to grade papers and for information about typical patterns of errors related to your students' native languages. For example, some languages do not have two-word verbs, and speakers of those languages may need extra help - and patience - as they try to master English idioms. Such students should not be penalized for misusing, say, take after, take in, take off, take on, take out, and take over.

**Suggest that students form study teams that meet outside of class.** By arranging for times and rooms where groups can meet, you can encourage students to study together. Peer support is an important factor in student persistence in school (Pascarella, 1986), but students of color are sometimes left out of informal networks and study groups that help other students succeed (Simpson, 1987). By studying together, your students can both improve their academic performance and overcome some of the out-of-class segregation common on many campuses. See "Collaborative Learning" for suggestions on how to form study teams.

**Assign group work and collaborative learning activities.** Students report having had their best encounters and achieved their greatest understandings of diversity as "side effects" of naturally occurring meaningful educational or community service experiences (Institute for the Study of Social Change, 1991). Consider increasing students' opportunities for group projects in which three to five students complete a specific task, for small group work during class, or for collaborative research efforts among two or three students to develop instructional materials or carry out a piece of a research study. Collaborative learning can be as simple as randomly grouping (by counting off) two or three students in class to solve a particular problem or to answer a specific question. See "Collaborative Learning," "Leading a Discussion," and "Supplements and Alternatives to Lecturing" for ideas about incorporating group work into instruction.

**Give assignments and exams that recognize students' diverse backgrounds and special interests.** As appropriate to your field, you can develop paper topics or term projects that encourage students to explore the roles, status, contributions, and experiences of groups traditionally underrepresented in scholarly research studies or in academia (Jenkins, Gappa, and Pearce, 1983). For example, a faculty member teaching a course on medical and health training offered students a variety of topics for their term papers, including one on alternative healing belief systems. A faculty member in the social sciences gave students an assignment asking them to compare female-only, male-only, and male-female work groups.

## Advising and Extracurricular Activities

**Meet with students informally.** Frequent and rewarding informal contact with faculty members is the single strongest predictor of whether or not a student will voluntarily withdraw from a college (Tinto, 1989). Ongoing contact outside the classroom also provides strong motivation for students to perform well in your class and to participate in the broad social and intellectual life of the institution. In addition to inviting groups of your students for coffee or lunch, consider becoming involved in your campus orientation and academic advising programs or volunteering to speak informally to students living in residence halls or to other student groups. See "Academic Advising and Mentoring Undergraduates."

**Encourage students to come to office hours.** Of course, all students can benefit from the one-to-one conversation and attention that only office hours provide. In addition, students who feel alienated on campus or uncomfortable in class are more likely to discuss their concerns in private. (Source: Chism, Cano, and Pruitt, 1989)

**Don't shortchange any students of advice you might give to a member of your own gender or ethnic group.** Simpson (1987) reports the following unfortunate incident. A white male faculty member was asked by a female African-American student about whether she should drop an engineering class in which she was having difficulties. Worried that if he advised a drop, he might be perceived as lacking confidence in the intellectual abilities of African-American women, he suggested that she persevere. Had the student been a white male, the professor acknowledged, he would have placed the student's needs ahead of his own self-doubts and unhesitatingly advised a drop.

**Advise students to explore perspectives outside their own experiences.** For example, encourage students to take courses that will introduce them to the literature, history, and culture of other ethnic groups. (Source: Coleman, n.d.)

**Involve students in your research and scholarly activities.** Whenever you allow students to see or contribute to your own work, you are not only teaching them about your field's methodology and procedures but also helping them understand the dimensions of faculty life and helping them feel more a part of the college community (Blackwell, 1987). Consider sponsoring students in independent study courses, arranging internships, and providing opportunities for undergraduates to participate in research.

**Help students establish departmental organizations.** If your department does not have an undergraduate association, encourage students to create one. Your sponsorship can make it easier for student groups to obtain meeting rooms and become officially recognized. Student organizations can provide peer tutoring and advising as well as offer social and academic programs. In fields in which women and certain ethnic groups have traditionally been underrepresented, some students may prefer to form caucuses based on their gender or cultural affinities (for example, women in architecture). Research by the Institute for the Study of Social Change (1991) has documented the importance of associations for students of color as a basis for collective identification and individual support.

**Provide opportunities for all students to get to know each other.** Research shows that both African-American and white students, for example, would like greater interracial contact. African-American students tend to prefer institutional programs and commitments, while most white students prefer opportunities for individual, personal contacts. (Source: Institute for the Study of Social Change, 1991)

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**Catherine G. Krupnick**

## **Women and Men in the Classroom: Inequality and Its Remedies**

Reprinted from *On Teaching and Learning*, Volume I (1985)

Few topics generate as much interest or disagreement as the nature of differences between women and men. In colleges, particularly, these differences are discussed with reference to the ways women and men communicate. Because teaching consultants at the Harvard-Danforth Video Lab are often asked about gender's influence on classroom interactions, I gathered a research team to see what we could discover. We wanted to know how gender affects the quality of teaching and learning at Harvard College. Specifically, we wanted answers to the following questions: What are the differences, if any, between male and female students' participation in classroom discussion? How does the gender of the teacher affect the students' participation? In other words, we wanted to devise an objective study of a controversial issue on which almost everyone has an opinion.

We spent a year reviewing videotapes volunteered by twentyfour instructors at the College: twelve women and twelve men -- a group that included Teaching Fellows and faculty members. Their teaching experience ranged from eight weeks to thirty-six years. We concluded that male students talked much longer in the predominant classroom circumstance: i.e., the situation in which the instructor is male and the majority of the students are male. Of the six classes (one quarter of our sample) in which this was the situation, male students spoke two and a half times longer than their female peers (Wilcoxon,  $P=0.046$ ). This finding is noteworthy, since the male teacher/predominantly male class situation is common not only at Harvard but also at most other coeducational colleges.

On the other hand, the presence of female instructors apparently had an inspiring effect on female students. They spoke almost three times longer under instructors of their own sex than when they were in classes led by male instructors (Kruskal-Wallis,  $P=0.025$ ). This led us to speculate about the importance of same-sex role models, but the enormous diversity of personalities and behaviors in our sample made it impossible to derive firm conclusions on this question. The data suggest that a teacher's gender can play a role in classroom discussion, in the sense that it appears to influence the extent to which male students dominate classrooms. The advantages of classroom discussion, long considered to be an integral part of education in sections and tutorials, are unequally distributed between the sexes.

The finding that male students tend toward greater talkativeness than female students led us to question whether male instructors might be more talkative than female instructors. They are not. Both sexes talk about the same amount of time: that is, instructors occupied 42% of the class hour on average, speaking about 4500 words. Modes of verbal behavior that are allegedly gender-based, such as self-subordination (supposedly a female trait) or competitiveness (supposedly a male trait) depend less on an instructor's gender than on particular personalities and the number of years that instructors have taught. Contrary to popular notions, no speech characteristic we examined revealed itself to be typical of either gender.

The male tendency to dominate in some classes did not surprise us, since talkativeness studies in general have concluded that men dominate mixed discussion groups everywhere -- both within the classroom and beyond. What did surprise us was the degree to which male domination appeared to depend on gender demographics: when the teacher was male and the students in a particular class were predominantly male, then male students

dominated the discussions. In none of the demographic circumstances studied did women students talk as much as men.

Why don't women students talk as much as men? One explanation is that women prove to be extremely vulnerable to interruption. Numerous studies have demonstrated that in mixed-sex conversations, women are interrupted far more frequently than men are. This was remarkably visible in the Video Lab's sample: the comments of women students often were confined to "bursts" lasting only a few seconds, while male students typically kept on talking until they had finished. Moreover, once interrupted, women sometimes stayed out of the discussion for the remainder of the class hour. Thus there were considerably more one-time contributors among women than men.

Our discovery that women students are interrupted more frequently than their male counterparts differed from the results of other studies in one surprising respect: although other research has repeatedly shown that women's speech is most often cut off by men and/or "authority figures" (instructors, for example), our video tapes reveal that female students were interrupted almost exclusively by one another.

Close observation shows how this comes about. Like male students, female students often tend to cluster their talk in "runs." A run means that during a given period, the conversation is dominated by one gender or another. We found gender runs in about half of the Harvard classes that we observed. A gender run usually operates so that long periods of predominantly male talk are followed by short bursts of all-female talk, which is characterized by a relatively high proportion of overlapping comments. Over the course of a class hour the tendency of men to speak at length (and the lesser likelihood that they will be interrupted) leads, in the case of male-majority classes with male teachers, to a male-dominated hour -- a phenomenon that is reinforced by the tendency of women to speak less frequently, more briefly, and to overlap one another's comments.

What we have, then, is a situation in which we find female students at the bottom of the conversational heap -- some passive, others competing for the scarce resource of conversational space. This picture is scarcely news to social scientists. Erving Goffman, for instance, commenting on women professionals in hospital settings, concluded in 1961 that women did not say as much in male-dominated situations as men did. Rosabeth Kanter, studying women in corporate settings, also observed this, as did her collaborator, Elizabeth Aries, when writing about discussion groups she had studied at Harvard in 1972.

Aries noticed something else as well when observing single-sex groups: she found that groups composed entirely of women students tended to have a "rotating," participatory style in comparison with male groups. In other words, in these groups women took turns in an egalitarian way, and each spoke for more or less equal amounts of time throughout the class hour. Male groups appeared more contest-like, with extremely uneven amounts of talk per man. They competed by telling personal anecdotes or raising their voices. In dividing the hour unevenly, they established hierarchies of access to the discourse. All these characteristics remained stable over the course of several months. And what happened in mixed groups? Unsurprisingly, the male competitive style won out. Apparently, it's as hard for men to give up the habits of competition as it is for women to learn them.

\* \* \*

The news in our investigation is not that men and women behave differently as speakers, or that male and female students do, but that at Harvard male and female students do. It is sometimes thought that the admissions process evens out the differences, and every teacher can cite examples of extremely articulate female students. But since the general pattern conforms to power imbalances in the world beyond academia, it should be monitored carefully by those who care about providing equal education.

If instructors want to help women develop strong participatory skills, they need to be aware of the tendency of women to underparticipate when the classroom setting is primarily male. This is particularly important for instructors who teach sections and tutorials. The pedagogical need is clear. Active participation is generally thought to encourage learning. Both tutorials and sections have evolved out of the premise that engaging in discussion is an integral part of mastering the vocabulary and thought processes of a discipline. In an ideal world, students' gender would bear no relationship to their likelihood of participation. Women in a group would generally



talk in proportion to their numbers in that group, and so would men. Every student would have equal access to the conversational floor and an equal opportunity to master a discipline. Small classes would be, in essence, short-term communities of shared learning. Why is this at odds with what happens in many classes?

So far we have isolated four factors which contribute to giving women students less access to discourse than men: their demographic status as members of a minority in the classroom; their inability or unwillingness to compete against men; their vulnerability to interruption; and the fact that men and women talk in runs, which tends to keep female participation low.

Other causes of inequality can be found in classroom teaching. At Harvard and elsewhere, instructors often confuse ends with means in their desire to produce "a good class." Forgetting that sections and tutorials have a different purpose than lectures, they feel justified in keeping the flow of discussion going by getting most of their contributions from the first students to volunteer. As a result, classroom discourse is biased toward assertive students who have the quickest response time. Participation becomes based on quick thinking instead of deep or representative thinking. Further, the best predictor of a student's making substantial contributions to a discussion is that student's level of participation earlier in the class session. By allowing conversational space to be monopolized early on by those who formulate the quickest responses, instructors aid in the creation of dominant and subordinate conversation groups. At Harvard, the dominant places in a discussion are ordinarily occupied by those males who are highly verbal, while the subordinate positions tend to be occupied by women and, as our videotapes showed, by other minorities of either sex.

Teachers often defend the practice of calling primarily or exclusively on volunteers by saying, "I don't want to put shy students on the spot." Empathetic as this sentiment sounds, it usually backfires. After a few predictable talkers have made most of the substantial contributions at the beginning of the class hour, other students become particularly hesitant to join the discussion. Segregation of participants and nonparticipants soon extends beyond individual class periods, and becomes a structural feature for the duration of the course. Most of the students are learning -- as in lecture -- by listening, while a small minority have the advantages of the teacher's attention: the questioning, correction, and praise that come better from being "on the spot." Students at the bottom of the conversational heap frequently prepare less thoroughly for class, and listen only half-heartedly. Thus they disqualify themselves further as serious conversational contenders, and their apathetic disenfranchisement becomes yet another factor in classroom inequality. Doubtless, a few nonparticipating students are naturally shy, but it seems implausible that most of them are. In short, the classroom environment is a likely factor in women's less than equal experience of coeducation. Sections and tutorials are meant to be about something deeper than a lively volley of quick responses. Nonassertive participation styles are gender-related under some conditions. These two facts suggest that instructors who are serious about providing equal access to scholarly dialogue must direct classroom conversation with the aim of encouraging each student to think and to speak.

Classroom environment, the development of self-esteem, and, later on, self-confidence in a profession, may be linked. The extent of students' involvement in class is a major factor in shaping their self-concepts, because the college years are a time of important developmental change. Current research on the social development of men's and women's lives has determined that both female students and female professionals tend to have lower self-esteem than, their male colleagues.

In recent years, more than a dozen studies have provided evidence of women's lower self-esteem in coeducational colleges than in single-sex schools. Recently Kathleen Welch, at Yale, compared assertiveness in discussions, as one measure of self-esteem, in classrooms at Yale, Brown, Wellesley, and Smith. What she found was that women at both of the mixed-sex institutions were verbally less assertive than men, in the sense that they were more likely to use hedges, qualifiers and questioning intonations. By contrast, women at Smith and Wellesley were not only more assertive than women at Yale and Brown, but also -- most surprisingly -- more assertive than men at the coeducational institutions.

The effects of low self-esteem carry over into graduate school and professional life, even in settings which might be thought to confer feelings of high self-efficacy. For example, Zappert and Stansbury at Stanford have found that female graduate students experience low self-esteem in comparison with male graduate students. Self-depreciation is especially pronounced in fields in which women are present in the lowest numbers. These

women, the authors reported, have less trust than graduate men in their own judgments, and a greater fear of making mistakes -- both feelings associated with keeping a safe and silent distance from classroom discussion. Even female trial lawyers are uneasy about speaking in mixed-sex settings: according to a 1984 report by sociologist Bettyruth Walter-Goldberg, female trial lawyers express much less satisfaction with their summary speeches to jurors than male lawyers do. Since both law schools and graduate schools recruit women and men with equal abilities, it is logical to conclude that these settings are themselves responsible for providing women and men with an unequal sense of their real or potential efficacy.

\* \* \*

What can instructors do to make coeducation equal education? First, they need to keep in mind that their own gender may influence classroom dynamics. More specifically, they need to become close observers of their own classrooms by keeping notes on who contributes to discussions -- at what length, at what depth, and in what order, as well as what kind of response these students got (especially if they were interrupted). For accuracy, these notes should be made immediately after class, so that dominant and subordinate contributors can be identified as they change from meeting to meeting. Teachers who find they have a poor memory for classroom interactions can get a videotape made at the Harvard-Danforth Video Lab, or they can ask a colleague to sit in on a class and take careful notes. The point is to cultivate a memory for, and an internalized sense of, the participation of individual students, so that inequalities can be avoided.

In addition, there are certain guidelines which may reduce the likelihood of inequalities developing. These will provide a learning situation in which all class members have an equal opportunity to develop confidence, judgment and ability. Teachers should hold all students responsible for assignments, and be willing to call on them directly even if they don't raise their hands. In order to increase the chance that students will raise their hands, however, the teacher should allow a significant pause -- not a pause of .5 seconds, as is typical of many teachers, but a pause of two, three or even four seconds, counted silently to oneself while looking around the room. Looking around the room has valuable pedagogical functions: it enables teachers to solicit the involvement of students who, at that moment, are likely to make valuable contributions. It also permits teachers to choose contributors with an eye towards gender equality.

Further, teachers should listen to all students with equal seriousness, challenging when appropriate, correcting or praising when correction or praise is due. Teachers should learn each student's name and make sure to use names frequently, so that all students know they are recognized members of the class. Teachers should be careful to ask male and female students the same kinds of questions: not, for instance, reserving all abstract questions, or all factual questions, or all hard questions, for one gender. Teachers should sequence participants' responses, so that neither gender develops a monopoly. Moreover, they should take pains to prevent interruptions, and intervene when comments occur too rapidly to permit individual students to complete their contribution to the discussion.

Instructors who decide to monitor and direct their classes with the aim of giving each student equal education can do so if they keep these general guidelines in mind. In so doing, they will not only prevent inadvertent discrimination against women, but they will also create a richer and more equal learning environment for all students.

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# PROJECT ON THE STATUS AND EDUCATION OF WOMEN

ASSOCIATION  
OF AMERICAN  
COLLEGES

## THE CLASSROOM CLIMATE: A CHILLY ONE FOR WOMEN?\*

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### VOICES FROM THE CAMPUS\*

"My impression (and belief) is that most professors do not know that they behave differently toward a woman (in class, in conference, and in administrative affairs)." (Female, Humanities, Berkeley, p. 78)

"Students in one of my classes did a tally and found that male professors called on men more often than on women students. What male students have to say or contribute is viewed as having more importance than what female students have to contribute in class." ("Illustrative Problems")

"... have I been overtly discriminated against? Possibly no. Have I been encouraged, helped, congratulated, received recognition, gotten a friendly hello, a solicitous 'can I help you out?' The answer is no. Being a woman here just makes you be tougher, work harder, and if you get a 4.0 GPA someone will say, 'You're good.' Perhaps like a fellow-student told me, 'you're only here to get a husband.' If that were true, I can think of easier, less painful and discouraging ways." (Female, Business Administration, Berkeley, p. 64)

"You come in the door... equal but having experienced the discrimination—the refusal of professors to take you seriously; the sexual overtures and the like—you limp out doubting your own ability to do very much of anything."

(Female Ph.D. candidate, Harvard, quoted in "Harvard Women Protest Unequal Job Opportunities," Washington Star 10/24/80)

(Continued on page 3)

### INTRODUCTION

As greater numbers of women students enter the higher education system, the postsecondary community has become increasingly concerned about such issues as the continuing low enrollment of women in "traditionally masculine" fields,<sup>1</sup> the fact that women undergraduates feel less confident about their preparation for graduate school than men attending the same institution,<sup>2</sup> and the surprising decline in academic and career aspirations experienced by many women students during their college years.<sup>3</sup> These concerns take on a new significance given current and projected enrollment patterns: although higher education has traditionally been associated with the educational and professional preparation of men, women students are the "new majority" of undergraduates. The education of women is literally central to the postsecondary enterprise.

However, despite women's gains in access to higher education—especially since the passage of Title IX—women undergraduate and graduate students may not enjoy full equality of educational opportunity on campus. Indeed, women's educa-

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tional experiences may differ considerably from those of men, even when they attend the same institutions, share the same classrooms, and work with the same graduate advisors. The most extensive longitudinal study of student development conducted to date concludes that:

[e]ven though men and women are presumably exposed to common liberal arts curriculum and other educational programs during the undergraduate years, it would seem that these programs serve more to preserve, rather than to reduce, stereotypic differences between men and women in behavior, personality, aspirations and achievement.<sup>4</sup>

Many factors, including familial and social expectations, may contribute to the preservation of these differences. However, faculty behaviors which express different expectations for women than for men students, or which lead women to feel their academic and career ambitions are not as important as those of men students may play a major role in limiting women students' development.

Most faculty want to treat all students fairly and as individuals with particular talents and abilities. However, some faculty may overtly—or, more often, inadvertently—treat men and women students differently in the classroom and in related learning situations. Subtle biases in the way teachers behave toward students may seem so "normal" that the particular behaviors which express them often go unnoticed. Nevertheless, these patterns, by which women students are either singled out or ignored because of their sex, may leave women students feeling less confident than their male classmates about their abilities and their place in the college community.

## THE CLASSROOM CLIMATE

*"Although more difficult to document than other areas we studied, the question of campus environment and general 'atmosphere' is no less vital. Not only do these intangibles affect the educational needs and goals of women... but they also to some extent determine those goals. Indeed, since the campus climate can help shape a woman's self-concept, especially during years of rapid developmental change, it can affect not only her academic choices and achievements, but also her ability to develop the skills she will need in order to meet future academic and professional challenges."*

(*The Education of Women at Oberlin*, pp. 16-17)

Many postsecondary institutions have evaluated their policies and practices toward women primarily in terms of legal issues and requirements. More recently, however, a number of colleges and universities have begun to recognize the importance of the institutional atmosphere, environment, or climate—both within and outside the classroom—in fostering or impeding women students' full personal, academic, and professional development.<sup>5</sup> Indeed, as one study notes, "There is persuasive evidence that, in selecting and reacting to educational environments, females tend more than males to be attuned to the personal supportiveness of these environments."<sup>6</sup>

Institutions as diverse as Oberlin College (OH), Hope College (MI), the University of Wisconsin, the University of Delaware, Harvard University (MA), Yale University (CT), the University of California at Berkeley, and the institutions involved in The Brown Project (Barnard (NY), Brown (RI), Dartmouth (NH), Princeton (NJ), SUNY at Stony Brook, and Wellesley (MA))—to name but a few—have conducted surveys and other research to determine how adequately the institution as a whole meets the needs of its women students. Researchers are asking questions about how women are treated in the classroom, the laboratory, the undergraduate and graduate advising relationship, and in the less formal intellectual exchanges that occur with faculty and with other students.<sup>7</sup> All of these contexts may affect how women students view themselves. They can encourage women's full intellectual development and academic and career aspirations, or dampen women's energies and ambitions.

Although many persons and experiences can help shape the campus climate, faculty attitudes and behaviors often have a pro-

found effect—especially for women students.<sup>8</sup> As Joseph Katz writes in *Men and Women Learning Together: A Study of College Students in the Late 1970's*:

The newly raised consciousness of women [students] is in some respects fragile. In the intellectual and academic spheres there is still a tendency for women to think themselves as not quite on a par with men... there is some indication that women are meeting the challenge creatively, but they also could use more help from their teachers...<sup>9</sup>

In part because of the disproportionate number of male faculty at the college and university level, women may not always get this help.<sup>10</sup> Several studies indicate that men faculty tend to affirm students of their own sex more than students of the other sex, and often perceive women students primarily as sexual beings who are less capable and less serious than men students.<sup>11</sup> Although these attitudes may be changing, a host of behaviors which can convey such attitudes are still prevalent in the academic setting.

Both men and women faculty—even those who are most concerned about sex discrimination—may inadvertently communicate to their students limiting preconceptions about appropriate and expected behaviors, abilities, career directions and personal goals which are based on sex rather than on individual interest and ability. For instance, some professors may habitually

### FACULTY BEHAVIORS: SOME NEW QUESTIONS

Faculty, administrators, researchers and women students themselves<sup>12</sup> are beginning to consider the importance of faculty behaviors in creating an institutional "climate" that fosters the full development of all students, and to ask questions such as the following:

- Are women students less likely to be called upon directly than men students? Do faculty tend to ask women and men students the same kinds of questions? Do they encourage women as much as men to think for themselves?
- Do women students receive as much informal feedback, encouragement or praise as men for their academic efforts?
- Are women interrupted more often than men during class discussion? Can this lead women to feel that their views are not being listened to or taken as seriously as those of their male peers?
- Do teachers tend to make more eye-contact with men when they ask a question of the class as a whole, thus "recognizing" men and inviting responses from them?
- Do professors often assume that women students are uncertain about what they want to say (or perhaps, not saying much that is worthwhile) because women may tend to state their classroom comments hesitantly or in "overly polite" fashion?
- Are some professors more likely to remember the names of the men students in their classes than those of the women?
- Are teachers as likely to choose women as men for student assistants and to give them the same responsibilities?
- Do some professors inadvertently discourage women from enrolling in traditionally "masculine" majors or from the "harder" specialties?
- Are graduate advisors more likely to contact men students when publication, research, and other professional opportunities arise? Does this make it more difficult for women than for men to see themselves as potential professionals and colleagues?
- Do some professors use sexist humor to "spice up a dull subject" or make disparaging comments about women as a group? How does this affect women in the classroom?

use classroom examples in which the man is always "the professional," the woman always the "client" or "patient," thus making it more difficult for women to imagine themselves in professional roles.<sup>13</sup> Men and women faculty alike may ask questions and then look at men students only—as if no women were expected to respond.<sup>14</sup> Some faculty may tend to ask women "lower order" factual questions ("When did Wordsworth write the first version of *The Prelude*?") and reserve "higher order" critical questions for men<sup>15</sup> ("What do you see as the major thematic differences between the 1805 and the 1850 versions?") Others may make seemingly helpful comments which nevertheless imply that women in general are not as competent as men ("I know women have trouble with spatial concepts, but I'll be happy to give you extra help"). Some professors may be unaware that they interrupt women more often than men students, or allow women to be easily interrupted by others in class discussion.

In addition to subtle forms of discrimination in classroom interaction, more obvious behaviors can also create a chilling climate. These may include disparaging comments about women as a group and the use of sexist humor or demeaning sexual allusion (for example, a slide in an accounting class that features a bikini-clad woman "guaranteed to provide accurate measurements.")

Whether overt or subtle, differential treatment based on sex is far from innocuous. Its cumulative effects can be damaging not only to individual women and men students but also to the educational process itself.

#### HOW A "CHILLY" CLIMATE FOR WOMEN AFFECTS ALL STUDENTS

##### Women Students

A chilling classroom climate puts women students at a significant educational disadvantage. Overtly disparaging remarks about women, as well as more subtle differential behaviors, can have a critical and lasting effect. When they occur frequently—especially when they involve "gatekeepers" who teach required courses, act as advisors, or serve as chairs of departments—such behaviors can have a profound negative impact on women's academic and career development by:

- discouraging classroom participation;
- preventing students from seeking help outside of class;
- causing students to drop or avoid certain classes, to switch majors or subspecialties within majors, and in some instances even to leave a given institution;
- minimizing the development of the individual collegial relationships with faculty which are crucial for future professional development;
- dampening career aspirations; and
- undermining confidence.<sup>16</sup>

Instead of sharpening their intellectual abilities, women may begin to believe and act as though:

- their presence in a given class, department, program or institution is at best peripheral, or at worst an unwelcome intrusion;
- their participation in class discussion is not expected, and their contributions are not important;
- their capacity for full intellectual development and professional success is limited; and
- their academic and career goals are not matters for serious attention or concern.

##### Men Students

While women students may be most directly harmed by an inhospitable climate, men students are also affected. If limited views of women are overtly or subtly communicated by faculty, some men students may experience reinforcement of their own negative views about women especially because such views are confirmed by persons of knowledge and status. This may make it more difficult for men to perceive women students as full peers, to work with them in collaborative learning situations, and to offer them informal support as colleagues in the undergraduate or graduate school setting. Moreover, it may hamper men's ability to

relate to women as equals in the larger world of work and family beyond the institution.<sup>17</sup>

#### HOW A CHILLY CLIMATE CAN INTERFERE WITH THE EDUCATIONAL PROCESS

In addition to its effects on individual women and men students, a learning climate that subtly or overtly communicates different expectations for women than for men can interfere with the educational process itself. If, for example, it is taken for granted that women are less apt than men to participate in class discussion and their input is either not sought, or overtly or subtly discouraged, the contribution of half the class may be lost. If faculty reinforce student perceptions that some fields of study are "masculine" and some "feminine," students may shy away from majors considered inappropriate. Thus, departments and individual teachers may lose students of talent and potential, and many students' academic and career options may be foreclosed.

#### WHAT THIS PAPER HOPES TO DO

This paper is written to help faculty, students and administrators become more aware of the subtle—and not-so-

#### VOICES FROM THE CAMPUS\*

(Continued from page 1)

"I was discussing my work in a public setting, when a professor cut me off and asked me if I had freckles all over my body."  
(*Illustrative Problems*)

"I have not encountered discrimination by faculty with regard to classroom and academic activities. I have, however, consciously chosen not to take particular courses with faculty who have reputations concerning sexual discrimination. In this way, my scope of available coursework was limited."  
(*Harvard*, p. 11)

"No great work has ever been attributed to any woman in any of my [...] classes. Even a woman who has shared the fame when she is part of a team has been passed over by lecturers as 'these gentlemen'."  
(*Harvard*, p. 16)

"There is still the feeling that you can't invest time and interest in women students as you do with men students because there is uncertainty about the professional commitment on the part of the woman student."  
(*Response to Project Call for Information, former faculty member in nontraditional area*)

"... a dozen of our classmates walked out in mid-lecture after a Professor of Surgery pinched the breast prosthesis of a mastectomy patient and then the breast of a woman radiologist, saying 'I'd like to bump into either of you in an elevator any time!' From such examples we learned how doctors treat our women patients and colleagues, and how are we to view women any differently?"  
(*Excerpts from letter to their dean from group of women medical students who had just received medical degrees, as quoted in MLA*, p. 22)

"One woman earned high grades in a traditionally male field. Her professor announced to a mostly male class that this represented an unusual achievement 'for a woman' and was an indication, first, that the woman student was probably not really feminine, and, second, that the males in the class were not truly masculine, since they allowed a woman to beat them."  
(*MLA*, p. 20)

"I could write a book but much of what I have said is still very painful to me. I would hope that the study you are doing will shed some light on these very difficult problems because I am convinced that women are being short changed by our higher educational institutions ..."  
(*Response to Project Call for Information, former faculty member in nontraditional area*)

"The quotations that appear throughout this paper are real and recent. Many come from surveys conducted by institutions themselves or by campus groups established to evaluate the institutional climate for women. Unless otherwise noted, quotations come from the sources listed in Appendix C. The fact that a quotation comes from a given institution in no way implies that that institution is "chillier" for women than other institutions; to the contrary, it indicates that persons on that campus have sought to identify problem areas and to devise strategies for change.

subtle—ways in which women and men students are often treated differently, and to indicate specific actions they can take to create a learning climate that best fosters the intellectual growth of all students. It will:

- identify a wide range of overt and subtle faculty behaviors that can create a chilly learning climate;
- identify classroom behaviors of men and women students that may elicit differential responses from faculty;
- offer specific recommendations which administrators, faculty, students, and others can use to bring about greater awareness and change; and
- provide a list of resource materials including organizations, researchers, a short bibliography, and an agenda for further research.

Information for this paper has been compiled from several kinds of sources, including empirical studies of postsecondary and other classrooms;<sup>14</sup> reports and surveys by individual researchers, campus groups, and postsecondary institutions; and individual responses to a "Call for Information" issued in conjunction with this project. Because classroom and other exchanges that occur in the college context are in some respects similar to the everyday interchanges that occur between and among men and women in the larger society,<sup>15</sup> information from the growing body of general research on men's and women's verbal and nonverbal behavior has also been reviewed with an eye toward its possible implications for classroom climate. The examples quoted or described in this paper are actual incidents that have occurred on campuses within the last few years.

## HOW "SMALL" BEHAVIORS CREATE A CHILLY CLASSROOM CLIMATE

### DEVALUATION, EVALUATION AND DOUBT

"I am even more ashamed to admit that out of my desire to be taken seriously as a physicist I was eager to avoid identification with other women students who I felt could not be taken seriously."  
(Evelyn Fox Keller, *Working It Out*, p. 10)

The old saw that "a woman must be twice as good to get half as far as a man" still contains a core of truth: our society tends in many ways to value men more than it values women, and to assume that men's work and words are important, women's less so.

The general tendency to devalue women and their work is illustrated by a well-known series of related studies<sup>16</sup> in which two groups of people were asked to evaluate particular items, such as articles, paintings, resumes, and the like. The names attached to the items given to each group of evaluators were clearly either male or female, but reversed for each group—that is, what one group believed was originated by a man, the other believed was originated by a woman. Regardless of the items, when they were ascribed to a man they were rated higher than when they were ascribed to a woman. In all of these studies, women evaluators were as likely as men to downgrade those items ascribed to women.

Another form of devaluation may occur when women exhibit behavior that is viewed as "masculine" rather than "feminine." An ambitious male pre-law student is viewed as behaving appropriately and is likely to receive encouragement when he speaks about wanting to be a judge; however, a female student expressing the identical goal may be viewed with surprise, perhaps as "odd," "unfeminine," "too striving," or "too ambitious." Thus, faculty may view and respond to the same behavior differently depending on the sex of the student. Males who act dispassionately may be viewed as "objective" but females as "cold." If a woman does exceptionally well, she may be praised for "thinking like a man"—a back-handed compliment which implies that there is something wrong with "thinking like a woman," which she is.

The devaluation of women's accomplishments is exacerbated by the related tendency to attribute males' success to skill or ability but females' success to luck or to lack of difficulty of the task to be performed. In one study, for example, adult tutors working with elementary school students who completed a pre-established assignment were most likely to tell high-achieving boys that they were competent, but to tell high-achieving girls that the assignment was easy. Thus, the cause for the children's identical achievement was viewed very differently—simply on the basis of the children's sex.<sup>17</sup> Similar results are found in a number of studies examining the perceived reasons for success in a variety of tasks performed by men and women.<sup>18</sup> The attribution of success to "skill" in the case of men implies in part that men have the ability to perform well or to improve upon their performance; the attribution of success to "luck" or lack of task difficulty in the case of women implies that their success is due to external factors over which they have little control, and which they therefore cannot rely on for future achievement.

If, as much research indicates,<sup>19</sup> young women internalize this devaluation and "attribution" pattern of the larger society, they are likely to be especially prone to doubt their own competence and abilities. Indeed, women students themselves may be just as likely as males to downgrade "a woman's" academic work. In one study, for example, women college students rated scholarly articles higher if they believed they were written by a man than if they believed they were written by a woman.<sup>20</sup>

## DEVALUATION AND THE POSTSECONDARY LEARNING CLIMATE

"(The) instructor spoke in snide and derogatory terms of the role of the females and women (as not being economically useful to men) without examining reasons why this may have been so."  
(Female, *Natural Resources*, Berkeley, p. 131)

Colleges and universities ideally provide an environment that differentiates between students only on the basis of merit. However, faculty and students are not automatically immune from the limiting preconceptions held by the larger society or from the everyday behaviors by which different perceptions of men and women are reinforced and expressed. To the contrary, despite the increased enrollment of women students in recent years, college is often still considered a "masculine" environment where success depends on skills and abilities such as intellectual argumentation<sup>21</sup> and competence in mathematics which women are viewed as lacking. As with work in society at large, academic work done by men may be valued more highly than that done by women; a woman student may have to outperform her male peers to be taken seriously by her professors.

Because many women may consciously or unconsciously share society's limited view of women's abilities, some women (as well as some men faculty) may expect less of their women students—expectations that in many instances may become self-fulfilling prophecies. Moreover, although many women students may begin their college careers with energy and ambition, they may at the same time, have less confidence about their capacity to achieve academic and professional success. Indeed, studies suggest that women postsecondary students are more likely than men to doubt their abilities and to attribute their success to luck or hard work rather than to skill.<sup>22</sup> As one professor notes:

[Self confidence and the need for encouragement and advice] is the primary area in which male and female students differ quite a bit . . . I had women students who were very bright and who didn't perceive of themselves as such. Whereas I had men students who were of moderate capabilities and convinced that their brilliance was going unrecognized.<sup>23</sup>

Women students may well have a special need for a college climate that specifically acknowledges them as individuals and recognizes their abilities, contributions and accomplishments.



"I have yet to hear a professor comment on the daily appearance of a male colleague. I have yet to go through a week without some comment pertaining to my appearance." (Harvard, p. 8)

"Certain instructors in the department are known for making sexual jokes, and having rather sexist attitudes, so it affects my rapport with them, but I don't think it has affected the assignment of grades or of course assignments." (Female, Biological Sciences, Berkeley, p. 105)

"Every time I tell my advisor about my dissertation, he says, 'Oh, that's a very important issue for women. My thesis involved issues which are important for both men and women but he persists in relating to me as a woman, rather than as a serious student, as if the two were incompatible.'" (Illustrative Problems)

"One memorable instructor (whose course was required of all graduate students) regularly informed each new generation of graduate students that women were not good for much of anything but sexual exercises. He enjoyed going into graphic description of the trials and tribulations of a journey taken with a group of students during which one female experienced the onset of menstruation. 'Blood all over the damn place,' our professor told the class, 'had to hike miles out of the canyon to find a washing to stultify in her c...' (Sexual Harassment, p. 9)

"Many professors, while admitting awareness of sex stereotyping language, often justify their continued use of these labels. Frequently, they joke about their continued male chauvinism, as though their admission serves as an exonerating for a continuation of sexism." (Female, Natural Resources, Berkeley, p. 131)

"I saw a slide show in (Course X) on computers which had female models in bikinis standing next to computers and the narration of the film included comments such as 'Look at those measurements,' etc., quite sexist (and a little gross, also)." (Male, Physical Sciences, Berkeley, p. 102)

"Class time is taken up by some professors with dirty jokes which... often happen to be derogatory to women (i.e., referring to a woman by a part of her anatomy, portraying women in jokes as simplified or leeches, showing... women as part of the decoration on a slide)." (Response to Project Call for Information, Veterinary Student)

"The instructor in particular... when we were reading novels... would make such comments as 'Well, you girls probably found this boring, or 'You women wouldn't understand this feeling that man have.' After a while I began to feel depressed while attending this class and listening to his disparagements of women. It inspired in me a feeling of worthlessness." (Female, Humanities, Berkeley, p. 130)

"... in other classes they hear women described as 'fat housewives,' 'dumb blondes' as physically 'dirty,' as 'broad,' 'chicks,' or 'dames,' depending on the age of the speaker." (MLA, p. 21)

**THE POWER OF WORDS**

anonymous members of a group from whom certain behaviors can be expected, rather than as individuals with unique characteristics.)

Because everyday inequities usually occur without either party's full awareness of exactly what has happened, they are often difficult to identify and to change. Especially when they occur in the college context, they can have profound cumulative and lasting ramifications such as:

- distorting a teacher's and student's evaluation of performance with preconceived expectations about women's abilities. For example, computing a math problem ("Women aren't good with numbers"), writing a thesis ("Women have trouble thinking critically"), or doing a lab experiment ("Women are clumsy with lab equipment");
- provoking and reinforcing expected behaviors that are of negative value in the academic setting ("Women tend to over-react, women can't handle criticism."); Often when one expects a particular behavior one may unconsciously encourage it or allow it to occur;
- using up women students' energies in conflict, anger, and self-doubt ("Why am I so upset? Maybe I'm really not up to college work."); and
- provoking feelings of displeasure, especially when there are no channels for discussion and no appropriate actions or remedies available.

In individual interchanges with two students, a professor disappointed in a male student's project might say, "Your work is inexcusably sloppy, you'll never make it that way!" However, in exactly the same circumstance, the professor might say to a woman student: "My God, you're as incompetent as my wife! Go home where you belong!" The woman student to whom such a "ritual" comment has been made may find herself upset, angry—and perhaps truly doubtful about her competence. She may also feel confused, because what seems a "petty" incident has sparked in her such a strong response. Her professor, meanwhile, may be quite unaware that his comment has linked her academic performance to her sex by communicating a perception of her not primarily as an individual learner, but as a woman who, like "all women," is of limited intellectual ability, operating on the side of her "appropriate" sphere, and likely to fail. (Indeed, women students—unlike men students—are too often seen as

**EVERYDAY INEQUITIES IN INDIVIDUAL STUDENT-TEACHER INTERCHANGES**

Such "everyday inequities" can intrude into the postsecondary setting, and can "taint the process" of education. The women students in postsecondary education consider discriminatory, found that "contrary to... initial expectations that by far the greater number of reported incidents would involve direct and overt discrimination... an equal or greater number concerned subtle forms of discrimination, which the women involved found as trying and inequitable in their own way as more outrageous or overt discrimination." In fact, subtle and/or inadvertent incidents can sometimes do the most damage, because they often occur without the full awareness of the professor or the student. When they occur in the classroom, or in related learning situations, everyday inequities can indeed create a chilly climate for women.

**EVERYDAY INEQUITIES IN THE POSTSECONDARY SETTING**

Small differential behaviors that often occur in the course of everyday interchanges—such as those in which individuals are either singled out or ignored because of sex, race or age—have been called "micro-inequities" by Mary P. Rowe. Special Assistant to the President at M.I.T. Each instance—such as a disparaging comment or an oversight which effects only members of a given group—may in and of itself seem trivial, and may even go unnoticed. However, when taken together throughout the experience of an individual, these small differences in treatment can create an environment which "maintain[s] unequal opportunity, because they are the air we breathe... and because we cannot change the personal characteristics... that leads to the inequity."

**EXPERIENCES IN SOCIETY: EVERYDAY INEQUITIES**

Women and men students are likely to enter college with different educational histories—even if they have attended the same elementary and high schools. Ongoing research indicates, for example, that elementary teachers frequently treat boys and girls differently in everyday classroom interaction—often without knowing that they do so. Primary school teachers tend to:

- talk more to boys, ask them more "higher order" questions, and urge them to "try harder" if they are initially unsuccessful (thus imparting the message that they have the ability to succeed);
- give boys specific instructions on how to complete a project, but show girls how to do it—or, do it for them;
- talk to boys regardless of location in the classroom, but often only to girls who are nearby; and
- praise boys for the intellectual quality of their work and criticize them for lack of form and neatness, but do the opposite for girls.

Although there are obvious differences between colleges and elementary schools, some patterns of student-teacher interaction established at lower school levels may help set the stage for expectations and interactions in the college classroom.

**EXPERIENCES IN EARLY SCHOOLING**



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Overtly discriminatory comments on the part of faculty are still surprisingly prevalent. These comments are often intentional—although those teachers who engage in them may be unaware of their potential to do real harm. They may occur not only in individual student-teacher interchanges, but also in classrooms, office consultations, academic advising situations and other learning contexts.

There are some indications that overtly sexist verbal behavior on the part of faculty may be most concentrated in those fields<sup>28</sup> and institutions where women are relative newcomers, and that it often increases in both intensity and effect at the graduate level. (For a discussion of the special problems encountered by graduate women and by women in traditionally masculine fields, see pp. 10-12.)

The invidious nature of such comments can perhaps best be understood by comparing them to similar racial remarks. Few, if any, professors would make disparaging comments about blacks' seriousness of purpose or academic commitment, or use racist humor as a classroom device. (In order to experience the derogatory nature of such comments, the reader may wish to substitute the word "black" [or other minority] in the examples that follow):

- comments that disparage women in general, such as habitual references to "busy-body, middle-aged women," statements to the effect that "women are no good at anything," or the description of a class comprised solely of women as a "goddamn chicken pen."
- comments that disparage women's intellectual ability, such as belittling women's competencies in spatial concepts, math, etc., or making statements in class discussion such as "Well, you girls don't understand . . ."
- comments that disparage women's seriousness and/or academic commitment, such as "I know you're competent, and your thesis advisor knows you're competent. The question in our minds is, are you really serious about what you're doing?" or "You're so cute. I can't see you as a professor of anything."
- comments that divert discussion of a woman student's work toward a discussion of her physical attributes or appearance, such as cutting a student off in mid-sentence to praise her attractiveness, or suggesting that a student's sweater "looks big enough for both of us." (While such comments may seem harmless to some professors, and may even be made with the aim of complimenting the student, they often make women uncomfortable because essentially private matters related primarily to the sex of the student are made to take precedence over the exchange of ideas and information.)
- comments about women faculty that define them in terms of their sex rather than their professional status (e.g., "It must be that time of month") or that disparage their professional accomplishments, such as greeting the announcement of a female colleague's book with "After all, it's only her dissertation, and you know her [presumably male] advisor must have written most of that." (Such comments can be especially damaging, since the attitudes and behaviors of women faculty, and of male faculty toward them, is often "the most direct evidence available to students of both sexes of what it means to be a professional woman in our society."<sup>29</sup>)
- comments that refer to males as "men" but to females as "girls," "gals," etc. rather than "women." This non-parallel terminology implies that women are viewed as similar to children and thus less serious or capable than men.
- comments that rely on sexist humor as a classroom device, either "innocently" to "spice up a dull subject," or with the conscious or unconscious motive of making women feel uncomfortable. Sexist humor can range from the blatantly sexual, such as a physics lecture in which the effects of a vacuum are shown by changes in the size of a crudely-drawn woman's "boobs,"<sup>30</sup> or the depiction of women in anatomy teaching slides as *Playboy* centerfolds, to "jokes about

dating, about women students waiting to be called by men, etc.—i.e., the usual fooling around which relies on a certain bad taste (usually depicting women in a sexual context which is typically derogatory) in order to create a lively atmosphere in class."<sup>31</sup>

- comments that disparage scholarship about women, or that ridicule specific works because they deal with women's perceptions and feelings. Such comments can reinforce students' perceptions that what men think, feel and do is important, while women's roles, actions, and feelings are not worth learning about.

Often, faculty feel that overtly sexist comments and related behaviors are trivial, or "facts of life"—accepted and harmless features of everyday conversation. In some instances, teachers may simply speak out of habit with no ill intent. In other instances, however, teachers themselves may be uncomfortable with women students, have a restricted view of women's abilities and roles and/or be consciously or unconsciously hostile toward women. Some teachers may unknowingly use sexist humor to relieve their own anxieties or hostilities.

Just as they may arise from several motives, overt comments disparaging to women may be intended to serve a variety of purposes. For example, sexist humor may ostensibly be designed to foster collegiality between a teacher and the class. However, it may have the opposite effect on female students: sexist humor and other overtly disparaging comments may in fact alienate women students (and some male students as well) and thus directly affect the climate of the class as a whole. As a woman's caucus at one western university notes, "The psychological undermining of . . . female students' confidence and self-esteem is ritualized through sexist jokes and comments . . . This patronizing of female students, in both its subtle and gross forms, impedes, if not destroys, intellectual exchange between female students and male faculty members (and female faculty members who have adopted the same posture)."<sup>32</sup>

Some faculty may also intentionally (or inadvertently) use sexist comments, and/or inappropriately personal or sexual references, in order to annoy or distract women, or to trivialize women's contributions, especially in circumstances where performance is being evaluated.<sup>33</sup> (This sort of behavior is often reported by professional women, and also by women graduate students, one of whom, for example, cites being distracted by a male examiner's inappropriate comments in the middle of an oral examination.<sup>34</sup>)

Whether or not their intended purposes are "innocent," sexist humor and overtly sexist comments can interfere with classroom learning and have negative effects that go far beyond the immediate classroom or related learning situation.

## THE CLASSROOM'S SILENT LANGUAGE

*"What I find damaging and disheartening are the underlying attitudes . . . the surprise I see when a woman does well in an exam—the condescending smile when she doesn't."*  
(Female, Physical Sciences, Berkeley, p. 126)

*"There are reports that a few teaching assistants suggest to their laboratory classes that girls not work together as partners, because of a presumed lack of ease with handling equipment."*  
(Chair, Department of Physics, Berkeley, p. 40)

*"I have witnessed female students in two lower division courses treated as ornaments—as if they lacked any semblance of intellectual capacity—both occasions by male instructors."*  
(Male, Social Sciences, Berkeley, p. 130)

Like verbal behavior, nonverbal and other behaviors can also help shape classroom climate. A professor's nonverbal behavior can signal inclusion or exclusion of group members; indicate interest and attention of the opposite; communicate expectation of students' success or failure; and foster or impede students' confidence in their own abilities to learn specific tasks and procedures.

General studies of nonverbal behavior show that women may be more sensitive to nonverbal cues than men are.<sup>42</sup> Consequently, women students are especially likely to benefit from behaviors that recognize them as individuals and encourage them—for instance, making eye contact and nodding. Additionally, women are very apt to pick up on “mixed signals”—such as verbal encouragement that is coupled with nonverbal behavior which indicates a lack of interest or attention (moving away, looking elsewhere, shuffling papers).

Observations of classroom interactions,<sup>43</sup> as well as general studies of nonverbal behavior in everyday situations, indicate that girls and women often receive and give different nonverbal cues than boys and men do. These differences may well arise from differences in the perception of ability, value and status traditionally associated with men and women.<sup>44</sup> As mentioned previously, classroom observations at the elementary level show that teachers more frequently talk to boys no matter where they are in the classroom, but to girls only when they are nearby. Thus, boys tend to command active teacher attention regardless of closeness to or distance from the teacher, while girls do not.<sup>45</sup>

Moreover, patterns of male-female interaction typical in society at large may well be carried over into the classroom setting. For example, both in and out of class, men tend to claim more physical space than women (e.g., outstretched arms rather than arms folded, sprawling posture, etc.) to make greater use of assertive and attention-getting gestures, to maintain eye contact rather than to avert their gaze, and to use touching as a way to assert power or dominance.<sup>46</sup>

Faculty may treat men and women students differently in the following manner:

- making eye contact more often with men than with women, so that individual men students are more likely to feel recognized and encouraged to participate in class. (One teacher, for example, concerned because few women took part in discussion, learned from her students that she tended to ask a question and then to make eye contact with men only, as if only men students were expected to respond.)
- nodding and gesturing more often in response to men's questions and comments than to women's.
- modulating tone (for example, using a tone that communicates interest when talking with men, but a patronizing or impatient tone when talking with women).
- assuming a posture of attentiveness (for example, leaning forward) when men speak, but the opposite (such as looking at the clock) when women make comments.
- habitually choosing a location near men students. (Proximity in the college classroom may invite comments primarily from those sitting close by.)
- excluding women from course-related activities, such as field trips, or attempting to discourage their participation because women are “too much trouble,” etc. (Such exclusion is illegal under Title IX.<sup>47</sup>)
- grouping students according to sex, especially in a way which implies that women students are not as competent as or do not have status equal to men. Women students, for example, have reported that some teachers insist there be no all-women lab teams because women cannot handle laboratory equipment on their own. (Other professors may group the women together “so they can help each other,” or so that they “don't delay the men.”) Some women have reported certain professors instruct male medical students to “scrub” with the faculty but women medical students with nurses.<sup>48</sup> These kinds of arrangements may not only lead women students to doubt their competence, but also prevent women—for whom “hands-on experience” can be especially important in building confidence<sup>49</sup>—from learning as much as men students.
  - If men students are expected to—and do—take over lab procedures, women are likely to be observers rather than participants.
  - “scrub” sessions may serve as informal learning circumstances from which women are excluded as learners

and simultaneously “put in their place” as support professionals in the traditionally female field of nursing rather than as full colleagues.

- favoring men in choosing student assistants. In many institutions, men are still more likely than women to be chosen by faculty for these positions,<sup>51</sup> which can provide students contact with faculty and opportunities for learning new skills and building confidence. Moreover, such course-related work experience with faculty can play a crucial role in sponsorship for jobs and admission to graduate and professional programs.<sup>52</sup>
- giving men detailed instructions in how to complete a particular problem or lab assignment in the expectation they will eventually succeed on their own, but doing the assignment for women—or allowing them to fail with less instruction.<sup>53</sup>
- allowing women to be physically “squeezed out” from viewing a laboratory assignment or a demonstration.<sup>54</sup> This sort of physical exclusion can interfere with women students' opportunity to learn on their own.
- making direct sexual overtures. Direct sexual harassment by faculty can lead women students not only to feel threatened, but also to perceive that they are viewed by faculty primarily in sexual terms rather than as individuals capable of scholastic and professional achievement. (For a discussion of sexual harassment by faculty and its effects on women students' self-esteem and academic and career commitment, see Frank J. Till, *Sexual Harassment: A Report on the Sexual Harassment of Students*, National Advisory Council on Women's Educational Programs, August 1980 and “Sexual Harassment: A Hidden Issue,” Project on the Status and Education of Women, 1978, listed in the Resource section of this paper.)

## SUBTLE MESSAGES IN CLASS PARTICIPATION PATTERNS

*“My high school girl friends used to be the brightest and most talkative students in class. When we got together during our first vacation from college, the girls who went to co-ed schools said they hardly talked at all in their classes. I couldn't believe it! I go to [a prestigious woman's college], and women are not at all reticent there.”*

*(Quote from intern at NIE colloquium, Washington, DC, 1981)*

*“In mixed-sex classrooms it is often extremely difficult for females to talk, and even more difficult for teachers to provide them with the opportunity. This is not because teachers are supremely sexist beings, but because they are governed by the same rules as everyone else.”*

*(Dale Spender, “Don't Talk, Listen!”*

*The Times Educational Supplement 3/11/78, p. 14)*

*“A professor repeatedly cuts off women while in the middle of answering in class. He rarely does this to men.”*

*(Harvard, p. 8)*

*“In classes, I experienced myself as a person to be taken lightly. In one seminar, I was never allowed to finish a sentence. There seemed to be a tacit understanding that I never had anything to say.”*

*(“Illustrative Problems”)*

Subtle and inadvertent differences in the ways faculty treat men and women students can dampen women's participation and lead them to doubt the value of their contributions. In mixed-sex college classrooms, even the brightest women students often remain silent, although they may submit excellent written work and will frequently approach a teacher privately after class to follow up on issues raised earlier.<sup>55</sup> Indeed, it has come to be taken for granted by many faculty and students alike that men will usually dominate the discussion in college classrooms, and many researchers have confirmed that women students are less likely to be verbally aggressive in coeducational settings.<sup>56</sup> Although women's silence can put them at a considerable disadvantage—not only in an academic but also in a career setting—only recently has the pattern of less participation by women become a matter for concern and research.

In many classes, women postsecondary students are called on less often than men students,<sup>28</sup> and some women simply remain silent. However, as mentioned earlier, those women students who do make an effort to participate may find that their comments are disproportionately interrupted by teachers and by male classmates, and/or that faculty are less likely to develop their points than those made by men students.<sup>29</sup> Cumulative classroom experiences such as these can contribute to women students' feeling and acting as though their opinions are of little importance—neither sought out nor listened to.

Factors that may make it difficult for women to participate in class, but that may occur without the full awareness of either students or faculty, are discussed in the following sections. They include:

- everyday inequities in the ways men and women talk—especially in task-oriented group situations—that may be carried over into the classroom;
- faculty behaviors in initiating and managing class discussion that can inadvertently reinforce these patterns and discourage women's participation;
- features of the college classroom as a "masculine" and competitive setting for discussion that can put some women students at a disadvantage; and
- characteristics of women's classroom "style"—as contrasted to that of men—which may lead women's comments to be taken less seriously than men's.

#### EVERYDAY INEQUITIES IN TALK THAT MAY BE CARRIED INTO THE CLASSROOM<sup>30</sup>

Despite the popular notion that in everyday situations women talk more than men, studies show that in formal groups containing men and women:

- men talk more than women;
- men talk for longer periods and take more turns at speaking;
- men exert more control over the topic of conversation;
- men interrupt women much more frequently than women interrupt men;<sup>31</sup> and
- men's interruptions of women more often introduce trivial or inappropriately personal comments that bring the woman's discussion to an end or change its focus.<sup>32</sup>

Not only do men talk more, but what men say often carries more weight. A suggestion made by a man is more likely to be listened to, credited to him, developed in further discussion, and adopted by a group than the same suggestion made by a woman.<sup>33</sup> (The difficulty in "being heard" or "having their comments taken seriously" has often been noted by women in professional peer groups and is strikingly similar to those cited by some women college students.)

All too often neither faculty nor students are aware of these patterns of behavior—and it is often that they can do the most harm. Without knowing precisely why, individual women students may come to feel and to behave as though they are marginal participants in the academic enterprise.

#### WAYS OF CONDUCTING CLASS DISCUSSION THAT CAN DISCOURAGE WOMEN STUDENTS

*"Two of the tenured professors in my department remember the male graduate students' names but somehow have trouble remembering women grad students' names..."*  
(*"Illustrative Problems"*)

*"Some professors unconsciously use sexist terminology (for example, referring to women in their 20's as girls, or saying 'You call in a pathologist and he takes the specimen...'). You get the impression there are no women professionals in the world."*  
(*Response to Project Call for Information, veterinary student*)

*"If [a] woman doesn't understand something, she is dismissed. If [a] male doesn't understand, he gets further attention."*  
(*Health and Medical Sciences Program, Berkeley, p. 59*)

*"Women who asked questions are not answered, so women have stopped asking questions."*  
(*Health and Medical Sciences Program, Berkeley, p. 59*)

*"Professors (all male) consistently call statisticians 'he.' One has said three times in class 'the statistician of the future will wear a mini-calculator on his belt,' even though one half of the class are women training to be statisticians."*  
(*Female, Physical Sciences, Berkeley, p. 131*)

*"Women are addressed by first names, men by their last."*  
(*Health and Physical Sciences Program, Berkeley, p. 59*)

*"If [the] instructor can't answer questions (he or she) says, 'You girls don't understand.'"*  
(*Health and Physical Sciences Program, Berkeley, p. 59*)

*"... many women, especially undergraduates, are discouraged by the predominately masculine pronouns in reference to both student and faculty. It seems like a small thing but is pervasive and influential."*  
(*Female, Physical Sciences, Berkeley, p. 106*)

Teachers themselves may inadvertently reinforce women students' "invisibility," and/or communicate different expectations for women than for men students. Faculty behaviors that can have this effect<sup>34</sup> include but are not limited to the following:

- ignoring women students while recognizing men students, even when women clearly volunteer to participate in class. (This pattern, which may lead individual women students to feel "invisible," parallels the experiences of many women in professional meetings or other formal groups, who often raise their hands to go a while after man after man is recognized by the chair.)
- calling directly on men students but not on women students. Male faculty, especially, may tend to call directly on men students significantly more often than on women students.<sup>35</sup> This may occur because faculty unconsciously presume men will have more of a value to say and/or will be more eager to speak up. Sometimes, however, faculty may wish to "protect" women students from the "embarrassment" they assume women may feel about speaking in class, and thus simply discount them as participants.
- calling men students by name more often than women students. Sometimes faculty are surprised to discover that they know the names of proportionately more men students than women students in their classes. Calling a student by name reinforces the student's sense of being recognized as an individual. (Students of both sexes should be addressed in "parallel" terms... last names for both, or first names for both. Calling men by last name but women by first name implies that women are not on a par with men as adults or as future professionals.)
- addressing the class as if no women were present. Asking a question with "Suppose your wife..." or "When you were a boy..." discounts women students as potential contributors.
- "coaching" men but not women students in working toward a fuller answer by probing for additional elaboration or explanation (for example, "What do you mean by that? Why do you see it as a major turning point?"). This pattern, which has been identified at the elementary level,<sup>36</sup> may communicate to the male student who is engaged in dialogue not only that his point is important, but also that he has the ability to answer the question, and can succeed if he tries harder. If women are not "coached," they do not get the same reinforcement to respond to intellectual challenges.
- waiting longer for men than for women to answer a question before going on to another student. Studies at the elementary level indicate that teachers tend to give brighter students more time to formulate a response.<sup>37</sup> Initial observations by researchers suggest that this pattern may also affect teachers' interaction with students on the basis of sex. If so, this may both reflect and reinforce women students' classroom reticence. Like interrupting women, giving women less time to answer a question may subtly communicate that women are not expected to know the answer. (Men's silence following a question may be more likely to be perceived as due to reflection or to the effort to formulate an answer, women's to "shyness" or lack of a suitable response.)

- interrupting women students (or allowing them to be disproportionately interrupted by peers). As discussed previously, this may seem so natural that it may be "invisible." However, it may lead some women to wonder about the worth of their comments, and/or to withdraw from attempts to participate in class.
- asking women students questions that require factual answers (lower order questions) while asking men questions that demand personal evaluation and critical thinking (higher order questions). Such a pattern presumes, and subtly communicates to women students, that they may not be capable of independent thought.
- responding more extensively to men's comments than to women's comments. This pattern may be exacerbated because men students may also be more likely to pay more attention to and to pick up on each other's comments, but to overlook those made by women.<sup>23</sup> Thus, men students may receive far more reinforcement than women for intellectual participation.
- crediting men's comments to their "author" ("...as Bill pointed out") but not giving authorship to women's comments. Giving authorship is a way of providing acknowledgement, praise, and reinforcement in the course of developing a point. Women are likely to be especially discouraged if authorship of their comments or suggestions is given to male speakers who restate or develop women's statements as though they were their own.
- making seemingly helpful comments which imply that women are not as competent as men. Comments such as "I know that women have difficulty handling this equipment, but I'll be glad to help you after class" are likely to reinforce the individual student's and the class' perception that she—and perhaps women as a group—are deficient in some skills. Moreover, they may imply that some fields require "masculine" skills and women who choose them are apt to encounter inordinate difficulty.<sup>24</sup>
- phrasing classroom examples in a way which reinforces a stereotyped and negative view of women's psychological traits, such as a description of a female character in literature as "typically weak and irrational."
- using classroom examples that reflect stereotyped ideas about men's and women's social and professional roles, as when the scientist, doctor, or accountant is always "he," while the lab assistant, patient or secretary is always "she."
- using the generic "he" or "man" to represent both men and women, as in "When a writer is truly innovative, what criteria can we use to measure his achievement?" or "Besides men who can organize well and think clearly, what other essentials are needed to build an industry?"<sup>25</sup>
- reacting to comments or questions articulated in a "feminine style" as inherently of less value than those stated in a "masculine style." The assumption that a woman student who begins a comment hesitantly and "overly" politely (as in "I wonder if maybe . . ."), or who makes a statement with questioning intonation, does not have a good grasp of the subject or has little of importance to say, may lead a teacher to "tune out" or to interrupt and rephrase. However, this style may reflect the way women have learned to talk in our culture, and may have little relation to the validity of what is said. (See "Women's Speech And Women's Silence" for further discussion.)

## THE CLASSROOM AS A "MASCULINE" SETTING FOR DISCUSSION

*"The sex discrimination which I have encountered . . . has been more tacit than explicit. I feel that women tend to shy away from the two areas in which I am most involved . . . and that most professors in these areas never stop to consider why this might be so. I am not sure of the reasons myself, but I do know that both of these fields encourage a kind of argumentative and aggressive style which I find particularly distasteful. I think other women feel the same way."*

(Female, field of study not designated, *Bachelors*, p. 80)

*"In seminars . . . I have noted different responses by both faculty and students to the presentations of other students . . . many women tend to work in areas more closely related to the individual experience, while men seem to work more with issues involving larger groupings in society. There is more attention and validation given to the latter and often presentations on the more personal individual level are ignored or treated lightly as less important. The more abstract the issue, the more status it has. Therefore, many very fine presentations by women are not given the attention they deserve."*

(Female, field of study not designated, *Bachelors*, p. 87)

Men and women obviously speak the same language; however, the manner in which they speak may tend to differ in ways that many people are not consciously aware of. Nevertheless, these different speaking styles may be a significant factor in faculty perceptions of what students say. One classroom researcher notes that "[T]he valued patterns of speech in college and university settings are more often found among men than among women speakers."<sup>26</sup> These patterns include:

- highly assertive speech;
- impersonal and abstract styles (often incorporating the generic "he"); and
- competitive, "devil's advocate" interchanges.<sup>27</sup>

In a college or university setting, these ways of talking are often "equated with intelligence and authority."<sup>28</sup> As mentioned earlier, students may perceive competitive intellectual argumentation as "masculine"<sup>29</sup> and some women students may feel uncomfortable in adopting this so-called "masculine" way of talking. Equally important, women students' own styles of speaking may incorporate features that are devalued in the traditionally masculine academic context.

## WOMEN'S SPEECH AND WOMEN'S SILENCE<sup>30</sup>

*"I have noticed that women tend to be much more tentative in seminars; often they will ask questions in lieu of making pronouncements. More often than not, their questions are treated with condescension. If they are not ignored entirely, I think male professors and graduate students will have to think seriously and openly about these more subtle, stylistic differences—about the perpetuation of the 'old boy' system in the classroom, as well as in the job market—before we can expect any major changes to occur."*

(Female, field of study not designated, *Bachelors*, p. 80)

*"One of the greatest problems women faculty and students confront is how to be taken seriously in the daily life of colleges and universities. This problem has strong linguistic components since speech characteristics are often made into and evaluated as symbols of the person . . . The valued patterns of speech in college and university settings are more often found among men than among women speakers . . ."*

(Barrie Thoma, "Claiming Verbal Space: Women, Speech and Language in College Classrooms," p. 5)

Researchers on sex differences in language have identified features which usually occur more often in the speech of women than of men. These ways of talking—many of which are used in everyday conversation not only by women, but also by individuals and groups with low status and little power—may put women students at a particular disadvantage in an academic setting. They include:

- hesitation and false starts ("I think . . . I was wondering . . .")
- high pitch
- "tag" questions ("This is really important, don't you think?")
- a questioning intonation in making a statement ("The second chapter does most to clarify the theme?")
- excessive use of qualifiers (Don't you think that maybe sometimes . . .?)
- other speech forms that are excessively polite and deferential ("This is probably not important, but . . .")

Some suggest that these speech patterns have developed as a response to inequities in the larger society: if one has little power and is not as highly regarded as others, one had better express oneself politely and cautiously—and girls are often raised to do so. However, women postsecondary students—as well as women faculty—find themselves in a double-bind if they use these "typically feminine" ways of talking in the classroom.

If, for example, a woman student begins her comments

hesitantly and uses many qualifiers, she may be immediately perceived by her teacher and by her classmates as unfocused and unsure of what she wants to say. Her "overly polite" style may seem to "invite" interruptions by, or inattention from, both teacher and other students. Indeed, even the most insightful points made in this manner—especially by a woman—may be taken less seriously than the identical points made by a man or delivered in a more "masculine" assertive style.

Some nonverbal behaviors found more often among women than among men<sup>7</sup> may also work to women students' disadvantage in the classroom. While men tend, for example, to use assertive gestures (such as pointing) coupled with loud tones to underscore statements, most women have "learned" to display "submissive" gestures and facial expressions, such as:

- "Inappropriate" smiling (smiling while making a serious statement or asking a question)
- averting their eyes, especially in dealing with men and/or with those in positions of authority (including their professors).

These and similar kinds of behaviors that deviate from the male "norm" may lead faculty to perceive women students as frivolous, uncertain, and perhaps flirtatious. They may also lead faculty to prejudge both women's comments and their academic commitment.

Some argue that women students would be best to adopt a "masculine" style in order to achieve classroom credibility. Others point out that a woman who does so may be perceived as "aggressive" rather than assertive because her way of talking and acting does not conform to "feminine" expectations: what a woman student says in a "masculine" style may be rejected out-of-hand on that basis. Indeed, the same behaviors seen as "forceful" in a man may be viewed negatively—perhaps even as "hostile"—when used by a woman. More importantly, researchers are currently beginning to explore the possibility that some features of "women's speech" and behavior might have positive value in fostering a more equitable classroom climate based more on the cooperative development of ideas than on "competition for the floor." Questioning intonation or tag questions, for example, may encourage elaboration of a comment by the next speaker, while some nonverbal behaviors more commonly found among women such as nodding in agreement, "commenting" with "hmm hmm," etc.—may help to reinforce speakers and to invite others to participate. Indeed, students of both sexes have been shown to participate significantly more often in classes taught by women.<sup>7</sup> Ongoing research is attempting to identify verbal and nonverbal "cues" which may be more typical of women teachers that may serve to encourage all students to participate most fully.<sup>7</sup>

## GROUPS OF WOMEN WHO MAY BE ESPECIALLY AFFECTED WOMEN GRADUATE STUDENTS<sup>7</sup>

*"I told my advisor I wanted to continue working towards a Ph.D. He said, 'A pretty girl like you will certainly get married. Why don't you stop with an M.A.?'"*  
(*"Illustrative Problems"*)

*"I expected the graduate experience to be different. I expected that my major advisor would be my mentor. I have received very little time. I have noticed that male students seem to develop different kinds of relationships with professors and get more help and support."*  
(*Female, Education, Berkeley, p. 67*)

*"Research assistantships are assigned by individual faculty members who have the support for this type of appointment. Male faculty members tend to favor male graduate students as research assistants for various and sundry reasons ('because they play squash together') with the result that few women are selected and hence more become teaching assistants by default."*  
(*Chairman, Department of Economics, Berkeley, p. 42*)

*"Most problems with my research adviser are of a subtle nature—I wouldn't say he discriminates but it is more awkward for him to deal with me than the men in the lab and vice versa. He's not terribly 'up front' about his opinions."*  
(*Female, Biological Sciences, Berkeley, p. 91*)

*"Over the years, I repeatedly received reports from women who complained of demoralizing experiences with male faculty who treated them in a de-*

*meaning, patronizing and sometimes outright insulting manner. I believe the high attrition rate of female graduate students is in large part a result of this informal lack of support."*  
(*Assistant professor, Berkeley, p. 30*)

*"A male professor, introducing his female graduate student who was giving a seminar said: 'It's nice to find a student who is intelligent and can write, but it doesn't hurt if she's also good-looking.'"*  
(*Harvard, p. 10*)

*"My research is taken more seriously than the research of women in our group."*  
(*Male, Engineering, Berkeley, p. 89*)

*"I certainly do not feel that women are treated like colleagues in (x) Dept. As a reader this year, I was treated as an additional secretary."*  
(*Female, Humanities, Berkeley, p. 84*)

*"... [This] [lack of senior women faculty to serve as professors or advisors] has been the single most important deficit of the Ph.D. 'experience.' I have no sense that my advisor and/or department supports my professional efforts, believes in my ability or cares whether or not I succeed. I would say this feeling is more pervasive with female students."*  
(*Harvard, p. 27*)

*"I have received comments such as 'You're not really serious about the degree, are you?' Or, 'Well, it doesn't matter if you finish your thesis this year. You probably won't use it for much anyway.'"*  
(*"Illustrative Problems"*)

Men and women students alike often suffer a decline in self-esteem when they begin graduate study. However, women students are more likely to encounter and to be vulnerable to behaviors that are subtle or overtly discouraging, that single them out because of their sex, or that communicate lower expectations for them than for equally competent men students.

As noted previously, one of the most telling indications of the discrepancy between men and women students' intellectual self-esteem is the finding that women students are much less likely than their male classmates to feel confident about their preparation and ability to do graduate work. One extensive study reports that this difference "holds across almost all major fields . . . class years, and colleges" even when "women and men are matched on grade average and on graduate plans."<sup>8</sup>

Title IX mandates that qualified women must have equal access to all graduate programs; however, once they are on campus, women who pursue graduate study often face the problems encountered by undergraduate women in magnified form. Many observers have noted the increasingly "male" climate at the graduate and professional school level: for example, male professors are usually even more predominant, the style of classroom interchange is often more competitive, the proportion of women students often smaller. Despite the fact that they are highly self-selected and often begin study with better grade averages than their male classmates<sup>9</sup> women graduate students frequently encounter even more doubt on the part of faculty and others about their seriousness of purpose than do women undergraduates. Many women have been told by faculty and by department chairs that while their competence is not questioned, their commitment is.<sup>10</sup>

Often, faculty do not view career success as an appropriate primary goal for women graduate students, but presume that they will marry and that therefore are not as highly motivated as men to pursue graduate study. In the case of male graduate students, marriage and family may be seen as an advantage—a stabilizing factor and a symbol of maturity; in the case of women graduate students, however, marriage (or even the possibility of marriage) is often seen as a disability. If women students are already married, faculty may assume they will have children and then drop out of school or leave their profession. If they have young children, faculty may feel that women students should be at home caring for them, and may advise them that a woman cannot properly combine school and a demanding professional career with a family. Indeed, prospective female graduate students may be asked how they plan to combine their career with family—a question rarely asked of male applicants. Moreover, married women applying to graduate or professional programs may be told they will be taking jobs away from "married men who need them."

Questions about graduate women's "seriousness" are even more likely in the case of many women who, because of outside family or job responsibilities, are able to enroll in graduate study

on a part-time basis only. The view persists that part-time students are not as committed as those who are able to devote themselves to full-time study. Additionally, many graduate professors may be uncomfortable working closely with women students who wish to enter the professor's own field because they have difficulty seeing women as potential colleagues.

Consequently, women often report being neglected and overlooked, particularly in the less formal aspects of student-teacher interaction. This is also especially true for both men and women minority graduate students.<sup>33</sup> Many suggest that this lack of informal encouragement may be a significant factor in the attrition of some women graduate students, since collegiality between graduate students and faculty has been identified as a necessary element in an apprentice relationship vital to the development of professional identity, and as an important predictor of satisfaction with graduate school.<sup>34</sup> (One study, for example, indicates that women Ph.D.'s who had female dissertation advisors published significantly more than women who had male advisors.<sup>35</sup>) Women graduate students are more likely to miss out on this crucial kind of encouragement and support, and thus may feel increasingly doubtful about their academic ability and professional potential.

At the opposite extreme, especially in classroom situations where they comprise a small minority, graduate women may be the objects of "overattention" in which their comments are viewed with "amazement that a woman could be speaking about a technical topic."<sup>36</sup> As one professor notes, "[I]n either event, women have difficulty evaluating the true worth of their contributions since their statements are either under- or overvalued because of the sex of the speaker."<sup>37</sup>

Graduate women often report being discouraged, angered or confused by the kinds of subtle and overt verbal and nonverbal behaviors discussed earlier.<sup>38</sup> Because they often work closely with a limited number of senior faculty members, women graduate students can be especially affected by the orientation and expectations of a particular professor or advisor. Although graduate professors have a responsibility to foster the professional development of all their students, they may knowingly or unknowingly treat men and women differently in classroom, academic advising and related learning situations not only in the ways discussed earlier but also by:

- counseling women to lower their aspirations and/or to switch from a "harder" to a "softer" sub-specialty. While professors may act out of seemingly good intentions (for example, to protect women students from possible failure or to steer them in directions more "appropriate" for women) such counseling often communicates to women that they are not as capable of doing graduate work as men are.
- organizing research and teaching assistantships in such a way that men have more responsibility and/or greater opportunity to pursue their own research than women. Male teaching assistants may be more likely to have full day-to-day responsibility for their classes while women assistants aid faculty members. In the case of research appointments, men more often than women may be able to pursue their own research interests while women often end up assisting with their advisor's research.<sup>39</sup> Such arrangements can dampen the growth of independence, and simultaneously communicate to women that their research interests are not important.
- excluding women students from consideration for teaching assistantships in areas where women as a group are traditionally considered weak, for example, in statistics.<sup>40</sup>
- spontaneously offering to write letters of reference for men students but not for equally competent women students.
- nominating men, but not equally competent women, for fellowships, awards and prizes.<sup>41</sup>
- showing acceptance of men, but not of women graduate students, as professional colleagues by treating men and women differently in "informal" ways such as the following:
  - more often forming "apprenticeship" or protégé relationships with men than with women students. This may occur in part because faculty may feel more comfortable with

male students, and also because faculty may inaccurately believe men are more likely to use their graduate training.<sup>42</sup> Additionally, some faculty may expect "women . . . to be competent, good students, but . . . [not] to be brilliant or original"—hence, not good "bets" for professional investment.

- providing women with "formal" but not informal feedback on the quality of their work. Some graduate faculty may give equal treatment to women in formal contacts and written comments, but interact more frequently with men overall to discuss their field, their own ongoing research, and other matters of professional importance.<sup>43</sup>
- inviting men, but not women students, to share authorships, accompany them on professional trips, and meet recognized scholars outside the department.

## WOMEN IN TRADITIONALLY "MASCULINE" FIELDS

"Later on, Dr. \_\_\_\_\_ took me aside and explained to me how women rarely make good field geologists. This, he maintained, was due to their difficulty in perceiving things in three dimensions. He contended that when figuring out GRE, SAT, ACT (etc.) scores, the 'educators' take this inherent deficiency into account." (Sexual Harassment, p. 9)

"When I volunteered the fact that I was a politics major [the professor] expressed surprise and asked 'Now why would you want to do that?' when he had commended the same information just minutes before to one of the men." (Response to Project Call for Information, woman student, Princeton, class of '83)

"... [U]ndoubtedly the most painful part of my experience was the total isolation in which I found myself . . . I was, clearly, a serious threat to my fellow students' conception of physics as not only a male stronghold but a male retreat, and so I was least likely to be sought out as a colleague." (Evelyn Fox Keller, Working II Out, p. 85)

"Since the department has had many male students of varying ability over the past years, if a particular male student does not meet expectations his deficiencies carry no particular significance. If a female does not meet expectations, however, her deficiencies are considered characteristic of all female students . . ." (Department of Plant Pathology, Report to Dean, Berkeley, p. 21)

"In quantitative courses if you are a woman there seems to be less respect for women than for men, and an assumption that women will have trouble. Furthermore, if you enjoy non-quantitative courses more than quantitative ones if you are a woman, the assumption seems to be that you're less intelligent. This is a mixture of technocratic bias and sex discrimination, but the effect is to make women feel inferior." (Harvard, p. 9)

"I feel that the farther I go the more discrimination on [the] basis of sex. Now that I'm taking classes within my major and other science classes, upper division that is, there is a greater pressure due to the major I have taken . . . as to whether I am qualified for classes and field trips, labs, etc." (Female, Physical Sciences, Berkeley, p. 119)

"I was interested in majoring in crop science in the College of Agriculture and went to see my academic advisor. He encouraged me to change my major instead to horticulture, because it would not be as difficult a major as crop science. He told me that crop science required field work and would be hard for a woman to handle." ("Illustrative Problems")

"There is a pervasive attitude in (x) that jobs are not available unless one chooses to 'go on' to a more acceptable discipline—women are assumed to be especially 'unprofessional' if they have career aspirations in other than academic fields—men, on the other hand, are encouraged to go into politics or law." (Female, Ethnic Studies, Berkeley, p. 70)

Although women's enrollments in traditionally "masculine fields"—such as physics, engineering, geology, architecture, and medicine and law—are beginning to grow, their actual numbers compared to men in these fields in most instances are still quite small.<sup>44</sup> Most women continue to enroll in a very limited number of traditionally female fields—such as education, the arts, and the social sciences—despite the limited employment and income opportunities in these areas. The idea that some fields of study are "feminine" and some "masculine" has increasingly become a matter for public concern, since it is a major contributor to low-status, low-pay "women's job" ghettos in the larger economy.

Two forces may be largely responsible for women's continued avoidance of traditionally masculine fields: departmental climate and women's own concern over the appropriateness of a "non-



traditional" major. Women are more likely to be attracted to departments with student-oriented faculty and "warmer" climates often associated with traditionally female than traditionally male fields even though such a choice may foreclose the opportunity to enter a "high status" profession.<sup>14</sup> Additionally, even the most academically competent women with interests and aptitudes geared to traditionally masculine fields may struggle with self-doubt in choosing a major which is culturally defined as appropriate for men but not for women. Women students in these fields are likely to face difficulties for the following reasons:

- they comprise a distinct minority in a given class or department;
- they have little contact with other women pursuing the same major because of the vertical progression of required courses;
- they find few female teachers who might serve as role models; and
- they work with many professors who are not accustomed to having women students in their classes.

Many reports of the kinds of overtly disparaging faculty behaviors discussed earlier come from women students enrolled in traditionally masculine fields,<sup>15</sup> and especially from women graduate students in these areas. The chilly—and sometimes hostile—climate can be especially discouraging to women students who are trying to pursue interests and develop abilities that do not coincide with current cultural norms. If these behaviors lead them to believe they are unwelcome or viewed as incapable—especially by their professors—some women may use valuable time and energy dealing with unnecessary doubts and conflicts, and may shift toward "softer" subspecialties, or toward traditionally female majors and career goals.<sup>16</sup>

While a chilly departmental climate can discourage women from enrolling in traditionally masculine areas—and can "cool out" women who have already enrolled—one study suggests that faculty behavior which is supportive and reinforcing can be the crucial element in preventing women students' attrition and in enhancing women's chances for both academic and career success in "male dominated areas."<sup>17</sup>

## WOMEN MINORITY STUDENTS

*"She [a black female medical student] cited a small group learning situation in which the instructor never looked at her and responded only to the other people on either side of her."* ("Learning Experiences," p. 3)

*"Sometimes I am quite reluctant to ask questions because of the put-downs of the instructor. He often looks at me in disbelief when I do respond correctly. Usually, however, I don't even get recognized. I feel, why bother?"* ("Assumptions and Practices," p. 4)

*"It takes an extra effort to assert oneself and to be accepted by white peers and faculty."* ("Learning Experiences," p. 3)

In classroom interactions, as well as in other situations, minority women often face the effects of double stereotypes based on both race and sex. Faculty may be especially uncomfortable in dealing with minority women, and act on the basis of a variety of assumptions about minority women's capabilities and attitudes. On the one hand, faculty may presume that an individual student has specific academic abilities and career ambitions associated with a given cultural heritage—such as a "natural ability" in quantitative subjects in the case of Pan Asian American women. On the other hand, they may assume that minority women are likely to be less capable than other students, to lack certain skills, or to have certain personality traits—such as "passivity" in the case of Hispanic women, American Indian women and others—that may limit academic achievement. Additionally, some minority students—especially blacks—have reported that faculty seem to expect them either to be academically incompetent or to be academic superstars who are "exceptions to the rule."<sup>18</sup> This sort of double-bind can put a great deal of pressure on minority women students.

Faculty behaviors frequently reported by minority students<sup>19</sup> which may communicate both discomfort on the part of faculty, and differential or lower expectations include those discussed earlier, especially:

- ignoring
- interrupting<sup>19a</sup>
- maintaining physical distance
- avoiding eye contact
- offering little guidance and criticism<sup>19b</sup>
- attributing success to luck or factors other than ability<sup>19c</sup>

Moreover, the twin problems of "underattention" and "overattention" experienced by women students generally are often exacerbated in the case of minority women. While on the one hand, minority women have reported being studiously ignored, even in small seminars, on the other hand, they have been singled out, not as individuals, but as representatives of their particular ethnic group—as when a minority woman is called upon to give the "black woman's view" of an issue or problem rather than her own view.

Additionally, racially stereotyped interpretations of minority women's own behaviors may interfere with effective faculty-student interaction. Professors may assume, for example, that a black woman's silence is due to "sullenness,"<sup>19d</sup> an Asian American woman's silence is "natural passivity."<sup>19e</sup> In some instances, cultural differences in verbal and nonverbal cues may lead faculty and minority students to misread each other's attitudes and expectations.<sup>19f</sup>

## OLDER WOMEN STUDENTS

*"The people most apt to be discriminated against (i.e., not taken seriously) are middle-aged women who return to grad school after a long hiatus. But I believe that even they, presuming they possess sufficient ability and sufficient application, can defeat the prevailing stereotypes which profs (old, young, male and female) have of them."*

(Female, Humanities, Berkeley, p. 85)

*"Older women returning to school report that faculty often discuss them publicly in terms of their age and marital status. Their reasons for returning to school become a basis for more or less humorous speculation as does their marital situation or possible neglect of home duties."* (MLA, p. 20)

Older women currently comprise the fastest-growing segment of the postsecondary student population. However, like minority women, older women often suffer the results of compounded stereotypes. Whether they are entering college as freshmen, finishing a graduate degree, or pursuing graduate study, older women often find it extremely difficult to be taken seriously as students. Frequently, they are devalued not only because of their sex, but also because of their age and their likely part-time status. Too often, they are viewed as bored, middle-aged women who are returning to school because they have nothing better to do. This perception is much in contrast to the actual situation of many returning women, who tend to enroll in postsecondary programs for professional advancement and are often both highly motivated and highly successful in school—despite the fact that they may sometimes initially lack self-confidence and be hesitant about classroom participation.<sup>20</sup>

Returning women often encounter both overt and subtle differential treatment of the kinds discussed previously. The following faculty behaviors can be especially discouraging to women students who have been out of an academic context for a prolonged period:

- adopting a patronizing tone in responding to comments or suggestions;
- refusing to provide precise information about what is required for a given assignment—even when students ask for additional guidance—and then downgrading the resulting work;<sup>20a</sup>
- suggesting in classroom examples or advising situations that older women "should be home with their children,"



"don't need to work if they have a husband to support them," etc.; and

- making comments that disparage older women students, or that introduce inappropriately personal concerns.

Moreover, some faculty may be uncomfortable working with students older than they themselves are. This may contribute to older women students' being ignored or overlooked in class, and excluded from less formal interchanges with faculty.

## FACILITATING CHANGE

Changing everyday classroom behavior that expresses devalued and limited views of women is a difficult challenge—especially because much differential treatment that may occur in classroom and related interaction is inadvertent, and often below the level of consciousness of both faculty and students. However, although this kind of change is elusive and difficult, it is already underway on many campuses, and directions for future changes are being charted by ongoing projects and research.

Many faculty, for example, have recognized the importance of classroom language, and are attempting to identify and to change language that excludes or disparages women.<sup>13</sup> Experts in teacher education at the elementary and other levels are engaged in ongoing research to isolate the small behaviors by which teachers may treat males and females differently, and to devise observation and training techniques to help teachers change. Leaders in faculty development are aiding teachers who want to become more aware of their own subtle behaviors that may discourage minority college students, and many of these strategies are also useful in identifying behaviors that express different attitudes and perceptions based on sex. Others are exploring the complex connections between sex-of-student and sex-of-teacher in order to isolate those verbal and nonverbal classroom behaviors that may facilitate women students' class participation. Indeed, the impact of sex on interactions in school and in society is becoming a major focus for research on many fronts, both outside and within academe.

Inseparable from this focus are the growing number of academic courses and programs which incorporate perspectives on or emphasize women as subject. These include women's studies courses, and other courses which incorporate content about women, as well as information about female development, sex roles, and women's contributions to the disciplines. Some women students have reported that after taking such courses they have felt more included in the academic enterprise, and have "not only learned new facts, theories and approaches, but also . . . gained new perspectives on themselves as women and as scholars and were much more ready to assume responsibility for their educations."<sup>14</sup> As one student notes, "When I became a women's studies major . . . I began taking myself seriously as a science major. I'm going to graduate school in genetics."<sup>15</sup> Others have indicated the more immediate effect of women's studies courses in leading them to be more assertive in the classroom.<sup>16</sup>

In addition to citing the benefits of courses which include women as subject, women students on all levels and in virtually every study and survey reviewed for this report have emphasized their need for more women faculty at every level of postsecondary education to serve not only as teachers but also as role models, mentors and colleagues.

Women and men faculty alike—as well as students of both sexes—can benefit from strategies to help them become aware of and change behaviors that may discourage women students. A variety of recommendations for increasing such awareness and facilitating change follow. While some are designed primarily for faculty, some for students, and some for institutional administrators and others who can offer assistance and support, many recommendations may be useful to all members of the academic community.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

### POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS FOR ADMINISTRATORS

- Issue a policy statement which makes it clear that overtly biased comments, use of sexist humor, and related behavior on the part of faculty are not appropriate in the classroom or in related learning situations. Distribute the statement to faculty and students, publish it in the student newspaper, the faculty bulletin, etc. Include it in materials distributed to new faculty and new students. The University of Miami (FL), along with other institutions, has issued such a statement.
- Incorporate the institution's policy on classroom climate issues in statements about good teaching.
- Determine how a concern with classroom climate can best be integrated into the mission, priorities and style of your institution. For example, if your mission emphasizes student development, one appropriate focus might be how classroom climate affects women's learning potential. If faculty are primarily oriented toward teaching, in-class questionnaires or class interviews (see p. 14), class videotaping, etc., may be more readily adopted; if faculty are more research-oriented, suggestions for research projects into classroom climate may increase awareness and spark interest in this area.
- Include information on classroom climate issues in workshops for all faculty, including teaching assistants. It is important to make this information available to teaching assistants since they often handle many introductory courses, especially at large institutions. Thus, their behavior may establish the classroom climate for incoming women students. The Commission on the Status of Women at the University of Delaware developed behavioral guidelines on sexual and gender harassment which were included in an annual teaching effectiveness workshop for TA's.
- Ensure that all new faculty are informed of institutional commitment to an equitable classroom climate. Use workshops, seminars, informal meetings with members of their department, etc.
- Develop criteria about providing an equitable learning climate for women to be used in evaluating applicants for faculty and staff positions.
- Include classroom climate issues as a factor in merit evaluations.
- Develop a grievance procedure that can accommodate everyday inequities in classroom and related learning situations (nonactionable discrimination) as well as discrimination that is illegal. Emphasize establishing a confidential forum for airing concerns and a means of providing informal feedback to faculty whose behavior is objectionable or discouraging to women. The Massachusetts Institute of Technology is one of several institutions that have devised a model procedure of this sort.<sup>1</sup>

### GENERAL RECOMMENDATIONS

- Include classroom climate issues in student evaluations. Questions might include items such as the following: Does this teacher call on women students as often as on men? Recognize women as readily as men when women raise their hands? Treat men's and women's comments with the same degree of seriousness? Make disparaging comments or use sexist humor? Make a special effort to treat women and men equally—e.g., by avoiding sexist language, using sex-balanced class examples, etc.?
- Hold informal meetings to discuss classroom climate and to stimulate awareness of the issues. Invite men and women students, faculty, student affairs and faculty development staff, and others. Use problems based on experiences at your own campus to encourage discussion.
- Set up a committee of women and men students to develop a questionnaire or survey geared to those climate issues of greatest concern on your campus. Issues might be clarified (in a non-threatening way) by using anonymous examples based on experiences at your own institution, or by citing incidents

that have occurred at institutions similar to your own.

- Evaluate results of the survey, publicize where appropriate and develop plans for further activity.
- Use a survey (by department) for men and women undergraduate and graduate students to evaluate classroom, departmental and institutional climate and to determine if women find the climate less congenial than men do. Items that might be appropriately included are questions about classroom climate adapted from the Student Perception Questionnaire (reprinted as Appendix B) and questions about the broader learning climate, such as the following:
  - Did your faculty advisor encourage you in your academic and career goals?
  - Were men and women students within your department equally considered for assistantships, research appointments, and collaboration with advisors on research and writing projects?
  - Has a faculty member ever offered to write a letter of recommendation for you, or suggested you should try to publish your research?
- Evaluate whether women transferring from "traditionally male" to "traditionally female" fields have done so because of an inhospitable classroom or departmental climate.
- Form an information-sharing network with other institutions—both coeducational and single sex—that are evaluating their learning climate for women. Members of already-established consortia might serve as a starting point.
- Use a new or already-established committee to evaluate classroom climate issues in the institution. (Existing committees might be those that deal with teaching policy or the status of women.) Involve faculty, administrators, student affairs staff and students—including women and minority students, and representatives from all concerned student groups.
- Hold meetings geared to male students (possibly led by male faculty and/or student affairs staff) to discuss male roles, attitudes, speaking styles, etc. in terms of their impact on the classroom climate.

#### RECOMMENDATIONS FOR PRESIDENTS, DEANS AND DEPARTMENT CHAIRS

- Utilize the active support of respected faculty who share the objective of improving the learning climate for women. Their willingness to publicly recognize the issue and to take initiatives (such as having a "class interview" (see below)) can help legitimize a concern with climate and set an example for others within their own departments.
- Ask heads of units, either formally or informally, what they are doing/have done to ensure an equitable classroom climate. This will provide you with information and also indicate your concern about the issue.
- Mention classroom climate in speeches to reinforce its importance as an institutional priority.
- Circulate materials about classroom climate, such as this paper, to members of the academic community.
- Discuss classroom climate informally at parties, luncheons, meetings, etc. Informal discussion can air the issues in a non-threatening way and allow for faculty and student commentary and feedback.
- Sponsor workshops, seminars or other sessions on classroom climate. Have your office send letters inviting faculty and staff to attend.

#### RECOMMENDATIONS FOR STUDENT AFFAIRS PERSONNEL:

- Establish a workshop for all faculty who are academic advisors to increase their understanding of the classroom climate issues (as well as the traditional societal expectations and personal conflicts) that can limit women students' academic and career choices.
- Familiarize residence hall advisors with aspects of the learning climate that can discourage women students, as well as

with existing channels for seeking counseling, exploring grievance procedures, etc.

- Collaborate with faculty on research concerning the learning climate for women at your institution.
- Interview or survey women and men students to determine whether they perceive overt and/or subtle discrimination in their classes.
- Hold workshops for faculty about classroom climate issues.
- Indicate your availability to meet with individual faculty to discuss classroom climate issues. (Put notices in the faculty bulletin, make a presentation at a faculty meeting, etc.)
- Establish a procedure to get feedback from each department about current classroom climates, areas which need improvement, and departmental goals you can help to facilitate.
- Work with staff of the continuing education or re-entry programs, minority center, etc. to plan workshops or group counseling sessions that focus on the climate problems special groups of women may face.

#### RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FACULTY DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMS

- Establish workshops, seminars or individual consultation sessions designed to help faculty become aware of classroom climate issues. Emphasize activities which provide a personal frame of reference for data presented, such as:
  - role-reversal activities specifically connected with classroom speaking, etc. (for example, have male faculty attempt to argue a point effectively while "talking like a lady");
  - case studies, especially those based on experience at your own campus.
- Aid faculty members in using audiotape, videotape and other devices to identify ways in which they may treat men and women students differently. (See the Student-Faculty Communication Checklist, reprinted as Appendix A.) Outside funding may be available to support such efforts. The American University (DC) for example, received a grant to provide classroom videotaping for instructors requesting it.
- Encourage faculty to keep journals, student contact logs<sup>4</sup> or other records to keep track of the frequency and nature of their interactions with women and men students.
- Bring students and faculty together to discuss the climate of a given classroom. Staff of the Center for Improving Teaching Effectiveness at Virginia Commonwealth University will hold a one-session "class interview" when invited by a faculty member. While geared mainly to helping white faculty understand subtle behaviors that may discourage black students in the classroom context, this method could be adapted to focus on behaviors that may discourage women. An open-ended question might be simply "What stands out to you as a woman in this class?"
- Set up "micro-teaching" workshops to help faculty identify and change differential patterns of interaction with women and men students. Staff of Project INTERSECT at The American University (DC) have devised a program for elementary school teachers which could be adapted for postsecondary faculty. Each teacher presents a brief lesson plan and conducts a five-minute discussion with a "class" of two girls and two boys. The interaction is recorded on videotape and a trained observer suggests changes. The teacher then conducts the session again, paying particular attention to differential treatments (such as calling more often on boys, encouraging the comments of boys but not girls, etc.) (For additional information, see Resources, p. 20.)
- Help faculty identify ways in which they respond to differential interactions between men and women students in the classroom. (For example, do they discourage, ignore, or encourage sexist humor on the part of male students? How do they handle interruption and/or trivialization of women's comments by male students?)
- Train faculty to conduct classroom climate workshops, seminars, etc. for their colleagues and/or for students.
- Train interested faculty to be observers in colleagues' classes.

## PUBLICIZING CLASSROOM CLIMATE ISSUES

- Use the student newspaper and faculty newsletter or bulletin to help make students and faculty more aware of classroom climate issues. Some campus groups have taken out advertisements and others have provided articles or information to campus media. The Commission on the Status of Women at the University of Delaware, for example, included in its newspaper a series of questions about potential sexism in the classroom, and urged students to comment either positively or negatively via their course evaluation forms.
- Use the student newspaper to conduct a classroom climate survey. The Committee Against Sexual Harassment at Washington University (MO) ran a survey in the student paper which asked for information about whether women felt they were taken seriously, ignored or excluded, subjected to sexist humor and sexist comments, etc. as well as about their personal, academic and career responses to such experiences.
- Distribute an informational flyer on classroom climate issues which includes suggested actions and resource persons to contact. The Utah State University Committee on the Status of Women prepared and distributed a flyer entitled "What Can Students Do About Sex Discrimination?"
- Use campus media to combat "humor" with humor. The *Women's Forum Quarterly* at Seattle Central Community College (WA), for example, publishes a "Sexist Remark of the Quarter Award" to raise awareness about sexist humor and overtly biased comments in the classroom. Each "award" reprints the offending comment.

## PROMOTING INSTITUTIONAL RESEARCH

- Offer incentives, such as summer funding, release time, support personnel, etc. to encourage research and planning in improving the learning climate. (Such support also serves to legitimize the issues explored.)
- Establish awards for on-campus research in classroom climate issues. (See also "Recommendations for Professional Associations and Organizations," p. 17.)
- Publish a catalogue of research on campus climate and related issues done by staff at your own institution. The Women's Resources and Research Center at the University of California, Davis, publishes an annual "Catalogue of UCD Faculty Research on Women and/or Sex Roles," which informs the campus community, interested scholars, and the general public of research by UCD faculty and helps to develop a network of interested scholars. Publications of this sort help stimulate further research.

## CURRICULUM

- Include in required introductory courses, where appropriate, a unit on sex/status differences in verbal and nonverbal behavior and the valuation of behaviors by sex. Such a unit might be included in courses in several fields, including Speech/Communications, English Composition, Psychology, Sociology, Linguistics, and Women's Studies. (Some departments, such as Linguistics or interdisciplinary programs such as Women's Studies, might offer a separate course in this area.)
- Offer a speech/communications workshop in intellectual argumentation skills geared specifically to the difficulties some women (and men) students may experience regarding class participation.
- Incorporate classroom climate issues in teacher-education programs and emphasize practical skill-building techniques designed to identify and overcome subtle differential treatment of students on the basis of sex. (Course materials might include texts such as *Beyond Pictures and Pronouns: Sexism in Teacher Education Texts* and *Sex Equity Handbook for Schools* [see Resources, p. 20].)

## RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FACULTY

### EVALUATING THE CLASSROOM CLIMATE

- Use whatever means are available (audiotape, videotape, a colleague, faculty or student development staff, or student observer, etc.) for observation of your own classes to deter-

mine whether you inadvertently treat women and men students differently. The Student-Faculty Communication Checklist (Appendix A) suggests behaviors to watch and listen for, and questions to ask.

- Administer a survey to your students to determine whether women and men students find the climate of your classroom equally hospitable, and to measure men's and women's perception of sex-based differences in classroom interaction. The "Student Perception Questionnaire" from *Sex and Gender in the Social Sciences* (Appendix B) might serve as a model. (In some cases, students may be more comfortable responding to such a questionnaire if it is administered by a proxy.)
- Where appropriate, devise assignments in which students learn research methods by collecting data concerning the classroom climate. Students in some classes, for example, have been assigned to analyze patterns of interruption in class participation.

### QUESTIONS FOR FACULTY: AWARENESS AND ATTITUDES

Which students can you envision as potential colleagues?  
Are there any women included?

Which students would you choose (or have you chosen) to work with as laboratory, teaching or research assistants?  
Are women and men both represented according to their abilities?

Which students do you consider most original and creative? Are women included?

What are the names of the students in your classes. Do you know the names of more students of either sex in disproportion to their number?

Are you as likely to offer to write letters of recommendation for women as for men students? Do your letters for women more often include extraneous comments about appearance, or marital or parental status?

Which students have you nominated for fellowships, awards and prizes? Are outstanding men and women students equally represented?

### AVOIDING BEHAVIORS THAT CAN CREATE A COLD CLIMATE FOR WOMEN

As discussed on page 5 and following, some faculty behaviors can directly discourage women students. Behaviors to avoid include:

- disparaging women in general, women's intellectual abilities, or women's professional potential.
- using sexist humor as a classroom device.
- making seemingly helpful comments which imply that women are not as competent as men (e.g., "I know women usually have trouble with numbers, but I'll be glad to give you extra help...").
- turning a discussion of a woman student's work toward a discussion of her physical attributes or appearance.
- discussing women faculty in terms of their sex rather than their professional status.
- grouping students according to sex in a way which implies that women are not as competent or do not have status equal to men (for example, in setting up laboratory or field-work teams).
- disparaging scholarship on women, or ridiculing specific works because they deal with women's perceptions and feelings.
- questioning or disparaging women students' seriousness of purpose and/or academic commitment.

### CREATING A CLIMATE THAT CAN ENCOURAGE WOMEN'S FULL PARTICIPATION

Faculty can take many steps to identify and change subtle patterns in classroom and related interactions that may discourage

women students. (See page 6ff.) Several of the following recommendations are based on those in *Sex and Gender in the Social Sciences: Reassessing the Introductory Course.*<sup>6</sup>

#### IN CLASS

- Pay particular attention to classroom interaction patterns during the first few weeks of class, and make a special effort to draw women into discussion during that time. Participation patterns are likely to be established during this period, and often continue throughout the term.
- Set aside a class session early in the semester for discussion of anxieties students might have about participating in class. One professor, who as a student suffered from fear of classroom speaking, found that airing the issue not only increased her students' awareness, but helped ease women (and men) students' concerns about participating.
- Tell your classes you expect both women and men students to participate in class discussion.
- Make a specific effort to call directly on women as well as on men students.
- In addressing the class, use terminology that includes both men and women in the group.
- Respond to women and to men students in similar ways when they make comparable contributions to class discussion by:
  - crediting comments to their author ("as Jeanne said . . .")
  - "coaching" for additional information, etc.
- Notice whether the "feminine" or "masculine" style of a student's comment, question or response affects your own perception of its importance.
- Intervene in communication patterns among students that may shut out women. For example, if men students pick up on each other's points, but ignore an appropriate comment offered by a woman, slow the discussion, and pick up on the comment that has been overlooked.
- Note patterns of interruption to determine if women students are interrupted more than men—either by yourself or by other students. Make a special effort to ensure that all students have the opportunity to finish their comments.
- Ask women and men qualitatively similar questions—that is, ask students of both sexes critical as well as factual questions.
- Give men and women students an equal amount of time to respond after asking a question.
- Give women and men the same opportunity to ask for and receive detailed instructions about the requirements for an assignment.
- Use parallel terminology when addressing women and men students in class, or referring to men and women in classroom examples.
- When talking about occupations or professions in class discussion, use language that does not reinforce limited views of men's and women's roles and career choices. Often, examples can be effectively cast into the "I"/"You" form with the instructor taking the role of one party and the class the other (e.g., "Suppose I am a doctor and you come to me because . . ." rather than "The woman went to the doctor and he told her . . ."). Additionally, use examples with feminine pronouns, such as, "Here is a geologist who finds herself with the following discovery."
- Avoid using the generic "he" whenever possible. (See footnote 70.)
- Avoid placing professional women in a "special category," for example, "woman (or worse, 'lady') accountant."
- Avoid reference to women students' appearance, family, etc., without similar reference to men students' appearance or family.
- Experiment with language that reverses expectations based on sex. One teacher, for example, used "she" as the generic form for one semester and asked her students to evaluate its impact on their perceptions and feelings.<sup>7</sup>
- Make eye contact with women as well as with men students after asking a question to invite a response.
- Watch for and respond to nonverbal cues that indicate women

students' readiness to participate in class, such as leaning forward or making eye contact.

- Use the same tone in talking with women as with men students (for example, avoid a patronizing or impatient tone when speaking with women, but a tone of interest and attention when talking with men.)
- Ensure that women are not "squeezed out" by male classmates from viewing laboratory demonstrations or engaging in other group assignments.
- Assume an attentive posture when responding to women's questions or listening to their comments.

#### ENCOURAGING WOMEN OUTSIDE THE CLASSROOM

- Meet with women students to discuss academic and career goals.
- Encourage women students to pursue traditionally "masculine" majors and subspecialties when these areas reflect the particular student's interests and abilities.
- Consider women as well as men students when choosing classroom, teaching and research assistants.
- Ensure that women and men assistants have equally independent responsibility for their classes, and equal opportunities to pursue their own research.
- Make a special effort to consider women for teaching and research assistantships in traditionally "masculine" fields.
- Offer to write letters of recommendation for women students.
- Consider women as well as men students when making nominations for fellowships, awards and prizes.
- Include women graduate students in the "informal" interactions that can be important in communicating support and acceptance as a colleague—for example, by inviting women, as well as men, to share authorships or attend professional conferences. If you are male and uncomfortable inviting a female for lunch or other informal occasions, invite two or three women at a time.
- Provide women with informal as well as formal feedback on the quality of their work.

#### RECOMMENDATIONS FOR WOMEN STUDENTS

(Some of the recommendations specifically directed to faculty and administrators may also be appropriate for student organizations which can help press for their adoption.)

- Do an informal "tally" of patterns of interruption, successful introduction of topics, development of comments, etc. during a typical class session to see if they break down along sex lines. (See the Student-Faculty Communication Guidelines and the Student Perception Questionnaire reprinted as Appendices A and B for behaviors to watch and questions to keep in mind.)
- If you seem to be disproportionately interrupted in a given class, discuss your perception with other women students to see if their experience coincides with your own. If so, you may wish to get together and bring your concern to your teacher's attention.
- Give credit or "authorship" to comments made by women classmates ("as Mary said . . .")—especially if credit has not been properly given during the course of the discussion.
- Give your professors positive feedback for efforts to create an equitable learning climate. For example, if a professor makes it a point to use sex-balanced classroom examples and/or avoid the generic "he," show your attention and approval by making eye contact, nodding, etc.—or by telling the professor that you recognize and appreciate his or her efforts.
- Familiarize yourself with your institution's grievance procedure for sexual harassment. If it does not include a mechanism for airing concerns and providing feedback to faculty about overtly biased comments and sexist humor in the classroom, work to have it changed.
- Use your student evaluation form to comment—positively or negatively—on the climate of your classes.
- Where appropriate, discuss problems of classroom climate with the department chair or dean. Raising these issues as a group may be helpful.

- Encourage student publications such as the school newspaper to write about the subject of classroom climate.
- Hold meetings, workshops or hearings about classroom climate in order to bring about awareness of the subject.
- Encourage student organizations to press for inclusion of classroom climate issues in faculty development programs and in official statements relating to teaching standards.
- Recognize features of your own speaking and nonverbal style that may be counterproductive in a classroom setting. (See "Women's Speech and Women's Silence," page 9.) You may wish to ask classmates for their observations on your in-class style.
- If you feel you would benefit by modifying your own speaking style to enhance your effectiveness in the classroom, check with appropriate academic departments (e.g., Speech/Communications) and the student service offices (e.g., Student Affairs) to see if your institution offers workshops to help women—and men—develop intellectual argumentation skills.
- Hold meeting or workshops on class participation anxiety. Invite experts in the field, faculty and/or alumnae who successfully overcame their own reticence about speaking in public and others to participate.

#### RECOMMENDATIONS FOR SPECIAL GROUPS OF WOMEN STUDENTS

- If you find your department's climate unsupportive, seek out professional organizations for women in your field. The Association of Women Geoscientists, for example, has chapters around the country and offers membership to students as well as to practicing professional women. Such organizations can offer both role models and informal support.
- Encourage the organization of a support group comprised of women students majoring in your area. Such a group can be of special help to women in traditionally male fields by providing a setting in which women from different class years, (i.e., sophomore, junior, senior) can learn from each other's experiences and overcome the isolation women in traditionally masculine majors often feel.
- Establish an organization for graduate women, older women, minority women, etc. where problems concerning lack of support and other climate issues, can be aired and strategies devised to deal with them. The attrition rate of graduate women dropped following the formation of a women's caucus at the University of California, Berkeley.<sup>1</sup>
- If your campus has a minority student center, alert staff to classroom climate issues that may affect minority women. Set up workshops, seminars, or informal meetings to discuss these issues. If your institution has no such center, establish your own informal group.

#### RECOMMENDATIONS FOR PROFESSIONAL ASSOCIATIONS AND ORGANIZATIONS

- Include sessions on classroom climate issues at your annual meeting. The Association of American Colleges, for example, included a session on these issues at its annual meeting. The South Atlantic Modern Language Association and the American Educational Research Association featured panels on related issues at their regional and mid-year meetings.
- Identify sub-groups within your organization that might be especially appropriate for considering classroom climate

issues. These might include faculty development or student development programs, women's caucuses or commissions.

- Work with other organizations and associations such as the Special Interest Group: Research on Women in Education of the American Educational Research Association. (For additional Resource Organizations, see p. 20.)
- Stimulate research on issues related to classroom climate by calling for papers for presentation and/or publication.
- Offer awards for innovative ideas in faculty/student development that focus on classroom climate issues.<sup>4</sup>

#### SELECTED LIST OF AREAS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

Many of the elements that create classroom climate have been investigated by researchers in diverse areas. Additional research is especially needed on the following:

- the effect of educational climate on women's choice of academic majors
- the relationship of findings about sex-based differences in student-teacher interaction at the elementary level to classroom and related interaction in postsecondary institutions
- the relationship of the sex-ratio of a given class to patterns of interaction
- the factors (aside from proportion of men and women students) that make some classes highly sex-differentiated, others less so
- the effect of women students' interaction with male and female peers on women's perception of climate in college and in graduate school
- the differentiation of verbal and nonverbal patterns by race and by age both within and between the sexes
- the similarities between subtle differential treatment of students based on sex and based on race
- the relationship between sex-of-teacher and sex-of-student as it may affect both classroom behavior and education and professional outcomes
- the impact of courses incorporating content on sex roles and/or women, on women's classroom behavior and educational and career ambitions
- the potential value of women's speaking styles in providing a "cooperative" alternative to the "competitive" male style associated with classroom interaction at the postsecondary level
- the development of well-designed intervention studies in the postsecondary setting
- the steps women students can take to respond effectively to subtle differential treatment
- the effect of interaction between men and women faculty on men and women students
- the identification of those areas in which women students may most benefit from special efforts in creating a learning climate to counter the effects of prior experiences in school and society (for example, increasing women's class participation, ensuring women's full inclusion in field work, laboratory research, and other "hands-on" experience; or enhancing women's opportunities for collaborative work with graduate faculty)

#### NOTES

<sup>1</sup>Mary Lou Randour, Georgia Strasburg and Jean Lipman-Stumen, "Women in Higher Education, Trends in Enrollments and Degrees Earned," in the *Harvard Education Review*, Vol. 52, No. 1, 1982.

<sup>2</sup>Elsie H. El-Khawas, "Differences in Academic Development During College," *Men and Women Learning Together: A Study of College Students in the Late 70's*, Office of the Provost, Brown University, April 1980, pp. 7-8. (Subsequently cited as *Report of the Brown Project*.)

<sup>3</sup>Alexander W. Astin, *Four Critical Years: Effects of College on Beliefs, Attitudes and Knowledge*, Jossey-Bass Publishers, San Francisco, CA, 1977, pp. 114, 129. More recent studies suggest that this trend may have moderated somewhat, but is still evident. See, for example, El-Khawas, *Report of the Brown Project*, p. 23.

<sup>4</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 216.

<sup>5</sup>See, for example, *Student Needs Survey: A Report*, compiled by Suzanne Howard for

the Women Students' Leadership Training Project, National Student Educational Fund, Washington, DC, March 1980.

<sup>6</sup>Women's colleges have been concerned with the impact of overall institutional climate and the role of faculty supportiveness in creating such a climate for some time. See, for example, *A Study of the Learning Environments of Women's Colleges*, the Women's College Coalition, Washington, DC, Spring 1981, which surveyed women's college faculty and presidents concerning their perceptions of institutional mission, curricular content, academic and career counseling, etc., as directed to the particular needs of women students (such as self-confidence, leadership skills, and preparation for new roles).

<sup>7</sup>James C. Hearn and Susan Ozek, "The Role of College Major Departments in the Reproduction of Sexual Inequality," pre-publication draft, pp. 6-7. For further information, contact James C. Hearn, The American College Testing Program, P.O. Box 787,

Iowa City, IA 52243.

"Much of this research appears in the *Report of the Brown Project* and in papers presented at the Research Conference on Educational Environments and the Undergraduate Woman, Center for Research on Women and Project HERS, Wellesley College, September 1979.

"See, for example, El-Khawas, p. 19, and Hearn & Oizak, p. 17.

"The New and Old Lives of Men and Women Undergraduates," *Report of the Brown Project*, p. 157.

"Luis Montelro, "The College Academic Environment: Student-Faculty Interaction," *Report of the Brown Project*, pp. 43-68.

"See, A.R. Hochschild, "Inside the Clockwork of Male Careers." In *Women and the Power to Change*, ed. Florence Howe, McGraw Hill Book Co., New York, 1976; M.E. Tidball, "Of Men and Research: The Dominant Themes in American Higher Education Include Neither Teaching Nor Women," *Journal of Higher Education*, Vol. 47, No. 4, 1976, pp. 373-89; and I.M. Heyman, *Women Students at Berkeley: Views and Data on Possible Sex Discrimination in Academic Programs*, University of California, Berkeley, June 1977 (subsequently cited as "Berkeley," as cited in Jeanne J. Spelzer, "Role Models, Mentors and Sponsors: the Elusive Concepts," *Signs*, Vol. 8, No. 4, Summer 1981, p. 698.

"This and other types of classroom examples which may reinforce stereotypes and discourage women students are discussed at length in Judith M. Gappa and Janice Pearce, *Sex and Gender in the Social Sciences: Reassessing the Introductory Course*, 3 vols., which brings together guidelines for changes in course content in psychology, sociology, and microeconomics, with recommendations for changes in faculty-student communication patterns. (For ordering and publication information, see list of Selected Resources, p. 20.)

"See, Barrie Thorne, "Claiming Verbal Space: Women Speech and Language in College Classrooms," paper presented at the Research Conference on Educational Environments and the Undergraduate Woman, Wellesley College, September, 1978, p. 18. (Subsequently referred to as "Claiming Verbal Space.")

"For discussion of this pattern at the elementary school level, see Myra P. Sadker and David M. Sadker, *Sex Equity Handbook for Schools*, Langman, Inc., New York, 1982, pp. 104-6.

"Frank J. Till explores these problems more fully in *Sexual Harassment: A Report on the Sexual Harassment of Students*, The National Advisory Council on Women's Educational Programs, Washington, DC, August 1980.

"For a discussion of this problem and recommendations for student development staff, see Marjorie Abrams, "Preparing Men and Women Students to Work Together: A New Student Development Challenge," *Journal of the National Association for Women Deans, Administrators and Counselors*, Vol. 44, No. 4, Summer 1981, pp. 3-9.

"As noted in "Selected Areas for Further Research," p. 17, infra., additional observation and intervention studies—especially on the postsecondary level—are needed. Empirical studies to date have offered provocative, if sometimes contradictory results. We need to know more about similar and differential treatment of women and men students as possibly affected by such factors as the organization and composition of the particular classrooms studied, type of institution, sex-of-teacher, etc. In the case of empirical studies, sex differences in interaction are always a matter of frequency and never absolute.

"See p. 8, infra.

"For a current overview and discussion, see Veronica F. Nieve and Barbara Gutek, "Sex Effects on Evaluation," *The Academy of Management Review*, Vol. 5, No. 2, 1980, pp. 267-276.

"Marie S. Frey and Ronald G. Slaby, "Differential Teaching Methods Used With Girls and Boys of Moderate and High Achievement Levels," paper presented at the meeting of the Society of Research in Child Development, San Francisco, CA, March 1979.

"See, Nieve and Gutek; and Virginia E. O'Leary and Barbara Studer Wallston, "Sex Makes a Difference: The Differential Perceptions of Women and Men," to appear in L. Wheeler, ed., *Review of Personality and Social Psychology*.

"For an overview of related research, see Constantina Saffilios-Rothschild, *Sex Role Socialization and Sex Discrimination: A Synthesis and Overview of the Literature*, National Institute of Education, Washington, DC, October 1979, pp. 38-41; and Irene H. Frieze, "Women's Attributions for and Causes of Success and Failure" in Marjorie T. Madnick, Sandra S. Tangri and Lois W. Hoffman, eds., *Women and Achievement: Social and Motivational Analysis*, Hemisphere Publishing Corporation, Washington, DC, 1975, pp. 158-171.

"Philip Goldberg, "Are Women Prejudiced Against Women?" *Trans-Action*, Vol. 5, 1968, pp. 28-30. Several studies have confirmed Goldberg's findings; however, more recent studies indicate that women—but not men—may be beginning to evaluate clearly competent women more favorably. See Frieze (note 23) pp. 167-68.

"Angele M. Parker, "Sex Differences in Classroom Intellectual Argumentation," unpublished M.S. thesis, Pennsylvania State University, 1973. Over two hundred students of both sexes rated intellectual argumentation as a "masculine" skill.

"See, Sumru Erturk, "Expectancy, Attribution, and Academic Achievement: Exploring Implications of Sex-Role Orientation," Working Paper No. 27, Wellesley College Center for Research on Women, Wellesley, MA, 1979.

"Faculty comment, Ad Hoc Committee on the Education of Women at Oberlin, "The Education of Women at Oberlin," Office of the President, Oberlin College, Oberlin, OH, May 1980, p. 35.

"For example, see Project INTERSECT (Interactions for Sex Equity in Classroom Teaching), Myra and David Sadker (The Network, Inc.); as well as "Classroom Interaction, Student Cooperation and Leadership," Marjorie Lockhead and Abi Harris (ETS), funded by the National Institute for Education. A related project, now complete, is the Non-Sexist Teacher Education Project, Myra and David Sadker, funded by the Women's Educational Equity Act.

"See Sadker and Sadker, *Sex Equity Handbook for Schools*, pp. 107-108, and Carol S. Dweck, et al., "Sex Differences in Learned Helplessness: II. The Contingencies of Evaluative Feedback in the Classroom and III. An Experimental Analysis," *Developmental Psychology*, Vol. 14, No. 3, 1978, pp. 288-78.

"Much of the following discussion is based on Mary P. Rowe, "The Saturns Rings Phenomenon: Micro-Inequalities and Unequal Opportunity in the American Economy," published in Patricia Bourne and Veima Parness, eds., *Proceedings of the National Science Foundation Conference on Women's Leadership and Authority*, University of

California, Santa Cruz, CA, 1977. (Page numbers for specific quotations refer to a typed copy provided by the author.)

"*Ibid.*, p. 1.

"*Ibid.*, p. 6.

"Karen Bogart, *Technical Manual for the Institutional Self-Study Guide on Sex Equity*, preface to Appendix C, American Institutes for Research, Washington, DC, 1981, pages unnumbered.

"Example and discussion based on Rowe, pp. 18-27.

"See Till, p. 8.

"The Education of Women at Oberlin," p. 33.

"Till, p. 10.

"Berkeley, p. 34.

"*Ibid.*, pp. 32-33.

"Eileen Shapiro, "A Survival Guide," *Monographs in Urban and Multicultural Education*, Indiana University, Center for Urban and Multicultural Education, School of Education, No. 1, July 1980.

"The Quality of Women's Education at Harvard University: A Survey of Sex Discrimination in the Graduate and Professional Schools," Women Students Coalition, Cambridge, MA, June 1980, p. 10.

"Nancy M. Henley, *Body Politics: Power, Sex and Nonverbal Communication*, Prentice Hall, Inc., Englewood Cliffs, NJ, 1977, p. 13. (Subsequently cited as *Body Politics*.)

"See, for example, Constantina Saffilios-Rothschild, "Sex Roles in Transition," *Report of the Brown Project*, pp. 247-248.

"Henley, *Body Politics*.

"Myra Sadker, Workshop: "Microteaching Skills for INTERSECT," August 26, 1981. The American University, Washington, DC.

"Henley, *Body Politics*.

"Thorne, "Claiming Verbal Space," p. 18.

"Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 prohibits sex discrimination in federally-assisted education programs and activities.

"Rowe, p. 14.

"Jean Howard, Committee on the Status of Women at Brown, "Final Report," May 30, 1980 in *Report of the Brown Project*, p. 269.

"Montelero, p. 52.

"*Ibid.*, p. 52.

"Constantina Saffilios-Rothschild, "Sex Roles in Transition," *Report of the Brown Project*, pp. 247-248. (This pattern parallels that identified at the elementary level. (See page 6).)

"*Ibid.*, pp. 247-48.

"Jeanne J. Spelzer, "Students Should Be Seen And Heard," pre-publication draft for Patricia Perun, ed., *The Undergraduate Woman: Issues in Education Equity*, Lexington Books, Lexington, MA, 1982, draft pages 631-38. Spelzer notes the negative impact of this reliance on women's self-confidence and ability to engage in intellectual argumentation beyond the institutional setting.

"See, for example, Aslin, p. 91; and Sarah Hall Sternglanz and Shirley Lyberger-Fieck, "Sex Differences in Student-Teacher Interactions in the College Classroom," *Sex Roles*, Vol. 3, No. 4, 1977, pp. 345-62. (Sternglanz and Lyberger-Fieck found no readily identifiable difference in faculty behavior to account for differences in men's and women's participation.)

"See, for example, David A. Karp and William C. Yoels, "The College Classroom: Some Observations on the Meanings of Student Participation," *Sociology and Social Research*, Vol. 60, No. 4, July 1976, pp. 421-439. The authors note that in the male-taught classes observed, male students were much more likely to be directly questioned by the professor and twice as likely as women to respond to a comment. In female-taught classes, however, professors were equally likely to directly question male and female students, and participation by students of both sexes to be more equal. (Karp and Yoels also point out that neither women nor men students were aware that sex-of-teacher had any effect on their own class participation.)

"Thorne, "Claiming Verbal Space," p. 1 and p. 16.

"Much of the following discussion is based on Barrie Thorne, "Claiming Verbal Space" (see note 14); Barrie Thorne and Nancy Henley, eds., *Language and Sex: Difference and Dominance*, Newbury House, Rowley, MA, 1976; and Robin Lakoff, *Language and Woman's Place*, Harper Colophon Books, Harper and Row, New York, NY, 1975.

"Don H. Zimmerman and Candace West, "Sex Roles, Interruptions and Silences in Conversation," *Language and Sex: Difference and Dominance*, pp. 105-20.

"For further discussion of interruptions that change the focus of discussion, see Candace West, "Females Interruptions in Cross-Sex Conversation: Boldam Soon, Soon Forgotten," paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the American Sociological Assn., August 1979. (A revised version of this paper, "Why Can't a Woman Be More Like a Man? An Interaction Note on Organizational Game-Playing for Managerial Women," will appear in *Sociology of Work and Occupations*, February 1982.)

"See, for example, Carol Wolman and Hal Frank, "The Solo Woman in a Professional Peer Group," *American Journal of Orthopsychiatry*, Vol. 45, Jan. 1975, pp. 184-71. For an overview of related research, see Constantina Saffilios-Rothschild, *Sex Role Socialization and Sex Discrimination: A Synthesis and Critique of the Literature*, pp. 21-25.

"Thorne, "Claiming Verbal Space," p. 1.

"Several of these behaviors are also noted in Gappa and Pearce, *Sex and Gender in the Social Sciences: Reassessing the Introductory Course*.

"See note 57.

"See, for example, Sadker and Sadker, *Sex Equity Handbook for Schools*, pp. 104-106.

"Sadker and Sadker, "Microteaching Skills for Sex Equity in Classroom Interaction," unpublished training manual for Project INTERSECT, Washington, DC, NIE, pp. 10-11.

"See, for example, Wolman and Frank; and Sandra Acker, "Women, the Other Academic," *British Journal of Sociology of Education*, Vol. 1, No. 1, 1980, p. 84.

"For further discussion, see Saffilios-Rothschild, "Sex Roles in Transition," *Report of the Brown Project*, p. 251.

"Second example from Krug Quillen, *Living in Our America*, 4th edition, Scott Foresman and Co., Chicago, IL, 1984, as cited in Donna M. Gollnick, Myra Sadker, and David Sadker, *Beyond the Dick and Jane Syndrome: Confronting Sex Bias in Instructional Materials*, p. 24. Some contend that concern about the use of the generic



"he/man" is a trivial matter. However, research indicates that the "generic" "he/man" is not generic in people's perceptions and that it can limit girls' and women's self-perception—especially when it occurs in a classroom context. (See, for example, Casey Miller and Kate Swift, *Words and Women*, Anchor Press, New York, NY, 1976, pp. 29-34.) Moreover, it can often be easily avoided. (For further discussion, see Recommendations, p. 13.)

<sup>17</sup>Thorne, "Claiming Verbal Space," p. 5. Thorne notes that "women's speech" may in fact provide an alternative to the masculine "competitive" pattern, and offer a cooperative mode for the development of ideas. (See p. 10, *infra*.)

<sup>18</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>19</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>20</sup>See note 25 (Parker).

<sup>21</sup>Much of the discussion that follows is based on Berrie Thorne, "Claiming Verbal Space"; Berrie Thorne and Nancy Henley, eds., *Language and Sex: Difference and Dominance*; and Robin Lakoff, *Language and Woman's Place*, in which many of these features of "women's speech" were first identified.

<sup>22</sup>For further discussion, see Henley, *Body Politics*, especially pp. 138 & 166-76.

<sup>23</sup>Karp and Yocis, p. 434.

<sup>24</sup>Many of the studies in this area are being conducted by researchers whose primary focus is the interaction between sex-of-teacher and sex-of-student in establishing class participation patterns. See, for example, Laurel Walum Richardson, Judith A. Cook and Ann Steinhilber Macke, "Classroom Management Strategies of Male and Female University Professors" in Laurel Walum Richardson and Verta Taylor, eds., *Issues in Sex, Gender and Society: A Feminist Perspective*, D.C. Heath, Co., Lexington, MA, 1981, pre-publication draft, pp. 11-14.

<sup>25</sup>Much of the following discussion is based on Nancy E. Adler, "Women Students," in Joseph Katz and Rodney T. Hartnett, eds., *Scholars in the Making: The Development of Graduate and Professional Students*, Ballinger Publishing Co., Cambridge, MA, 1978, pp. 187-225; and on Mary P. Richards, "Women in Graduate Education," *Communicator*, Vol. XIII, No. 8, pp. 10ff.

<sup>26</sup>E. Khawaa, pp. 7-8.

<sup>27</sup>Adler, pp. 198-99.

<sup>28</sup>See, for example, Bogart, Appendix C.

<sup>29</sup>For a discussion of this problem, see Birt L. Duncan, "Minority Students" in *Scholars in the Making*, pp. 233-38.

<sup>30</sup>For a brief summary of the research in this area, see Adler, p. 209.

<sup>31</sup>Elyse Goldstein, "Effect of Same-Sex and Cross-Sex Role Models on the Subsequent Academic Productivity of Scholars," *American Psychologist*, Vol. 34, No. 5, May 1979, p. 407.

<sup>32</sup>Adler, p. 208.

<sup>33</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>34</sup>See, for example, "The Quality of Women's Education at Harvard University: A Survey of Sex Discrimination in the Graduate and Professional Schools."

<sup>35</sup>See Adler, p. 208.

<sup>36</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 207.

<sup>37</sup>Nomination for fellowships can be especially important for graduate women. Researchers have found that while all students who receive fellowships have a lower drop-out rate than non-recipients, the difference in retention rate is far greater for women than for men. Some suggest that receiving a fellowship confirms for women that they are taken seriously as graduate students. For further discussion, see Michelle Paterson and Lucy Seils, "Women Dropouts From Higher Education," in Anne Rossi and Ann Calderwood, eds., *Academic Women on the Move*, Russell Sage Foundation, New York, NY, 1973, pp. 88-99.

<sup>38</sup>Helen S. Astlin, "Career Profiles of Women Doctorates," *Ibid.*, pp. 156-67.

<sup>39</sup>For a research overview, see Adler, pp. 209-210.

<sup>40</sup>For a discussion of the current status of women's enrollment in nontraditional fields, see Randour, et al. (note 1.)

<sup>41</sup>Hearn and Ozak, p. 17.

<sup>42</sup>*Ibid.*, pp. 6-7.

<sup>43</sup>Till, p. 9.

<sup>44</sup>See, for example, Evelyn Fox Keller, "The Anomaly of a Woman in Physics," in Sara Ruddick and Pamela Daniels, eds., *Working It Out*, Pantheon Books, New York, NY, 1977, pp. 77-91.

<sup>45</sup>Hearn and Ozak, p. 21.

<sup>46</sup>Much of the following discussion is based on John F. Noonan, "White Faculty and Black Students: Examining Assumptions and Practices," 1980, and Adelaide Simpson, "A Perspective on the Learning Experience of Black Students at VCU" (Virginia Commonwealth University) 1979, unpublished papers. The Center for Improving Teaching Effectiveness, VCU, as well as on Mary Rowe, "The Salams Rings Phenomenon" and Birt L. Duncan, "Minority Students." For a detailed analysis of the feelings and experiences of minority students in a traditional university, see Kathryn O. Cowan, Ronald W. Sawley and J. Herman Blake, "Through the Hourglass (Darkly): Summary of an Exploratory Analysis of the 'New Student' at a Traditional University," unpublished paper, Oakes College, University of California at Santa Cruz, 1980.

<sup>47</sup>See, for example, Simpson, p. 3.

<sup>48</sup>Noonan, p. 5.

<sup>49</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 5 and Duncan, pp. 233-34.

<sup>50</sup>Noonan, p. 2. (For discussion of the changing perspectives of black women college students vis-a-vis their own attribution/expectation patterns, see Sumru Ekut, "Sex and Race Effects in the Attribution of Achievement and Expectancy for Success," *Working Paper No. 30*, Wellesley College Center for Research on Women, 1978).

<sup>51</sup>Noonan, p. 6.

<sup>52</sup>For further discussion, see Joanna S. Yamauchi, "The Triple Bind of Asian American Women: Problems of Self-Concept, Communication Behavior, and Cultural Accommodation," paper presented at the annual convention of the Speech Communication Association, San Francisco, CA, 1976, pp. 8-8.

<sup>53</sup>For a brief general overview of race and sex differences in nonverbal communication, see Henley, *Body Politics*, pp. 132-35.

<sup>54</sup>For a detailed discussion of the institutional and attitudinal barriers returning women students often face, see the series of papers on re-entry women published by the Project on the Status and Education of Women, Association of American Colleges, 1980-81, especially "The Counseling Needs of Re-entry Women." (See Resources for ordering information.)

<sup>55</sup>Incidents of this kind have been reported by individual re-entry women as well as by coordinators of re-entry programs.

<sup>56</sup>See, for example, Barbara Bate, "Nonsexist Language Use in Transition," *Journal of Communication*, Winter, 1978, pp. 139-49.

<sup>57</sup>See, for example, student evaluations for course concerning women's achievement motivation as summarized in Nancy M. Porter and Margaret T. Eileanchild, *In The Effectiveness of Women's Studies Teaching*, Women's Studies Monograph Series, National Institute of Education, Washington, DC, 1980, pp. 33-34.

<sup>58</sup>Senior, San Francisco State University, quoted in Lorna Sage, "Women on Course," in "Living," *The London Observer*, August 2, 1981.

<sup>59</sup>See, for example, study by Marina Cummings Elson and Irene Crockeroff, San Diego State University, as reported in *On Campus With Women*, Project on the Status and Education of Women, No. 20, June 1978, pp. 5-8.

## NOTES FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

<sup>1</sup>Mary P. Rowe and Clarence G. Williams, "The MIT Non-Union Grievance Procedure: An Upward-Feedback, Mediation Model," MIT Press, Cambridge, MA, 1980. For other model procedures, see, "Appendix: Codes of Conduct and Grievance Procedures" in Phyllis Franklin et al., *Sexual and Gender Harassment in the Academy*, The Modern Language Association of America, New York, NY, 1981, pp. 55-74.

<sup>2</sup>Several of the recommendations in this section are based on more general strategies outlined by Joseph Katz in "Collaboration of Academic Faculty and Student Affairs Professionals for Student Development," David C. Tilley, et al., *The Student Affairs Dean and the President: Trends in Higher Education*, Ann Arbor, MI, ERIC/CAPS 1979, pp. 33-54; and in Marjorie Abrams, "Preparing Men and Women Students to Work Together: A New Student Development Challenge," *Journal of the National Association for Women Deans, Administrators and Counselors*, Summer 1981, Vol. 44, No. 4, pp. 3-8.

<sup>3</sup>Many sources for activities that can be used to help faculty increase their general awareness of sex-role stereotyping, sex-based expectations, etc., are now available, such as E. Nickerson, et al., *Intervention Strategies for Changing Sex-Role Stereotypes: A Procedural Guide*, Kendall-Hunt, Dubuque, 1978; C.G. Carney & S.L. McMahon, eds., *Exploring Contemporary Male/Female Roles: A Facilitator's Guide*, University Associates, San Diego, CA, 1977; *Participants Notebook for Training Sessions on the Social/Educational Context of Title IX*, Title IX Equity Workshop Project, Washington, DC, National Foundation for the Improvement of Education, 1977, pp. 17-23.

<sup>4</sup>For the use of faculty-student contact logs in related research, see Sheila Kishler Bennett, "Student Perceptions of and Expectations for Male and Female Instructors: Evidence Relating to the Question of Gender Bias in Teaching Evaluation," unpublished paper. (Requests for reprints should be sent to Sheila K. Bennett, Dept. of Sociology, Bryn Mawr College, Bryn Mawr, PA 19010.) A revised version is forthcoming in the *Journal of Educational Psychology*.

<sup>5</sup>This flyer and related materials are available from the Project on the Status and Education of Women in an informational packet concerning sexual harassment on campus. (For ordering information, see Resources, p. 20.)

<sup>6</sup>For ordering information, see Resources, p. 20.)

<sup>7</sup>Cathryn Adamsky, "Changes in Pronominal Usage Among College Students As a Function of Instructor Use of She As the Generic-Singular Pronoun," paper presented to the American Psychological Association, September 1978.

<sup>8</sup>Lucy Seils, "Convention Notes," *Sociologists for Women in Society Newsletter*, February 20, 1972 as cited in Adler, p. 217.

<sup>9</sup>For a brief description of how to set up an awards program see "Giving Prizes and Awards: A New Way to Recognize and Encourage Activities that Promote Equity for Women in Academe," Bonny Lambert and Bernice Sandler, Project on the Status and Education of Women, Association of American Colleges, Washington, DC, 1981. (Available for \$1.00 from the Project.)

## SELECTED LIST OF RESOURCES

### PUBLICATIONS

Bogart, Karen; Flagle, Judith; and Jung, Steven. *Institutional Self-Study Guide on Sex Equity*, Washington, DC: American Institutes for Research, 1981. Contains five separate sections and a brief introductory user's guide designed for institutional or departmental self-evaluation. One section focuses on general social-educational climate including subtle behaviors that may discourage women. Each of the other sections focuses on specific conditions, policies and practices affecting sex equity for students, faculty, administrators, and staff. Arranged as a checklist with suggestions as to which personnel might respond to questions in each area, the Guide can be used as a diagnostic tool in identifying barriers to equity, and as an educational tool to familiarize administrators, faculty and others with the needs of women on

campus. Approximately 100 pages. Available from the Project on the Status and Education of Women, Association of American Colleges, 1818 R St., NW, Washington, DC 20009. \$10.00 prepaid.

Bogart, Karen. *Technical Manual for the Institutional Self-Study Guide on Sex Equity*. Washington, DC: American Institutes for Research, 1981. Describes the critical incident technique and other aspects of the methodology employed in development of the Self-Study Guide. Includes illustrative problems and proposed solutions for inequities, including those stemming from subtle differential treatment of women students, faculty, administrators and staff. 55 pages and appendices. Available from: American Institutes for Research, 1055 Thomas Jefferson St., Washington, DC 20007. \$10.00

Eakins, Barbara; Eakins, R. Gene; and Lieb-Brihart, Barbara, eds. *SISCOM '78: Women's (and Men's) Communication*. Proceedings of the Speech Communication Association's Summer Conference XI. Includes an overview of research and resources on women's communication, suggestions for workshops and courses, and list of resources for research and instruction. 268 pages. Limited number of copies are available from: the Speech Communication Association, 5105 Backlick Rd., Suite E, Annandale, VA 22003. \$3.50; orders under \$10.00 must be prepaid.

Franklin, Phyllis, et al., *Sexual and Gender Harassment in the Academy: A Guide for Faculty, Students and Administrators*. Commission on the Status of Women in the Profession. New York: The Modern Language Association of America, 1981. Explains gender as well as sexual harassment. Includes a chapter on problems of graduate women in the modern languages, and outlines steps for establishing definitions, determining codes and standards, and developing grievance mechanisms. Also includes bibliography and appendix with model codes and procedures. 75 pages paperbound, \$3.50 prepaid & \$1.00 postage (1-9 copies); \$2.50 (10 or more copies) available from MLA, 62 Fifth Ave., New York, NY 10011.

Gappa, Judith M. and Pearce, Janice. *Sex and Gender in the Social Sciences: Reassessing the Introductory Course*. Set has three volumes with content guidelines for sociology, psychology, and microeconomics; each volume also contains "Guidelines for Student-Faculty Communication" (major contributing author, Mercilee M. Jenkins) which include specific recommendations for change and set out in chart form faculty verbal and nonverbal behaviors that may reinforce stereotypes and/or discourage women's class participation. Also included are the "Student-Faculty Communication Checklist" and the "Student Perception Questionnaire" reproduced in this paper as Appendices A and B. *Introductory Sociology* (major contributing author, Barrie Thorne), 176 pages; *Introductory Psychology* (major contributing author, Nancy F. Russo), 152 pages; and *Principles of Microeconomics* (major contributing author, Barbara B. Reagan), 120 pages. Prior to publication and dissemination by the Women's Educational Equity Act Program, a limited number of copies are available from Judith M. Gappa, Associate Provost, Faculty Affairs, San Francisco State University, 1600 Holloway Ave., San Francisco, CA 94132. Price: \$25.00 each for duplicating and postage for any one of the three disciplines. Content guidelines in additional disciplines are available for \$5.00 each with the purchase of one complete volume. The complete text of *Introductory Sociology* will also be available from the Teaching Resource Center, American Sociological Association, 1722 N St., NW, Washington, DC at an approximate cost of \$10.00 prepaid.

"Guidelines for Nonsexist Language," *American Psychologist*, June 1975, pp. 682-84 and "Guidelines for Nonsexist Language in APA Journals," *American Psychologist*, June 1972 (Publication Manual Change Sheet 2). Available free from the American Psychological Association, 1200 17th St., NW, Washington, DC 20036 (send stamped self-addressed envelope).

Henley, Nancy M. *Body Politics: Power, Sex and Nonverbal Communication*, 1977. Identifies and analyzes sexist differences in nonverbal behavior and explores ways in which everyday nonverbal communication expresses and maintains an established hierarchy in social and personal interactions. 214 pages paperbound. Available from Spectrum Books, Prentice Hall, Inc., Englewood Cliffs, NJ 07632. \$3.95.

Howe, Florence, et al. *Everywoman's Guide to Colleges and Universities*, forthcoming. Scheduled for publication in fall, 1982. The Guide is designed to aid women students in the college-selection process. Institutions listed responded to a questionnaire covering a range of items—such as curricular offerings, educational climate, sports, health and counseling services, financial aid and scholarships, child care facilities, services and centers for re-entry women, etc. For further information, contact The Feminist Press, State University of New York/College at Old Westbury, Box 334, Old Westbury, NY 11568. (516) 967-7860.

International Association of Business Communicators. *Without Bias: A Guidebook for Nondiscriminatory Communication*, 1977. Gives specific guidelines for avoiding bias on the basis of race, sex or disability in verbal communication, in visual media, and in meetings, conferences and workshop settings. Includes list of resource publications and organizations. 77 pages paperbound. Available from the International Association of Business Communicators, 870 Market St., Suite 940, San Francisco, CA 94102. \$4.00 single copy (bulk orders cost less—request invoice for multiple copies).

Kramarac, Cherie and Trenchler, Paula, eds. *Women and Language News*. Newsletter on sex differences in language use, attitudes and acquisition. Includes information on new research and resources, courses and conferences. Published twice a year. Available at yearly subscription rate of \$5.00 from Cherie Kramarac, Speech Communications Dept., 244 Lincoln Hall, University of Illinois, Urbana, IL 61801.

Lakoff, Robin. *Language and Women's Place*, 1975. Discusses language used to describe and define the sexes, and identifies features of "women's language" in the context of women's devalued status and society's prescription that women be polite and deferential. 63 pages paperbound. Available from Harper and Row, Publishers, Inc., Attn: Order Dept., Keystone Industrial Park, Soranton, PA 15512. \$4.95.

Men and Women Learning Together: A Study of College Students in the Late 70's. *Report of The Brown Project*. Originally conceived as an assessment of the merger of Brown University and Pembroke College (1971) with a special focus on the situation of women in co-educational institutions, the study was expanded to include survey data from over three thousand undergraduates, classes of 1978-81, from Barnard, Brown, Dartmouth, Princeton, SUNY at Stony Brook, and Wellesley, as well as interviews with current students and alumni/ae. The Report includes working papers on aspects of the undergraduate experience; two analyses specific to the Brown-Pembroke merger; proceedings of the conference *Women/Men/College: The Educational Implications of Sex Roles in Transition*; and a series of specific recommendations prepared for Brown University. 295 pages. (A limited number of copies are available from Cynthia Storey, Box 1945, Brown University, Providence, RI 02912. \$8.00 prepaid; payable to Brown University.)

Perun, Pamela, ed. *The Undergraduate Women: Issues in Educational Equity*, forthcoming. Provides an overview of current research for administrators, faculty and counselors. Topics include critical aspects of pre-enrollment years such as sex-bias in testing, and the college selection process; elements of the college experience including department climates, curricula, evaluation, and teaching styles; aspects of cognitive, moral and psychosocial development; educational outcomes such as im-

pact on career commitment and family roles; and objectives for research and policy in the coming decade. Will be available from Lexington Books, D.C. Heath & Co., 2700 N. Richard Ave., Indianapolis, IN 46219. For additional information, call 800-428-6071.

Project on the Status and Education of Women, Rape and Sexual Harassment Packet. Includes "The Problem of Rape on Campus," 1979, 8 pages; "Sexual Harassment: A Hidden Issue," 1979, 7 pages; "Sexual Harassment" (selected articles from previous issues of the Project's newsletter, *On Campus With Women*), 4 pages; "Title VII Sexual Harassment Guidelines on Educational Employment," 1980, 4 pages; and "What Can Students Do About Sex Discrimination," (reprint, Utah State University), 1981, 1 page. Available from the Project on the Status and Education of Women, Association of American Colleges, 1818 R St., NW, Washington, DC 20009 for \$3.00 prepaid. (A list of all Project publications is available free with a stamped, self-addressed envelope.)

Project on the Status and Education of Women, *Re-entry Women* (3 packets of 5 papers each), 1980. Papers focus on institutional barriers returning women students often face when they enroll—or attempt to enroll—in postsecondary programs. Each paper discusses a specific problem (such as recruitment and admissions, financial aid, transfer policies and graduation requirements, support services, graduate study), offers specific recommendations for institutional change, and cites adoptable model programs. Set also includes a paper on special programs for special populations, an introductory paper, a paper compiling current national statistics on re-entry women, and a list of bibliographies. Packets are available for \$5.00 each, prepaid, from the Project on the Status and Education of Women, Association of American Colleges, 1818 R St., NW, Washington, DC 20009. (For a complete listing of contents of each packet as well as a list of all other Project publications, send a stamped, self-addressed envelope to the Project.)

Project on the Status and Education of Women, "Working Bibliography for Classroom Climate Issues," 1982. Informal annotated bibliography of sources consulted for this report. Briefly annotated entries, with an addendum of more recently received materials. For further information, contact the Project on the Status and Education of Women, Association of American Colleges, 1818 R St., NW, Washington, DC 20009.

Sedker, Myra P. and Sedker, David M. *Sex Equity Handbook for Schools*, and companion *Guide for Sex Equity Teachers* by Joyce S. Kaser, Myra Sedker and David Sedker, 1982. The Handbook includes chapters on sex bias in instructional materials and in teacher-student interaction; field-tested strategies for non-sexist teaching; lesson plans for elementary and other courses; a resource directory, and related materials. It also can be used as a college text for methods and for other preservice courses, or as a training text for inservice workshops. The Guide gives detailed instructions for designing, implementing and evaluating conferences, and for conducting two specific workshops. Available from: Longman, Inc., College and Professional Book Division, 19 West 44th St., New York, NY 10036. Handbook (331 pages) \$17.95 (tent.); Guide (108 pages), \$4.95 (tent.)

Sedker, Myra P. and Sedker, David M. *Beyond Pictures and Pronouns: Sexism in Teacher Education Textbooks*, 1979. Identifies types of sex bias in the most widely-used teacher-education texts; includes guidelines for the development of sex-fair textbooks; lists supplementary materials that can help teachers remedy biases in existing texts. (Also discusses bias concerning racial and ethnic groups.) 70 pages. Available from Education Development Center, 55 Chapel St., Newton, MA 02180. \$1.95.

Silberstein, Sandra. *Bibliography: Women and Language*. Michigan Occasional Papers in Women's Studies, No. XI, Winter, 1980. Includes references to unpublished as well as published works on gender differences in language; a representative sample of guidelines for nonsexist language use; articles concerning the issues such guidelines raise; and applications of the guidelines (i.e., teaching nonsexist language). (Also lists works on gender differences in nonverbal communication.) 67 pages and addenda. Available from Women Studies Program, University of Michigan, 354 Lorch Hall, Ann Arbor, MI 48109. \$2.50 (individual), \$5.50 (institution), payable to Michigan Occasional Papers.

Thorne, Barrie and Henley, Nancy, eds. *Language and Sex: Differences and Dominance*, 1975. Includes articles drawn from a variety of disciplines—such as linguistics, sociolinguistics, speech communication, English, psycholinguistics, and child development—which examine the relationship between language and sex in a variety of social and educational contexts. Contains an extensive annotated bibliography, "Sex Differences in Language, Speech and Nonverbal Communication" (also published under separate cover as *She Said/He Said*, Know, Inc., Pittsburgh, PA, 1975). 311 pages, paperbound. Available from Newbury House Publishers, Inc., 54 Warehouse Lane, Rowley, MA 01969. \$13.95 (if prepaid, \$10.46). (A new edition, *Language and Sex II*, is currently being edited by Thorne, Henley and Cherie Kramarac.)

Till, Frank J. *Sexual Harassment: A Report on the Sexual Harassment of Students*. National Advisory Council on Women's Educational Programs, Washington, DC, August 1980. Discusses subtle and overt sexual harassment in the postsecondary setting and examines short- and long-term educational consequences for women students. Includes analysis of legal issues and a technical supplement to aid institutions in establishing definitions, setting up grievance procedures, understanding liabilities and legal remedies. Single copies are available free from NACWEP, 1832 M St., NW, Suite 821, Washington, DC 20036.

## ORGANIZATIONS

American Educational Research Association's (AERA) Special Interest Group: Research on Women and Education (SIG:RWE). Founded in 1973, SIG:RWE publishes a quarterly newsletter featuring information of interest to scholars and researchers concerned with women's issues; holds a mid-year research conference; offers symposia and presentations at AERA annual meetings; and co-sponsors activities with the AERA Women's Committee and with Women Educators. For further information, contact Susan Klein, National Advisory Council on Women's Educational Programs, 1832 M St., NW, Suite 821, Washington, DC 20036, (202) 653-5848.

American Personnel and Guidance Association, Committee on Women. The Committee on Women works to increase the awareness of APGA's members about issues of concern to women and to facilitate networking. Publishes a newsletter. For further information, contact Myra C. Tashner, Chair (812) 874-4114 or Judith Rosenbaum, Associate Executive, APGA (703) 820-4700.



Center for Improving Teaching Effectiveness, Virginia Commonwealth University. Projects undertaken by the Center include identification of subtle behaviors by which faculty may discourage minority students, and techniques to enhance faculty and student awareness. For further information, contact John F. Noonan, Director, 901 West Franklin St., Richmond, VA 23284, (804) 257-1121.

Informal Network of Researchers and Practitioners Interested in Sex Equity in Classroom Interactions. For information, contact Susan Klein, National Advisory Council on Women's Educational Programs, 1832 M St., NW, Suite 821, Washington, DC 20036, (202) 653-6848 or Barbara Richardson, Teaching and Instruction, Teaching and Learning, National Institute of Education, 1200 18th St., NW, Washington, DC 20208, (202) 254-6407.

Mid-Atlantic Center for Sex Equity. One of 10 regional centers that provide technical assistance and other resources to school systems, including training on how to avoid sex bias in student-teacher interaction. For further information, contact David Becker, Director, Mid-Atlantic Center for Sex Equity, The American University, Foxhall Square Building, Suite 252, 3301 New Mexico Ave., NW, Washington, DC 20016, (202) 686-3511.

National Association for Women Deans, Administrators and Counselors (NAWDAC). Publishes a quarterly newsletter and journal as well as mailings throughout the year. Journal articles often focus on issues in women students' development. Membership costs \$45 per year (\$20 for retired persons and students). For further information, contact Patricia Ruetzel, Executive Director, 1825 Eye St., NW, 8624-A, Washington, DC 20006, (202) 659-9330.

National Association of Student Personnel Administrators (NASPA). For general information, contact Jane Howard-Jasper, Assistant Executive Director, NASPA, One Dupont Circle, NW, Washington, DC 20036, (202) 833-4880. For information on professional development assistance for women, contact Nancy Turner, Coordinator for the Women's Network, Florida State University, Tallahassee, FL 32306, (904) 644-3206.

National Council for Staff, Program and Organizational Development (NCSPOD). A national organization for those active in faculty development in two-year colleges. NCSPOD publishes a newsletter and refers consultants specializing in a variety of faculty development areas. For additional information, contact Maureen Lukenbill, President, Miami-Dade Community College, South Campus, FSPD Office, Room 3338, 11011 Southwest 104 St., Miami, FL 33178, (305) 596-1366.

National Institute for Staff and Organizational Development (NISOD). A national faculty development organization, NISOD focuses on creating a positive learning environment in community colleges and other two-year institutions. Affiliated with the North American Consortium, NISOD serves non-member as well as member institutions. It provides publications, workshops and consultants with a focus on classroom dynamics. Many offerings emphasize ways in which faculty can best serve nontraditional students. For further information, contact Nancy Arnes, Executive Director, NISOD, 348 Education Building, University of Texas at Austin, Austin, TX 78712, (512) 471-7545.

Professional Organizational Development Network in Higher Education (POD). A national professional organization for those involved in faculty development at all levels of postsecondary education. POD offers a referral service to institutions seeking faculty development consultants. For further information, contact: Michael Davis, Executive Director, Office of the Academic Vice President, University of the Pacific, Stockton, CA 95211, (209) 946-2551.

Women Students Leadership Training Project. Designed to arm students with information, training and leadership skills to combat sex discrimination in postsecondary education, the project held a national conference and distributed a resource manual to student leaders in 1990. It is currently developing regional information and support networks. For further information, contact Donna Brownsey, National Student Educational Fund, 2000 P St., NW, Suite 205, Washington, DC 20036, (202) 785-1856.

## APPENDIX A

### STUDENT-FACULTY COMMUNICATION CHECKLIST\*

It may be difficult for an instructor to be consciously aware of the interactional dynamics in the classroom, while at the same time transmitting the content of the lecture or guiding a discussion. For this reason, the following techniques are suggested to help faculty with an analysis of the interaction in their classes.

#### A. Classroom Observation

Having a friend, colleague, or teaching assistant observe some of your classes on a random basis can be helpful. Classroom observation can be used to answer questions such as:

1. What is the number of males versus females called on to answer questions?
2. Which students (male or female) participate in class more frequently through answering questions or making comments? Is the number disproportional enough that you should encourage some students to participate more frequently?
3. Do interruptions occur when an individual is talking? If so, who does the interrupting?
4. Is your verbal response to students positive? Aversive? Encouraging? Is it the same for all students? If not, what is the reason? (Valid reasons occur from time to time for reacting or responding to a particular student in a highly specific manner.)
5. Do you tend to face or address one section of the classroom more than others? Do you establish eye contact with certain students more than others? What are the gestures, postures, or facial expressions used and are they different for men, women, or minority students?

#### B. Audio Taping of Class Section

A student could tape record some of your class sessions. Self-analysis of the tapes could provide answers to questions such as:

1. Which students do you call by name?
2. What language pattern are you using? Is there a regular use of male referencing? or the generic "he"? or the universal "man"? Are stereotypical assumptions about men and women revealed in your classroom dialogue?
3. Are examples and anecdotes drawn from men's lives only?
4. Can differential patterns of reinforcement be detected from the tapes?

(\*Reprinted from *Sex and Gender in the Social Sciences: Reassessing the Introductory Course*)

## APPENDIX B

### CURRICULUM ANALYSIS PROJECT FOR SOCIAL SCIENCES STUDENT PERCEPTION QUESTIONNAIRE\*

DIRECTIONS: ANSWER EACH OF THE FOLLOWING QUESTIONS. GIVE ONLY ONE ANSWER TO EACH QUESTION. PLACE THE NUMBER CORRESPONDING TO YOUR ANSWER ON THE BLANK TO THE LEFT OF THE QUESTION.

1. Age at present time:
  - (1) 17-20
  - (2) 21-24
  - (3) 25-30
  - (4) 31-40
  - (5) 41 or more
2. Citizenship:
  - (1) Citizen of the USA
  - (2) Noncitizen of the USA
3. If U.S. citizen, what is your race? (If not U.S. citizen, do not answer.)
  - (1) Caucasian (White American)
  - (2) Black American
  - (3) Hispanic (Mexican-American, Puerto Rican, Cuban, etc.)
  - (4) Native American (North American Indian/Alaskan)
  - (5) Asian American
4. Sex of student
  - (1) Male
  - (2) Female
5. This course is:
  - (1) Required for my academic major
  - (2) Not in my academic major
6. Does your instructor know you by name?
  - (1) Yes
  - (2) No
  - (3) Don't know or uncertain
7. How often do you voluntarily answer questions or contribute to class discussions in this class?
  - (1) Never
  - (2) One to three times during the course
  - (3) An average of once a week
  - (4) An average of two to three times a week
  - (5) An average of one or more times a day
8. How often does the instructor call on you or ask you to respond to a question or comment?
  - (1) Instructor does not call on anyone
  - (2) One to three times during the course
  - (3) An average of once a week
  - (4) An average of two to three times a week
  - (5) Never
9. How does the instructor most frequently call on you?
  - (1) By name
  - (2) By pointing with hand
  - (3) By eye contact/looking directly at me
  - (4) Instructor never calls on me

(Continued on next page)

**APPENDIX C**  
**SOURCES FOR QUOTATIONS**

Ad Hoc Committee on the Education of Women at Oberlin, "The Education of Women at Oberlin," Office of the President, Oberlin College, Oberlin, OH, April 1980.

Karen Bogart, Technical Manual for the Institutional Self-Study Guide on Sex Equity, Appendix C, "Illustrative Problems and Proposed Solutions for Inequities," American Institutes for Research, Washington, DC 1981 (cited as "Illustrative Problems").

Phyllis Franklin et al., *Sexual and Gender Harassment in the Academy: A Guide for Faculty, Students and Administrators*, Commission on the Status of Women in the Profession, The Modern Language Association of America, New York, NY, 1981 (cited as M.L.A.).

Ira M. Heyman, *Women Students at Berkeley: Views and Data on Possible Sex Discrimination in Academic Programs*, Office of the Chancellor, University of California, Berkeley, June 1977 (cited as Berkeley).

John F. Noonan, "White Faculty and Black Students: Examining Assumptions and Practices," unpublished paper, The Center for Institutional Teaching Effectiveness, Virginia Commonwealth University, Richmond, VA, 1980 (cited as "Assumptions and Practices").

Project on the Status and Education of Women, "Call for Information on Campus Climate Issues," published in the Project's newsletter, *Campus With Women* and in a number of other publications, 1980-81 (cited as Project Call for Information).

Sara Rudick and Pamela Daniels, eds., *Working It Out: 23 Women Writers, Artists, Scientists and Scholars Talk About Their Lives and Work*, Pantheon Books, New York, NY, 1977 (cited as Working It Out).

Adele Simpson, "A Perspective on the Learning Experiences of Black Students at VCU," unpublished paper, The Center for Improving Teaching Effectiveness, Virginia Commonwealth University, Richmond, VA, 1979 (cited as "Learning Experiences").

Frank J. Till, *Sexual Harassment: A Report on the Sexual Harassment of Students*, National Advisory Council on Women's Educational Programs, Washington, DC, August 1980 (cited as Sexual Harassment).

Women Students' Coalition, "The Quality of Women's Education at Harvard University: A Survey of Sex Discrimination in the Graduate and Professional Schools," Cambridge, MA, June 1980 (cited as Harvard).

(Continued from preceding page)

10. Are there times when you raise your hand to ask a question or make a comment but do not get called on by the instructor?

(1) Once or twice  
(2) Three or more times  
(3) I am called on when I raise my hand  
(4) I never raise my hand  
(5) I do not think the instructor does not call on you when you raise your hand? (Select the one answer which best reflects your opinion.)

(1) Too many students want to respond  
(2) Others beat me to it  
(3) Instructor does not see or hear me  
(4) Instructor ignores me  
(5) This situation never occurs

12. Are there times when you want to participate in class by asking a question or making a comment but choose not to do so?

(1) Once or twice  
(2) Three or more times  
(3) Nearly every day  
(4) No, because I participate when I want to  
(5) I do not want to participate

13. If you have wanted to participate in class by asking a question or making a comment but did not do so, what was your reason for not doing so? (Select the one response that most closely corresponds with your feelings.)

(1) Felt insecure, inadequate, or uncertain  
(2) Another student asked question or commented first  
(3) Too many students in class  
(4) Disagreed with instructor but chose not to speak out  
(5) This situation never occurs

14. In your opinion, which students most frequently participate in class? (Select the one answer that best represents your opinion.)

(1) Those who are most knowledgeable or most interested in the subject  
(2) Those who are seeking clarification or want more information  
(3) Those who are trying to show off or get attention  
(4) I have not noticed  
(5) Male and female students equally

15. In your opinion, which students ask the most questions and make the most comments in class?

(1) Male students  
(2) Female students  
(3) Male and female students equally  
(4) Have not noticed

16. How does the instructor react to the questions you make in class?

(1) Encourages me to question or comment again  
(2) Discourages me from commenting or asking a question again  
(3) Neither encourages nor discourages me  
(4) I never participate  
(5) In your opinion, how does the instructor react to opinions and comments given by other students in the class?

(1) Respects the opinions of students in the class  
(2) Does not respect the opinions of students in this class  
(3) Embarrasses or "puts down" students for their opinions  
(4) I did not notice  
(5) Does your instructor use humor or make humorous remarks that you feel are offensive, embarrassing, or belittling to any individuals or groups?

17. How often do student participate in this class by asking questions or making comments?

(1) Never  
(2) One time  
(3) Occasionally  
(4) Frequently

18. How often do student participate in this class by asking questions or making comments?

(1) Never  
(2) Rarely  
(3) Occasionally  
(4) Frequently

(Reprinted from *Sex and Gender in the Social Sciences: Reassessing the Inductory Course*)

**WHITE PRIVILEGE AND MALE PRIVILEGE:  
A PERSONAL ACCOUNT OF COMING TO SEE CORRESPONDENCES  
THROUGH WORK IN WOMEN'S STUDIES**

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Through work to bring materials and perspectives from Women's Studies into the rest of the curriculum, I have often noticed men's unwillingness to grant that they are over-privileged in the curriculum, even though they may grant that women are disadvantaged. Denials which amount to taboos surround the subject of advantages which men gain from women's disadvantages. These denials protect male privilege from being fully recognized, acknowledged, lessened, or ended.

Thinking through unacknowledged male privilege as a phenomenon with a life of its own, I realized that since hierarchies in our society are interlocking, there was most likely a phenomenon of white privilege which was similarly denied and protected, but alive and real in its effects. As a white person, I realized I had been taught about racism as something which puts others at a disadvantage, but had been taught not to see one of its corollary aspects, white privilege, which puts me at an advantage.

I think whites are carefully taught not to recognize white privilege, as males are taught not to recognize male privilege. So I have begun in an untutored way to ask what it is like to have white privilege. This paper is a partial record of my personal observations, and not a scholarly analysis. It is based on my daily experiences within my particular circumstances.

I have come to see white privilege as an invisible package of unearned assets which I can count on cashing in each day, but about which I was "meant" to remain oblivious. White privilege is like an invisible

weightless knapsack of special provisions, assurances, tools, maps, guides, codebooks, passports, visas, clothes, compass, emergency gear, and blank checks.

Since I have had trouble facing white privilege, and describing its results in my life, I saw parallels here with men's reluctance to acknowledge male privilege. Only rarely will a man go beyond acknowledging that women are disadvantaged to acknowledging that men have an unearned advantage, or that unearned privilege has not been good for men's development as human beings, or for society's development, or that privilege systems might ever be challenged and changed.

I will review here several types or layers of denial which I see at work protecting, and preventing awareness about, entrenched male privilege. Then I will draw parallels, from my own experience, with the denials which veil the facts of white privilege. Finally, I will list 46 ordinary and daily ways in which I experience having white privilege, within my life situation and its particular social and political frameworks.

Writing this paper has been difficult, despite warm receptions for the talks on which it is based.<sup>1</sup> For describing white privilege makes one newly accountable. As we in Women's Studies work reveal male privilege and ask men to give up some of their power, so one who writes about having white privilege must ask, "Having described it, what will I do to lessen

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<sup>1</sup>. This paper was presented at the Virginia Women's Studies Association conference in Richmond in April, 1986 and the American Educational Research Association conference in Boston in October, 1986 and discussed with two groups of participants in the Dodge Seminars for Secondary School Teachers in New York and Boston in the spring of 1987.

or end it?"

The denial of men's overprivileged state takes many forms in discussions of curriculum change work. Some claim that men must be central in the curriculum because they have done most of what is important or distinctive in life or in civilization. Some recognize sexism in the curriculum but deny that it makes male students seem unduly important in life. Others agree that certain individual thinkers are blindly male-oriented but deny that there is any systemic tendency in disciplinary frameworks or epistemology to over-empower men as a group. Those men who do grant that male privilege takes institutionalized and embedded forms are still likely to deny that male hegemony has opened doors for them personally. Virtually all men deny that male overreward alone can explain men's centrality in all the inner sanctums of our most powerful institutions. Moreover, those few who will acknowledge that male privilege systems have over-empowered them usually end up doubting that we could dismantle these privilege systems. They may say they will work to improve women's status, in the society or in the university, but they can't or won't support the idea of lessening men's. In curricular terms, this is the point at which they say that they regret they cannot use any of the interesting new scholarship on women because the syllabus is full. When the talk turns to giving men less cultural room, even the most thoughtful and fair-minded of the men I know well tend to reflect, or fall back on, conservative assumptions about the inevitability of present gender relations and distributions of power, calling on precedent or sociobiology and psychobiology to demonstrate that male domination is natural and follows inevitably from evolutionary pressures. Others resort

to arguments from "experience" or religion or social responsibility or wishing and dreaming.

After I realized, through faculty development work in Women's Studies, the extent to which men work from a base of unacknowledged privilege, I understood that much of their oppressiveness was unconscious. Then I remembered the frequent charges from women of color that white women whom they encounter are oppressive. I began to understand why we are justly seen as oppressive, even when we don't see ourselves that way. At the very least, obliviousness of one's privileged state can make a person or group irritating to be with. I began to count the ways in which I enjoy unearned skin privilege and have been conditioned into oblivion about its existence, unable to see that it put me "ahead" in any way, or put my people ahead, overrewarding us and yet also paradoxically damaging us, or that it could or should be changed.

My schooling gave me no training in seeing myself as an oppressor, as an unfairly advantaged person, or as a participant in a damaged culture. I was taught to see myself as an individual whose moral state depended on her individual moral will. At school, we were not taught about slavery in any depth; we were not taught to see slaveholders as damaged people. Slaves were seen as the only group at risk of being dehumanized. My schooling followed the pattern which Elizabeth Minnich has pointed out: whites are taught to think of their lives as morally neutral, normative, and average, and also ideal, so that when we work to benefit others, this is seen as work which will allow "them" to be more like "us." I think many of us know how obnoxious this attitude can be in men.

After frustration with men who would not recognize male privilege, I

decided to try to work on myself at least by identifying some of the daily effects of white privilege in my life. It is crude work, at this stage, but I will give here - list of special circumstances and conditions I experience which I did not earn but which I have been made to feel are mine by birth, by citizenship, and by virtue of being a conscientious law-abiding "normal" person of good will. I have chosen those conditions which I think in my case attach somewhat more to skin-color privilege than to class, religion, ethnic status, or geographical location, though of course all these other factors are intricately intertwined. As far as I can see, my Afro-American co-workers, friends, and acquaintances with whom I come into daily or frequent contact in this particular time, place, and line of work cannot count on most of these conditions.

1. I can if I wish arrange to be in the company of people of my race most of the time.
2. I can avoid spending time with people whom I was trained to mistrust and who have learned to mistrust my kind or me.
3. If I should need to move, I can be pretty sure of renting or purchasing housing in an area which can afford and in which I would want to live.
4. I can be pretty sure that my neighbors in such a location will be neutral or pleasant to me.
5. I can go shopping alone most of the time, pretty well assured that I will not be followed or harassed.
6. I can turn on the television or open to the front page of the paper and see people of my race widely represented.



letters, without having people attribute these choices to the bad morals, the poverty, or the illiteracy of my race.

19. I can speak in public to a powerful male group without putting my race on trial.

20. I can do well in a challenging situation without being called a credit to my race.

21. I am never asked to speak for all the people of my racial group.

22. I can remain oblivious of the language and customs of persons of color who constitute the world's majority without feeling in my culture any penalty for such oblivion.

23. I can criticize our government and talk about how much I fear its policies and behavior without being seen as a cultural outsider.

24. I can be pretty sure that if I ask to talk to "the person in charge," I will be facing a person of my race.

25. If a traffic cop pulls me over or if the IRS audits my tax return, I can be sure I haven't been singled out because of my race.

26. I can easily buy posters, post-cards, picture books, greeting cards, dolls, toys, and children's magazines featuring people of my race.

27. I can go home from most meetings of organizations I belong to feeling somewhat tied in, rather than isolated, out-of-place, outnumbered, unheard, held at a distance, or feared.

28. I can be pretty sure that an argument with a colleague of another race is more likely to jeopardize her chances for advancement than to jeopardize mine.

29. I can be pretty sure that if I argue for the promotion of a person of another race, or a program centering on race, this is not likely to cost

me heavily within my present setting, even if my colleagues disagree with me.

30. If I declare there is a racial issue at hand, or there isn't a racial issue at hand, my race will lend me more credibility for either position than a person of color will have.

31. I can choose to ignore developments in minority writing and minority activist programs, or disparage them, or learn from them, but in any case, I can find ways to be more or less protected from negative consequences of any of these choices.

32. My culture gives me little fear about ignoring the perspectives and powers of people of other races.

33. I am not made acutely aware that my shape, bearing, or body odor will be taken as a reflection on my race.

34. I can worry about racism without being seen as self-interested or self-seeking.

35. I can take a job with an affirmative action employer without having my co-workers on the job suspect that I got it because of my race.

36. If my day, week, or year is going badly, I need not ask of each negative episode or situation whether it has racial overtones.

37. I can be pretty sure of finding people who would be willing to talk with me and advise me about my next steps, professionally.

38. I can think over many options, social, political, imaginative, or professional, without asking whether a person of my race would be accepted or allowed to do what I want to do.

39. I can be late to a meeting without having the lateness reflect on my race.

40. I can choose public accommodation without fearing that people of my race cannot get in or will be mistreated in the places I have chosen.
41. I can be sure that if I need legal or medical help, my race will not work against me.
42. I can arrange my activities so that I will never have to experience feelings of rejection owing to my race.
43. If I have low credibility as a leader I can be sure that my race is not the problem.
44. I can easily find academic courses and institutions which give attention only to people of my race.
45. I can expect figurative language and imagery in all of the arts to testify to experiences of my race.
46. I can choose blemish cover or bandages in "flesh" color and have them more or less match my skin.

I repeatedly forgot each of the realizations on this list until I wrote it down. For me, white privilege has turned out to be an elusive and fugitive subject. The pressure to avoid it is great, for in facing it I must give up the myth of meritocracy. If these things are true, this is not such a free country; one's life is not what one makes it; many doors open for certain people through no virtues of their own. These perceptions mean also that my moral condition is not what I had been led to believe. The appearance of being a good citizen rather than a troublemaker comes in large part from having all sorts of doors open automatically because of my color.

A further paralysis of nerve comes from literary silence protecting

privilege. My clearest memories of finding such analysis are in Lillian Smith's unparalleled Killers of the Dream and Margaret Andersen's review of Karen and Mamie Fields' Lemon Swamp. Smith, for example, wrote about walking toward black children on the street and knowing they would step into the gutter; Andersen contrasted the pleasure which she, as a white child, took on summer driving trips to the south with Karen Fields' memories of driving in a a closed car stocked with all necessities lest, in stopping, her black family should suffer "insult, or worse." Adrienne Rich also recognizes and writes about daily experiences of privilege, but in my observation, white women's writing in this area is far more often on systemic racism than on our daily lives as light-skinned women. <sup>2</sup>

In unpacking this invisible knapsack of white privilege, I have listed conditions of daily experience which I once took for granted, as neutral, normal, and universally available to everybody, just as I once thought of a male-focused curriculum as the neutral or accurate account which can speak for all. Nor did I think of any of these perquisites as bad for the holder. I now think that we need a more finely differentiated taxonomy of privilege, for some of these varieties are only what one would want for everyone in a just society, and others give license to be ignorant, oblivious, arrogant and destructive. Before proposing some more finely-tuned categorization, I will make some observations about the general effects of these conditions on my life and expectations.

In this potpourri of examples, some privileges make me feel at home

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2. Andersen, Margaret, "Race and the Social Science Curriculum: A Teaching and Learning Discussion." Radical Teacher, November, 1984, pp. 17-20.  
Smith, Lillian, Killers of the Dream, New York, 1949.

in the world. Others allow me to escape penalties or dangers which others suffer. Through some, I escape fear, anxiety, or a sense of not being welcome or not being real. Some keep me from having to hide, to be in disguise, to feel sick or crazy, to negotiate each transaction from the position of being an outsider or, within my group, a person who is suspected of having too close links with a dominant culture. Most keep me from having to be angry.

I see a pattern running through the matrix of white privilege, a pattern of assumptions which were passed on to me as a white person. There was one main piece of cultural turf; it was my own turf, and I was among those who could control the turf. I could measure up to the cultural standards and take advantage of the many options I saw around me to make what the culture would call a success of my life. My skin color was an asset for any move I was educated to want to make. I could think of myself as "belonging" in major ways, and of making social systems work for me. I could freely disparage, fear, neglect, or be oblivious to anything outside of the dominant cultural forms. Being of the main culture, I could also criticize it fairly freely. My life was reflected back to me frequently enough so that I felt, with regard to my race, if not to my sex, like one of the real people.

Whether through the curriculum or in the newspaper, the television, the economic system, or the general look of people in the streets, we received daily signals and indications that my people counted, and that others either didn't exist or must be trying, not very successfully, to be like people of my race. We were given cultural permission not to hear voices of people of other races, or a tepid cultural tolerance for hearing

or acting on such voices. I was also raised not to suffer seriously from anything which darker-skinned people might say about my group, "protected," though perhaps I should more accurately say prohibited, through the habits of my economic class and social group, from living in racially mixed groups or being reflective about interactions between people of differing races.

In proportion as my racial group was being made confident, comfortable, and oblivious, other groups were likely being made inconfident, uncomfortable, and alienated. Whiteness protected me from many kinds of hostility, distress, and violence, which I was being subtly trained to visit in turn upon people of color.

For this reason, the word "privilege" now seems to me misleading. Its connotations are too positive to fit the conditions and behaviors which "privilege systems" produce. We usually think of privilege as being a favored state, whether earned, or conferred by birth or luck. School graduates are reminded they are privileged and urged to use their (enviable) assets well. The word "privilege" carries the connotation of being something everyone must want. Yet some of the conditions I have described here work to systemically overempower certain groups. Such privilege simply confers dominance, gives permission to control, because of one's race or sex. The kind of privilege which gives license to some people to be, at best, thoughtless and, at worst, murderous should not continue to be referred to as a desirable attribute. Such "privilege" may be widely desired without being in any way beneficial to the whole society.

Moreover, though "privilege" may confer power, it does not confer

moral strength. Those who do not depend on conferred dominance have traits and qualities which may never develop in those who do. Just as Women's Studies courses indicate that women survive their political circumstances to lead lives which hold the human race together, so "under-privileged" people of color who are the world's majority have survived their oppression and lived 'survivors' lives from which the white global minority can and must learn. In some groups, those dominated have actually become strong through not having all of these unearned advantages, and this gives them a great deal to teach the others. Members of so-called privileged groups can seem foolish, ridiculous, infantile or dangerous by contrast.

I want, then, to distinguish between earned strength and unearned power conferred systemically. Power from unearned privilege can look like strength when it is in fact permission to escape or to dominate. But not all of the privileges on my list are inevitably damaging. Some, like the expectation that neighbors will be decent to you, or that your race will not count against you in court, should be the norm in a just society and should be considered as the entitlement of everyone. Others, like the privilege not to listen to less powerful people, distort the humanity of the holders as well as the ignored groups. Still others, like finding one's staple foods everywhere, may be a function of being a member of a numerical majority in the population. Others have to do with not having to labor under pervasive negative stereotyping and mythology.

We might at least start by distinguishing between positive advantages which we can work to spread, to the point where they are not advantages at all but simply part of the normal civic and social fabric, and negative

types of advantage which unless rejected will always reinforce our present hierarchies. For example, the positive "privilege" of belonging, the feeling that one belongs within the human circle, as Native Americans say, fosters development and should not be seen as privilege for a few. It is, let us say, an entitlement which none of us should have to earn; ideally it is an unearned entitlement. At present, since only a few have it, it is an unearned advantage for them. The negative "privilege" which gave me cultural permission not to take darker-skinned Others seriously can be seen as arbitrarily conferred dominance and should not be desirable for anyone. This paper results from a process of coming to see that some of the power which I originally saw as attendant on being a human being in the U.S. consisted in unearned advantage and conferred dominance, as well as other kinds of special circumstance not universally taken for granted.

In writing this paper I have also realized that white identity and status (as well as class identity and status) give me considerable power to choose whether to broach this subject and its trouble. I can pretty well decide whether to disappear and avoid and not listen and escape the dislike I may engender in other people through this essay, or interrupt, take over, dominate, preach, direct, criticize, or control to some extent what goes on in reaction to it. Being white, I am given considerable power to escape many kinds of danger or penalty as well as to choose which risks I want to take.

There is an analogy here, once again, with Women's Studies. Our male colleagues do not have a great deal to lose in supporting Women's Studies, but they do not have a great deal to lose if they oppose it either. They simply have the power to decide whether to commit themselves to more



equitable distributions of power. They will probably feel few penalties whatever choice they make; they do not seem, in any obvious short-term sense, the ones at risk, though they and we are all at risk because of the behaviors which have been rewarded in them.

Through Women's Studies work I have met very few men who are truly distressed about systemic, unearned male advantage and conferred dominance. And so one question for me and others like me is whether we will be like them, or whether we will get truly distressed, even outraged, about unearned race advantage and conferred dominance and if so, what we will do to lessen them. In any case, we need to do more work in identifying how they actually affect our daily lives. We need more down-to-earth writing by people about these taboo subjects. We need more understanding of the ways in which white "privilege" damages white people, for these are not the same ways in which it damages the victimized. Skewed white psyches are an inseparable part of the picture, though I do not want to confuse the kinds of damage done to the holders of special assets and to those who suffer the deficits. Many, perhaps most, of our white students in the U.S. think that racism doesn't affect them because they are not people of color; they do not see "whiteness" as a racial identity. Many men likewise think that Women's Studies does not bear on their own existences because they are not female; they do not see themselves as having gendered identities. Insisting on the universal effects of "privilege" systems, then, becomes one of our chief tasks, and being more explicit about the particular effects in particular contexts is another. Men need to join us in this work.

In addition, since race and sex are not the only advantaging systems

at work, we need to similarly examine the daily experience of having age advantage, or ethnic advantage, or physical ability, or advantage related to nationality, religion, or sexual orientation. Prof. Marnie Evans suggested to me that in many ways the list I made also applies directly to heterosexual privilege. This is a still more taboo subject than race privilege: the daily ways in which heterosexual privilege makes married persons comfortable or powerful, providing supports, assets, approvals, and rewards to those who live or expect to live in heterosexual pairs. Unpacking that content is still more difficult, owing to the deeper imbeddedness of heterosexual advantage and dominance, and stricter taboos surrounding these.

But to start such an analysis I would put this observation from my own experience: The fact that I live under the same roof with a man triggers all kinds of societal assumptions about my worth, politics, life, and values, and triggers a host of unearned advantages and powers. After recasting many elements from the original list I would add further observations like these:

1. My children do not have to answer questions about why I live with my partner (my husband).
2. I have no difficulty finding neighborhoods where people approve of our household.
3. My children are given texts and classes which implicitly support our kind of family unit, and do not turn them against my choice of domestic partnership.
4. I can travel alone or with my husband without expecting embarrassment

or hostility in those who deal with us.

5. Most people I meet will see my marital arrangements as an asset to my life or as a favorable comment on my likability, my competence, or my mental health.

6. I can talk about the social events of a weekend without fearing most listeners' reactions.

7. I will feel welcomed and "normal" in the usual walks of public life, institutional, and social.

8. In many contexts, I am seen as "all right" in daily work on women because I do not live chiefly with women.

Difficulties and dangers surrounding the task of finding parallels are many. Since racism, sexism, and heterosexism are not the same, the advantaging associated with them should not be seen as the same. In addition, it is hard to disentangle aspects of unearned advantage which rest more on social class, economic class, race, religion, sex and ethnic identity than on other factors. Still, all of the oppressions are interlocking, as the Combahee River Collective statement of 1977 continues to remind us eloquently.<sup>3</sup>

One factor seems clear about all of the interlocking oppressions. They take both active forms which we can see and embedded forms which as a member of the dominant group one is taught not to see. In my class and place, I did not see myself as racist because I was taught to recognize

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<sup>3</sup>. "A Black Feminist Statement," The Combahee River Collective, pp. 13-22 in Hull, Scott, Smith, eds., All the Women Are White. All the Blacks Are Men. But Some of Us Are Brave: Black Women's Studies. The Feminist Press, 1982.

racism only in individual acts of meanness by members of my group, never in invisible systems conferring unsought racial dominance on my group from birth. Likewise, we are taught to think that sexism or heterosexism is carried on only through individual acts of discrimination, meanness, or cruelty toward women, gays, and lesbians, rather than in invisible systems conferring unsought dominance on certain groups. Disapproving of the systems won't be enough to change them. I was taught to think that racism could end if white individuals changed their attitudes; many men think sexism can be ended by individual changes in daily behavior toward women. But a man's sex provides advantage for him whether or not he approves of the way in which dominance has been conferred on his group. A "white" skin in the United States opens many doors for whites whether or not we approve of the way dominance has been conferred on us. Individual acts can palliate, but cannot end, these problems. To redesign social systems we need first to acknowledge their colossal unseen dimensions. The silences and denials surrounding privilege are the key political tool here. They keep the thinking about equality or equity incomplete, protecting unearned advantage and conferred dominance by making these taboo subjects. Most talk by whites about equal opportunity seems to me now to be about equal opportunity to try to get into a position of dominance while denying that systems of dominance exist.

It seems to me that obliviousness about white advantage, like obliviousness about male advantage, is kept strongly inculturated in the United States so as to maintain the myth of meritocracy, the myth that democratic choice is equally available to all. Keeping most people unaware that freedom of confident action is there for just a small number

of people props up those in power, and serves to keep power in the hands of the same groups that have most of it already. Though systemic change takes many decades, there are pressing questions for me and I imagine for some others like me if we raise our daily consciousness on the perquisites of being light-skinned. What will we do with such knowledge? As we know from watching men, it is an open question whether we will choose to use unearned advantage to weaken hidden systems of advantage, and whether we will use any of our arbitrarily-awarded power to try to reconstruct power systems on a broader base.

I have appreciated commentary on this paper from the Working Papers Committee of the Wellesley College Center for Research on Women, from members of the Dodge seminar, and from many individuals, including Margaret Andersen, Sorel Berman, Joanne Braxton, Johnnella Butler, Sandra Dickerson, Marnie Evans, Beverly Guy-Sheftall, Sandra Harding, Eleanor Hinton Hoytt, Pauline Houston, Paul Lauter, Joyce Miller, Mary Norris, Gloria Oden, Beverly Smith, and John Walter.

hard to give up anything once the system is working for you." Yes. But also there are rewards for making good on what we say are our ideals. Within your life circumstances, how can those of you who are reading these questions use power to share power, or use privilege to dismantle privilege systems? Is it possible to arrive at some two or three ways in which each, or all, can see, speak, or act in such ways? and involve their institutions in doing so?

Can Caucasian people understand that so-called privilege can be a deficit status? I have a black friend who said to me once, "I wouldn't want to be white if you paid me five million dollars." Can whites learn to understand that they are not "models"?

Can white Americans learn that their versions of things are not international models? One listener has suggested that we should make lists like this about "the ugly American," living off unearned colonizers' power. We are not the only ones who do this, nor do we do it in all situations, but the comparison is valid.

Many groups traditionally committed to "service" have requested permission to use this paper: church groups, the Junior League, and the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom. Church councils include Episcopal, Quaker, Unitarian-Universalist, and Lutheran. I think certain white people who had thought of themselves as "good" are able to be more reflective about the conditions surrounding their apparent virtue if they look at this kind of list.

But also the list has been useful to black students in the classes of Prof. Beverly Guy-Sheftall, who uses the paper in a sophomore course, at traditionally black Spelman College in Atlanta, Georgia. Dr. Sheftall reports that paradoxically, discussion of the points on my list brings many black students to their first understanding of what their parents and grandparents had been talking about as "institutionalized racism." Many of these students entered Spelman College saying, as so many 17 year-old white female students say, "I've never been discriminated against."

This account and analysis of privilege, then, is useful both for those whose groups have been given permission to dominate, and those whose groups have not been given such permission.

I would welcome responses and further comment from readers of this paper.

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# Race and the Schooling of Black Americans

MORE THAN HALF OF BLACK COLLEGE STUDENTS FAIL TO COMPLETE THEIR DEGREE WORK—FOR REASONS THAT HAVE LITTLE TO DO WITH INNATE ABILITY OR ENVIRONMENTAL CONDITIONING. THE PROBLEM, A SOCIAL PSYCHOLOGIST ARGUES, IS THAT THEY ARE UNDERVALUED, IN WAYS THAT ARE SOMETIMES SUBTLE AND SOMETIMES NOT

*By Claude M. Steele*

My former university offered minority students a faculty mentor to help shepherd them into college life. As soon as I learned of the program, I volunteered to be a mentor, but by then the school year was nearly over. Undaunted, the program's eager staff matched me with a student on their waiting list—an appealing nineteen-year-old black woman from Detroit, the same age as my daughter. We met finally in a campus lunch spot just about two weeks before the close of her freshman year. I realized quickly that I was too late. I have heard that the best way to diagnose someone's depression is to note how depressed you feel when you leave the person. When our lunch was over, I felt as gray as the snowbanks that often lined the path back to my office. My lunchtime companion was a statistic brought to life, a living example of one of the most disturbing facts of racial life in America today: the failure of so many black Americans to thrive in school. Before I could lift a hand to help this student, she had decided to do what 70 percent of all black Americans at four-year colleges do at some point in their academic careers—drop out.

I sense a certain caving-in of hope in America that problems of race can be solved. Since the sixties, when race relations held promise for the dawning of a new era, the issue has become one whose persistence causes "problem fatigue"—resignation to an unwanted condition of life.

This fatigue, I suspect, deadens us to the deepening crisis in the education of black Americans. One can enter any desegregated school in America, from grammar school to high school to graduate or professional school, and meet a persistent reality: blacks and whites in largely separate worlds. And if one asks a few questions or looks at a few records, another reality emerges: these worlds are not equal, either in the education taking place there or in the achievement of the students who occupy them.

As a social scientist, I know that the crisis has enough possible causes to give anyone problem fatigue.

But at a personal level, perhaps because of my experience as a black in American schools, or perhaps just as the hunch of a myopic psychologist, I have long suspected a particular culprit—a culprit that can undermine black achievement as effectively as a lock on a schoolhouse door. The culprit I see is stigma, the endemic devaluation many blacks face in our society and schools. This status is its own condition of life, different from class, money, culture. It is capable, in the words of the late sociologist Erving Goffman, of "breaking the claim" that one's human attributes have on people. I believe that its connection to school achievement among black Americans has been vastly underappreciated.

This is a troublesome argument, touching as it does on a still unhealed part of American race relations. But it leads us to a heartening principle: if blacks are made less racially vulnerable in school, they can overcome even substantial obstacles. Before the good news, though, I must at least sketch in the bad: the worsening crisis in the education of black Americans.

Despite their socioeconomic disadvantages as a group, blacks begin school with test scores that are fairly close to the test scores of whites their age. The longer they stay in school, however, the more they fall behind; for example, by the sixth grade blacks in many school districts are two full grade levels behind whites in achievement. This pattern holds true in the middle class nearly as much as in the lower class. The record does not improve in high school. In 1980, for example, 25,500 minority students, largely black and Hispanic, entered high school in Chicago. Four years later only 9,500 graduated, and of those only 2,000 could read at grade level. The situation in other cities is comparable.

Even for blacks who make it to college, the problem doesn't go away. As I noted, 70 percent of all black students who enroll in four-year colleges drop out at some point, as compared with 45 percent of whites. At any given time nearly as many black males are incarcerated as are in college in this country. And the grades of black college students average half a letter below those of their white classmates. At one prestigious university I recently studied, only 18 percent of the graduating black students had grade averages of B or above, as compared with 64 percent of the whites. This pattern is the rule, not the exception, in even the most elite American colleges. Tragically, low grades can render a degree essentially "terminal" in the sense that they preclude further schooling.

Blacks in graduate and professional schools face a similarly worsening or stagnating fate. For example, from 1977 to 1990, though the number of Ph.D.s awarded to other minorities increased and the number awarded to whites stayed roughly the same, the number awarded to American blacks dropped from 1,116 to 828. And blacks needed more time to get those degrees.

Standing ready is a familiar set of explanations. First is societal disadvantage. Black Americans have had, and continue to have, more than their share: a history of slavery, segregation, and job ceilings; continued lack of economic opportunity; poor schools; and the related problems of broken families, drug-infested communities, and social isolation. Any of these factors—alone, in combination, or through accumulated effects—can undermine school achievement. Some analysts point also to black American culture, suggesting that, hampered by disadvantage, it doesn't sustain the values and expectations critical to education, or that it fosters learning orientations ill suited to school achievement, or that it even "opposes" mainstream achievement. These are the chestnuts, and I had always thought them adequate. Then several facts emerged that just didn't seem to fit.



For one thing, the achievement deficits occur even when black students suffer no major financial disadvantage—among middle-class students on wealthy college campuses and in graduate school among black students receiving substantial financial aid. For another thing, survey after survey shows that even poor black Americans value education highly, often more than whites. Also, as I will demonstrate, several programs have improved black school achievement without addressing culturally specific learning orientations or doing anything to remedy socioeconomic disadvantage.

Neither is the problem fully explained, as one might assume, by deficits in skill or preparation which blacks might suffer because of background disadvantages. I first doubted that such a connection existed when I saw flunk-out rates for black and white students at a large, prestigious university. Two observations surprised me. First, for both blacks and whites the level of preparation, as measured by Scholastic Aptitude Test scores, didn't make much difference in who flunked out; low scorers (with combined verbal and quantitative SATs of 800) were no more likely to flunk out than high scorers (with combined SATs of 1,200 to 1,500). The second observation was racial: whereas only two percent to 11 percent of the whites flunked out, 18 percent to 33 percent of the blacks flunked out, even at the highest levels of preparation (combined SATs of 1,400). Dinesh D'Souza has argued recently that college affirmative-action programs cause failure and high dropout rates among black students by recruiting them to levels of college work for which they are inadequately prepared. That was clearly not the case at this school; black students flunked out in large numbers even with preparation well above average.

And, sadly, this proved the rule, not the exception. From elementary school to graduate school, something depresses black achievement at every level of preparation, even the highest. Generally, of course, the better prepared achieve better than the less prepared, and this is about as true for blacks as for whites. But given any level of school preparation (as measured by tests and earlier grades), blacks somehow achieve less in subsequent schooling than whites (that is, have poorer grades, have lower graduation rates, and take longer to graduate), no matter how strong that preparation is. Put differently, the same achievement level requires better preparation for blacks than for whites—far better: among students with a C+ average at the university I just described, the mean American College Testing Program (ACT) score for blacks was at the 98th percentile, while for whites it was at only the 34th percentile. This pattern has been documented so broadly across so many regions of the country, and by so many investigations (literally hundreds), that it is virtually a social law in this society—as well as a racial tragedy.

Clearly; something is missing from our understanding of black underachievement. Disadvantage contributes, yet blacks underachieve even when they have ample resources, strongly value education, and are prepared better than adequately in terms of knowledge and skills. Something else has to be involved. That something else could be of just modest importance—a barrier that simply adds its effect to that of other disadvantages—or it could be pivotal, such that were it corrected, other disadvantages would lose their effect.

That something else, I believe, has to do with the process of identifying with school. I offer a personal example:

I remember conducting experiments with my research adviser early in graduate school and awaiting

the results with only modest interest. I struggled to meet deadlines. The research enterprise—the core of what one does as a social psychologist—just wasn't ME yet. I was in school for other reasons—I wanted an advanced degree, I was vaguely ambitious for intellectual work, and being in graduate school made my parents proud of me. But as time passed, I began to like the work. I also began to grasp the value system that gave it meaning, and the faculty treated me as if they thought I might even be able to do it. Gradually I began to think of myself as a social psychologist. With this change in self-concept came a new accountability; my self-esteem was affected now by what I did as a social psychologist, something that hadn't been true before. This added a new motivation to my work; self-respect, not just parental respect, was on the line. I noticed changes in myself. I worked without deadlines. I bored friends with applications of arcane theory to their daily lives. I went to conventions. I lived and died over how experiments came out.

Before this transition one might have said that I was handicapped by my black working-class background and lack of motivation. After the transition the same observer might say that even though my background was working-class, I had special advantages: achievement-oriented parents, a small and attentive college. But these facts alone would miss the importance of the identification process I had experienced: the change in self-definition and in the activities on which I based my self-esteem. They would also miss a simple condition necessary for me to make this identification: treatment as a valued person with good prospects.

I believe that the "something else" at the root of black achievement problems is the failure of American schooling to meet this simple condition for many of its black students. Doing well in school requires a belief that school achievement can be a promising basis of self-esteem, and that belief needs constant reaffirmation even for advantaged students. Tragically, I believe, the lives of black Americans are still haunted by a specter that threatens this belief and the identification that derives from it at every level of schooling.

### **THE SPECTER OF STIGMA AND RACIAL VULNERABILITY**

I have a good friend, the mother of three, who spends considerable time in the public school classrooms of Seattle, where she lives. In her son's third-grade room, managed by a teacher of unimpeachable good will and competence, she noticed over many visits that the extraordinary art work of a small black boy named Jerome was ignored—or, more accurately perhaps, its significance was ignored. As genuine art talent has a way of doing—even in the third grade—his stood out. Yet the teacher seemed hardly to notice. Moreover, Jerome's reputation, as it was passed along from one grade to the next, included only the slightest mention of his talent. Now, of course, being ignored like this could happen to anyone—such is the overload in our public schools. But my friend couldn't help wondering how the school would have responded to this talent had the artist been one of her own, middle-class white children.

Terms like "prejudice" and "racism" often miss the full scope of racial devaluation in our society, implying as they do that racial devaluation comes primarily from the strongly prejudiced, not from "good people" like Jerome's teacher. But the prevalence of racists—deplorable though racism is—misses the full extent of Jerome's burden, perhaps even the most profound part.

He faces a devaluation that grows out of our images of society and the way those images catalogue

people. The catalogue need never be taught. It is implied by all we see around us: the kinds of people revered in advertising (consider the unrelenting racial advocacy of Ralph Lauren ads) and movies (black women are rarely seen as romantic partners, for example); media discussions of whether a black can be President; invitation lists to junior high school birthday parties; school curricula; literary and musical canons. These details create an image of society in which black Americans simply do not fare well. When I was a kid, we captured it with the saying "If you're white you're right, if you're yellow you're mellow, if you're brown stick around, but if you're black get back."

In ways that require no fueling from strong prejudice or stereotypes, these images expand the devaluation of black Americans. They act as mental standards against which information about blacks is evaluated: that which fits these images we accept; that which contradicts them we suspect. Had Jerome had a reading problem, which fits these images, it might have been accepted as characteristic more readily than his extraordinary art work, which contradicts them.

These images do something else as well, something especially pernicious in the classroom. They set up a jeopardy of double devaluation for blacks, a jeopardy that does not apply to whites. Like anyone, blacks risk devaluation for a particular incompetence, such as a failed test or a flubbed pronunciation. But they further risk that such performances will confirm the broader, racial inferiority they are suspected of. Thus, from the first grade through graduate school, blacks have the extra fear that in the eyes of those around them their full humanity could fall with a poor answer or a mistaken stroke of the pen.

Moreover, because these images are conditioned in all of us, collectively held, they can spawn racial devaluation in all of us, not just in the strongly prejudiced. They can do this even in blacks themselves: a majority of black children recently tested said they like and prefer to play with white rather than black dolls—almost fifty years after Kenneth and Mamie Clark, conducting similar experiments, documented identical findings and so paved the way for *Brown v. Topeka Board of Education*. Thus Jerome's devaluation can come from a circle of people in his world far greater than the expressly prejudiced—a circle that apparently includes his teacher.

In ways often too subtle to be conscious but sometimes overt, I believe, blacks remain devalued in American schools, where, for example, a recent national survey shows that through high school they are still more than twice as likely as white children to receive corporal punishment, be suspended from school, or be labeled mentally retarded.

Tragically, such devaluation can seem inescapable. Sooner or later it forces on its victims two painful realizations. The first is that society is preconditioned to see the worst in them. Black students quickly learn that acceptance, if it is to be won at all, will be hard-won. The second is that even if a black student achieves exoneration in one setting—with the teacher and fellow students in one classroom, or at one level of schooling, for example—this approval will have to be rewon in the next classroom, at the next level of schooling. Of course, individual characteristics that enhance one's value in society—skills, class status, appearance, and success—can diminish the racial devaluation one faces. And sometimes the effort to prove oneself fuels achievement. But few from any group could hope to sustain so daunting and everlasting a struggle. Thus, I am afraid, too many black students are left hopeless and deeply vulnerable in America's classrooms.

## "DISIDENTIFYING" WITH SCHOOL

I believe that in significant part the crisis in black Americans' education stems from the power of this vulnerability to undercut identification with schooling, either before it happens or after it has bloomed.

Jerome is an example of the first kind. At precisely the time when he would need to see school as a viable source of self-esteem, his teachers fail to appreciate his best work. The devalued status of his race devalues him and his work in the classroom. Unable to entrust his sense of himself to this place, he resists measuring himself against its values and goals. He languishes there, held by the law, perhaps even by his parents, but not allowing achievement to affect his view of himself. This psychic alienation—the act of not caring—makes him less vulnerable to the specter of devaluation that haunts him. Bruce Hare, an educational researcher, has documented this process among fifth-grade boys in several schools in Champaign, Illinois. He found that although the black boys had considerably lower achievement-test scores than their white classmates, their overall self-esteem was just as high. This stunning imperviousness to poor academic performance was accomplished, he found, by their de-emphasizing school achievement as a basis of self-esteem and giving preference to peer-group relations—a domain in which their esteem prospects were better. They went where they had to go to feel good about themselves.

But recall the young student whose mentor I was. She had already identified with school, and wanted to be a doctor. How can racial vulnerability break so developed an achievement identity? To see, let us follow her steps onto campus: Her recruitment and admission stress her minority status perhaps more strongly than it has been stressed at any other time in her life. She is offered academic and social support services, further implying that she is "at risk" (even though, contrary to common belief, the vast majority of black college students are admitted with qualifications well above the threshold for whites). Once on campus, she enters a socially circumscribed world in which blacks—still largely separate from whites—have lower status; this is reinforced by a sidelining of minority material and interests in the curriculum and in university life. And she can sense that everywhere in this new world her skin color places her under suspicion of intellectual inferiority. All of this gives her the double vulnerability I spoke of: she risks confirming a particular incompetence, at chemistry or a foreign language, for example; but she also risks confirming the racial inferiority she is suspected of—a judgment that can feel as close at hand as a mispronounced word or an ungrammatical sentence. In reaction, usually to some modest setbacks she withdraws, hiding her troubles from instructors, counselors, even other students. Quickly, I believe, a psychic defense takes over. She disidentifies with achievement; she changes her self-conception, her outlook and values, so that achievement is no longer so important to her self-esteem. She may continue to feel pressure to stay in school—from her parents, even from the potential advantages of a college degree. But now she is psychologically insulated from her academic life, like a disinterested visitor. Cool, unperturbed. But, like a painkilling drug, disidentification undoes her future as it relieves her vulnerability.

The prevalence of this syndrome among black college students has been documented extensively, especially on predominantly white campuses. Summarizing this work, Jacqueline Fleming, a psychologist, writes, "The fact that black students must matriculate in an atmosphere that feels hostile arouses defensive reactions that interfere with intellectual performance....They display academic demotivation and think less of their abilities. They profess losses of energy." Among a sample of blacks

on one predominantly white campus, Richard Nisbett and Andrew Reaves, both psychologists, and I found that attitudes related to disidentification were more strongly predictive of grades than even academic preparation (that is, SATs and high school grades).

To make matters worse, once disidentification occurs in a school, it can spread like the common cold. Blacks who identify and try to achieve embarrass the strategy by valuing the very thing the strategy denies the value of. Thus pressure to make it a group norm can evolve quickly and become fierce. Defectors are called "oreos" or "incognegroes." One's identity as an authentic black is held hostage, made incompatible with school identification. For black students, then, pressure to disidentify with school can come from the already demoralized as well as from racial vulnerability in the setting.

Stigmatization of the sort suffered by black Americans is probably also a barrier to the school achievement of other groups in our society, such as lower-class whites, Hispanics, and women in male-dominated fields. For example, at a large midwestern university I studied, women match men's achievement in the liberal arts, where they suffer no marked stigma, but underachieve compared with men (get lower grades than men with the same ACT scores) in engineering and premedical programs, where they, like blacks across the board, are more vulnerable to suspicions of inferiority.

### **"WISE" SCHOOLING**

"When they approach me they see...everything and anything except me....[this] invisibility...occurs because of a peculiar disposition of the eyes...."

—Ralph Ellison, *Invisible Man*

Erving Goffman, borrowing from Gays of the 1950s, used the term "wise" to describe people who don't themselves bear the stigma of a given group but who are accepted by the group. These are people in whose eyes the full humanity of the stigmatized is visible, people in whose eyes they feel less vulnerable. If racial vulnerability undermines black school achievement, as I have argued, then this achievement should improve significantly if schooling is made "wise"—that is, made to see value and promise in black students and to act accordingly.

And yet, although racial vulnerability at school may undermine black achievement, so many other factors seem to contribute—from the debilitations of poverty to the alleged dysfunctions of black American culture—that one might expect "wiseness" in the classroom to be of little help. Fortunately, we have considerable evidence to the contrary. Wise schooling may indeed be the missing key to the schoolhouse door.

In the mid-seventies black students in Philip Uri Treisman's early calculus courses at the University of California at Berkeley consistently fell to the bottom of every class. To help, Treisman developed the Mathematics Workshop Program, which, in a surprisingly short time, reversed their fortunes, causing them to outperform their white and Asian counterparts. And although it is only a freshman program, black students who take it graduate at a rate comparable to the Berkeley average. Its central technique is group study of calculus concepts. But it is also wise; it does things that allay the racial vulnerabilities of these students. Stressing their potential to learn, it recruits them to a challenging "honors" workshop tied to their first calculus course. Building on their skills, the workshop gives difficult work, often beyond course content, to students with even modest preparation (some of their math SATs dip

to the 300s). Working together, students soon understand that everyone knows something and nobody knows everything, and learning is speeded through shared understanding. The wisdom of these tactics is their subtext message: "You are valued in this program because of your academic potential—regardless of your current skill level. You have no more to fear than the next person, and since the work is difficult, success is a credit to your ability, and a setback is a reflection only of the challenge." The black students' double vulnerability around failure—the fear that they lack ability, and the dread that they will be devalued—is thus reduced. They can relax and achieve. The movie *Stand and Deliver* depicts Jaime Escalante using the same techniques of assurance and challenge to inspire advanced calculus performance in East Los Angeles Chicano high schoolers. And, explaining Xavier University's extraordinary success in producing black medical students, a spokesman said recently, "What doesn't work is saying, 'You need remedial work.' What does work is saying, 'You may be somewhat behind at this time but you're a talented person. We're going to help you advance at an accelerated rate.'"

The work of James Comer, a child psychiatrist at Yale, suggests that wiseness can minimize even the barriers of poverty. Over a fifteen-year period he transformed the two worst elementary schools in New Haven, Connecticut, into the third and fifth best in the city's thirty-three-school system without any change in the type of students—largely poor and black. His guiding belief is that learning requires a strongly accepting relationship between teacher and student. "After all," he notes, "what is the difference between scribble and a letter of the alphabet to a child? The only reason the letter is meaningful, and worth learning and remembering, is because a MEANINGFUL other wants him or her to learn and remember it." To build these relationships Comer focuses on the overall school climate, shaping it not so much to transmit specific skills, or to achieve order per se, or even to improve achievement, as to establish a valuing and optimistic atmosphere in which a child can—to use his term—"identify" with learning. Responsibility for this lies with a team of ten to fifteen members, headed by the principal and made up of teachers, parents, school staff, and child-development experts (for example, psychologists or special-education teachers). The team develops a plan of specifics: teacher training, parent workshops, coordination of information about students. But at base I believe it tries to ensure that the students—vulnerable on so many counts—get treated essentially like middle-class students, with conviction about their value and promise. As this happens, their vulnerability diminishes, and with it the companion defenses of disidentification and misconduct. They achieve, and apparently identify, as their achievement gains persist into high school. Comer's genius, I believe, is to have recognized the importance of these vulnerabilities as barriers to INTELLECTUAL development, and the corollary that schools hoping to educate such students must learn first how to make them feel valued.

These are not isolated successes. Comparable results were observed, for example, in a Comer-type program in Maryland's Prince Georges County, in the Stanford economist Henry Levin's accelerated-schools program, and in Harlem's Central Park East Elementary School, under the principalship of Deborah Meier. And research involving hundreds of programs and schools points to the same conclusion: black achievement is consistently linked to conditions of schooling that reduce racial vulnerability. These include relatively harmonious race relations among students; a commitment by teachers and schools to seeing minority-group members achieve; the instructional goal that students at all levels of preparation achieve; desegregation at the classroom as well as the school level; and a de-emphasis on ability tracking.

That erasing stigma improves black achievement is perhaps the strongest evidence that stigma is what depresses it in the first place. This is no happy realization. But it lets in a ray of hope: whatever other factors also depress black achievement—poverty, social isolation, poor preparation—they may be substantially overcome in a schooling atmosphere that reduces racial and other vulnerabilities, not through unrelenting niceness or ferocious regimentation but by wisdom, by seeing value and acting on it.

## **WHAT MAKES SCHOOLING UNWISE**

But is wise schooling is so attainable, why is racial vulnerability the rule, not the exception, in American schooling?

One factor is the basic assimilationist offer that schools make to blacks: You can be valued and rewarded in school (and society), the schools say to these students, but you must first master the culture and ways of the American mainstream, and since that mainstream (as it is represented) is essentially white, this means you must give up many particulars of being black—styles of speech and appearance, value priorities, preferences—at least in mainstream settings. This is asking a lot. But it has been the "color-blind" offer to every immigrant and minority group in our nation's history, the core of the melting-pot ideal, and so I think it strikes most of us as fair. Yet non-immigrant minorities like blacks and Native Americans have always been here, and thus are entitled, more than new immigrants, to participate in the defining images of the society projected in school. More important, their exclusion from these images denies their contributive history and presence in society. Thus, whereas immigrants can tilt toward assimilation in pursuit of the opportunities for which they came, American blacks may find it harder to assimilate. For them, the offer of acceptance in return for assimilation carries a primal insult: it asks them to join in something that has made them invisible.

Now, I must be clear. This is not a criticism of Western civilization. My concern is an omission of image-work. In his incisive essay "What America Would Be Like Without Blacks," Ralph Ellison showed black influence on American speech and language, the themes of our finest literature, and our most defining ideals of personal freedom and democracy. In *The World They Made Together*, Mechal Sobel described how African and European influences shaped the early American South in everything from housing design and land use to religious expression. The fact is that blacks are not outside the American mainstream but, in Ellison's words, have always been "one of its major tributaries." Yet if one relied on what is taught in America's schools, one would never know this. There blacks have fallen victim to a collective self-deception, a society's allowing itself to assimilate like mad from its constituent groups while representing itself to itself as if the assimilation had never happened, as if progress and good were almost exclusively Western and white. A prime influence of American society on world culture is the music of black Americans, shaping art forms from rock-and-roll to modern dance. Yet in American schools, from kindergarten through graduate school, these essentially black influences have barely peripheral status, are largely outside the canon. Thus it is not what is taught but what is not taught, what teachers and professors have never learned the value of, that reinforces a fundamental unwisdom in American schooling, and keeps black disidentification on full boil.

Deep in the psyche of American educators is a presumption that black students need academic remediation, or extra time with elemental curricula to overcome background deficits. This orientation

guides many efforts to close the achievement gap—from grammar school tutoring to college academic-support programs—but I fear it can be unwise. Bruno Bettelheim and Karen Zelan's article "Why Children Don't Like to Read" comes to mind: apparently to satisfy the changing sensibilities of local school boards over this century, many books that children like were dropped from school reading lists; when children's reading scores also dropped, the approved texts were replaced by simpler books; and when reading scores dropped again, these were replaced by even simpler books, until eventually the children could hardly read at all, not because the material was too difficult but because they were bored stiff. So it goes, I suspect, with a great many of these remediation efforts. Moreover, because so many such programs target blacks primarily, they virtually equate black identity with substandard intellectual status, amplifying racial vulnerability. They can even undermine students' ability to gain confidence from their achievement, by sharing credit for their successes while implying that their failures stem from inadequacies beyond the reach of remediation.

The psychologist Lisa Brown and I recently uncovered evidence of just how damaging this orientation may be. At a large, prestigious university we found that whereas the grades of black graduates of the 1950s improved during the students' college years until they virtually matched the school average, those of blacks who graduated in the 1980s (we chose only those with above-average entry credentials, to correct for more-liberal admissions policies in that decade) worsened, ending up considerably below the school average. The 1950s graduates faced outward discrimination in everything from housing to the classroom, whereas the 1980s graduates were supported by a phalanx of help programs. Many things may contribute to this pattern. The Jackie Robinson, "pioneer" spirit of the 1950s blacks surely helped them endure. And in a pre-affirmative-action era, they may have been seen as intellectually more deserving. But one cannot ignore the distinctive fate of 1980s blacks: a remedial orientation put their abilities under suspicion, deflected their ambitions, distanced them from their successes, and painted them with their failures. Black students on today's campuses may experience far less overt prejudice than their 1950s counterparts but, ironically, may be more racially vulnerable.

### **THE ELEMENTS OF WISENESS**

For too many black students school is simply the place where, more concertedly, persistently, and authoritatively than anywhere else in society, they learn how little valued they are.

Clearly, no simple recipe can fix this, but I believe we now understand the basics of a corrective approach. Schooling must focus more on reducing the vulnerabilities that block identification with achievement. I believe that four conditions, like the legs of a stool, are fundamental.

\* If what is meaningful and important to a teacher is to become meaningful and important to a student, the student must feel valued by the teacher for his or her potential and as a person. Among the more fortunate in society, this relationship is often taken for granted. But it is precisely the relationship that race can still undermine in American society. As Comer, Escalante, and Treisman have shown, when one's students bear race and class vulnerabilities, building this relationship is the first order of business—at all levels of schooling. No tactic of instruction, no matter how ingenious, can succeed without it.

\* The challenge and the promise of personal fulfillment, not remediation (under whatever guise), should guide the education of these students. Their present skills should be taken into account, and



they should be moved along at a pace that is demanding but doesn't defeat them. Their ambitions should never be scaled down but should instead be guided to inspiring goals even when extraordinary dedication is called for. Frustration will be less crippling than alienation. Here psychology is everything: remediation defeats, challenge strengthens—affirming their potential, crediting them with their achievements, inspiring them.

But the first condition, I believe, cannot work without the second, and vice versa. A valuing teacher-student relationship goes nowhere without challenge, and challenge will always be resisted outside a valuing relationship. (Again, I must be careful about something: in criticizing remediation I am not opposing affirmative-action recruitment in the schools. The success of this policy, like that of school integration before it, depends, I believe, on the tactics of implementation. Where students are valued and challenged, they generally succeed.)

\* Racial integration is a generally useful element in this design, if not a necessity. Segregation, whatever its purpose, draws out group differences and makes people feel more vulnerable when they inevitably cross group lines to compete in the larger society. This vulnerability, I fear, can override confidence gained in segregated schooling unless that confidence is based on strongly competitive skills and knowledge—something that segregated schooling, plagued by shortages of resources and access, has difficulty producing.

\* The particulars of black life and culture—art, literature, political and social perspective, music—must be presented in the mainstream curriculum of American schooling, not consigned to special days, weeks, or even months of the year, or to special-topic courses and programs aimed essentially at blacks. Such channeling carries the disturbing message that the material is not of general value. And this does two terrible things: it wastes the power of this material to alter our images of the American mainstream—continuing to frustrate black identification with it—and it excuses in whites and others a huge ignorance of their own society. The true test of democracy, Ralph Ellison has said, "is...the inclusion—not assimilation—of the black man."

Finally, if I might be allowed a word specifically to black parents, one issue is even more immediate: our children may drop out of school before the first committee meets to accelerate the curriculum. Thus, although we, along with all Americans, must strive constantly for wise schooling, I believe we cannot wait for it. We cannot yet forget our essentially heroic challenge: to foster in our children a sense of hope and entitlement to mainstream American life and schooling, even when it devalues them.

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## **What are Some of the Advantages of the Lecture Method of Teaching?**

1. The teacher controls the topic, aims, content, organization, sequence, and rate. Emphasis can be placed where the teacher desires.
2. The lecture can be used to motivate and increase interest, to clarify and explain, to expand and bring in information not available to the students, and to review.
3. The number of students listening to the lecturer isn't important.
4. Students can interrupt for clarification or more detail.
5. The lecture can be taped, filmed, or printed for future use.
6. Other media and demonstrations can be easily combined with the lecture.
7. The lecture can be easily revised and updated.
8. The teacher can serve as a model in showing how to deal with issues and problems.
9. Students are used to the lecture method.

## **What are Some of the Disadvantages of the Lecture Method?**

1. Some of the students may already know the content of the lecture while some may not be ready for the lecture.
2. Lectures are group paced.
3. It is difficult to maintain student interest and attention for a full hour of lecture.
4. The communication is mostly one-way communication from the teacher to her students. Usually there is little student participation. The students who do participate are few in number and tend to be the same students each class.
5. Most students have not learned to take good notes.
6. Lecture information is forgotten quickly, during and after the lecture.
7. There is no immediate and direct check of whether learning has taken place.
8. Lectures are not effective when teaching thinking objectives.
9. The lecture method encourages student dependence on the teacher.
10. Few teachers have been taught how to lecture effectively.
11. Students are not very active when only listening.

## The Conversation

6 July 2012, 1.06pm AEST

# A lecture on the art of lecturing: A how-to guide to teaching young people



**Rohan Price**  
Lecturer at University of Tasmania

Narcissistic, lazy, and overly confident – this is the way some see the new generation of young people starting to go to our universities.

According to teacher Lynn Van Der Wagan, who sparked an online debate recently with this article, members of "Generation I" form strong opinions without enough knowledge and are reluctant to work. Reactions to her article – mostly in agreement – came in thick and fast.



Students from the next generation are heading to university, how should we teach them? Flickr/iwouldstay

As I take an interest in who will be next in my class, Van Der Wagan's provocation has prompted a few thoughts of my own on how to approach teaching this new generation.

## A new breed

Be assured, I do not see the current crop of Australian tertiary students through rose-tinted glasses. But I am certain that "young people these days" do make their teachers better.

While some students may expect effusive praise, they usually get prompt feedback. While some may wish to give their opinion unchallenged, they do get corrective engagement which all the class can learn from. In expecting respect and responsiveness "young people these days" have put the onus on their lecturers to do a half-decent job.

I would hope that tertiary students are not shamed or discouraged by their lecturers during their studies. But that they do not always feel happy as learners is not necessarily cause for concern; this is often a sign that learning is happening.

## Shameful learning

Everyone seems to remember the 1990s as the time when political correctness reached its zenith in universities. But the shaming of students that used to go on in those days seems unbelievable to me now.

When I was an undergraduate student in the early 1990s, I was in a tutorial where after five minutes of silence a student summoned courage to make a point. The lecturer instead of encouraging the student or making a constructive comment, just told the student that what he

had said was "absolute rubbish."



Not everyone's a fan of lectures. Flickr/Tadeeej

On another occasion, in a lecture where the students were clearly unprepared, the lecturer launched off with: "This isn't kindergarten you know; we aren't here to run around in circles all day".

## Who should speak?

Van Der Wagen argues that education experts have been misguided in empowering students in Australia to develop an "unwavering self-belief," contrasting this with her experience in China.

Like Van Der Wagan I have been in the teaching game for a fair while and I have had stints of teaching in China. I agree with her comment that mainland Chinese students expect direction and are bemused by lecturers who ask them questions.

I found that my students may not have been ready to say what they thought, but were ready to hear a four hour monologue.

Some Australian students seem to prefer the monologue too. In one evaluation of my teaching a student wrote "I am paying to hear what you think, not what the bloke sitting next to me thinks". In another year one asked: "Can you just LECTURE us?"

Fair enough points, you might venture. But these are not the opinions of the majority or necessarily reflecting the best way for most students in the social sciences to learn.

It occurs to me, however, that the question of who speaks in class and why is as important now as it has ever been. This is because the quality of our interactions with students in class is coming into question.

## Bringing something to the table

One legacy of students expecting better from lecturers is the interactive teaching style which is now so common. But tertiary students can't very well demand interaction and then not bring anything to class. When they do not take the opportunity to interact, it is unfair to criticise their lecturer for falling back on the monologue.

Students have to bring some level of knowledge in order to be stimulated. A student who opens the textbook before the lecture can bring even the most dreary topic to life. Such a student arrives at class with a stake in the discussion. Even an understandable misapprehension arising from the reading gives us some place to start.

Teaching my Chinese students, I found that if there was a single line in my Powerpoint slides

that seemed out of context, then they would beset me at the end of the session with very specific questions about it, for there was confusion to put right. So there may not have been in-class dialogue between us at every moment but they were engaged and interacting with material in class.

As long as students can engage and a few lightbulbs get turned on, then that's all that matters, I don't care how. But if it does not happen, in any form, in China or Australia I will choose a monologue over 100 minutes of silence because, unless I start teaching mime, something has to be said.

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# The Lecture Method: Preparation and Presentation Guidelines

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Alumni Association Distinguished Professor  
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The greatness of a state university is the heterogeneity of its students; it opens its doors wide, giving to as many as possible the opportunity to progress in higher education and beyond. Your charge in each class is to teach in such a way that all the students in your class, despite their contrasting skills and dispositions, have a chance of learning from you. The minimal goals: Students leave your class knowing what it was about and they leave with good records (notes, handout) for future reference and study.

## *Organization*

1. To prepare for class, ask yourself: What am I trying to do? What are the goals of this lecture? How can I best achieve them?
2. Organize your presentation around three or four major concepts, three or four basic points (with subsidiary concepts nested within them). This helps you to focus on teaching rather than telling.
3. Plan to begin each lecture with a summary (e.g., "On the last occasion, we...") and conclude with a clear overview and brief preview. That is, have a real beginning and end. This fosters coherency and avoids fragmentation across classes.
4. Similarly, plan to summarize after each major concept, and after successions of major concepts. Think of your lecture as interwoven segments of approximately 8-10 minutes in a 45 minutes lecture or 4-5 minutes in a 20 minutes lecture. This avoids fragmentation within a class and facilitates the students' grasp.
5. Be very clear in your head about what will be said in the first 1-2 minutes—be reflexive. Then, ensure that by the end of the first 10 minutes of a 45 minutes lecture, or first 5 minutes of a 20 minutes lecture, you have thoroughly set the stage.
6. If you plan to solve or present a solution to a particular problem, work hard in your preparation at making the nature of the problem as clear as possible. Your goal: To give the student a "gut level" appreciation of the problem. Intellectual and technical appreciation then comes more easily.
7. Be attentive to the pace at which you plan on developing concepts and techniques, both within a lecture and across the entire semester.
8. Always aim to cover your topics with the fewest words possible. Ask yourself: "What do the students need to know minimally to grasp this idea, method, result...?" This forces you, the teacher, to become more sensitive to (analytic of) the form of the topic, its essential structure. An excess of words has few benefits, for either student or teacher. Avoid tangents. Don't ramble.

## *Visuals*

1. Plan your use of the chalk- or marker-board or overheads or powerpoint as a map to develop your subject in a progressive fashion. With chalk- or marker-board plan ahead so that you don't erase or write in random locations. With powerpoint, plan your animations. Do not present a complex slide all at once. This helps both you and the student. There is an art to designing what amounts to the students' notes.
2. Prepare simple diagrams and schematics with few words. Don't clutter boards or overheads or slides. Don't assume your figures will be self-evident. Think ahead about which features you will need to clarify. Do not present a word or sentence or picture etc. without commenting on it.
3. Whenever a complex data set, graph, detailed figure, chart, etc., must be presented, prepare to preface it with a "bare-bones" schematic that pinpoints the essentials and provides a guide.

### *Self-tuning*

1. Put yourself in the student's place. Try to remember what it was like when you were an undergraduate attempting to understand the concepts you are about to teach.
2. Rekindle enthusiasm for concepts that are now commonplace to you and foster enthusiasm for concepts that you care little for, but must teach. Remind yourself of the ingenuity and dedication of those scholars who introduced and developed those concepts. If you are not enthusiastic about presenting the lecture you cannot expect the students to be enthusiastic about listening to it.

### *Mechanics*

1. Be attentive to the pace of your presentation. Your utterances should be slow (but not tortuously so) and deliberate, not rapid and hurried. Ensure that students have time to make their notes and sketch your diagrams.
2. Be repetitive if not redundant. Ask yourself, "In what other useful ways can I say this?"
3. Be vocabulary sensitive. Use ordinary language. When you use less common words, provide synonyms, and simple interpretations. Encourage later use of dictionary and thesaurus for clarification.
4. Do not use notes during the lecture. This allows you more freedom to engage the class and gauge their understanding and involvement. And you can think of yourself as a teacher not a lecturer.
5. Move around, not randomly, but in a definite manner. "Make the classroom small." "Visit the students." There is an art of using your classroom.
6. Look at individual students. Over the duration of the class, look at each and every one of them several times. This reduces teacher-student distance and helps "Make the classroom small." Use their facial expressions to see if you have been understood.
7. Do not talk to the chalk- or marker-board or overheads or powerpoint slides. Maximize time looking at the students, minimize time looking at your visuals.

8. After making a point or giving a concept, treat the subject in a lighter fashion. Since people cannot follow complex material for any extended period of time, use levity; i.e., relieve student mental concentration by using a light method of approach, then back to seriousness.
9. If a topic you are discussing will be used in the future, tell them so.
10. If a topic is particularly difficult or technical, tell them so at the outset.
11. Do not allow too many questions when developing your subject—they can break down your systematic development. The better your lecture organization, the fewer will be questions of minor clarification, the greater will be questions of substance.
12. When a student asks a question, make sure to involve everyone by repeating it (looking at the class and not just at the questioner) before you answer. If the question is wrongly asked, rephrase it and put it to use. Don't waste questions and don't ever embarrass questioners.
13. Do not pose questions to the class for which they lack adequate preparation. Ensure the background knowledge, then ask. Set them up for the question.

#### *Entitlements*

1. Encourage students to think of the course content as an entitlement—they are supposed to understand the material, even the most difficult.
2. Encourage students to think of your office hours as entitlement—they are supposed to take advantage of the university's mechanism for providing individualized instruction. Be persistent in your encouragement. Students who need personal tutoring the most tend to be those who seek it the least.



## **Suggestions for Effective Presentation Design and Delivery**

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### **STAGE 1: Initial Planning / Preparation**

#### **Planning:**

1. Understand the purpose of the lecture.
  - Raising awareness of the topic
  - Transmitting knowledge and understanding of the topic
  - Eliciting change in audience behavior relative to the topic
2. Analyze audience knowledge and interest in topic.
3. Fit topic in bigger picture, course, etc.
4. Identify your objectives for the lecture
5. Consider situational constraints: setting, time of day, relationship to meal serving, whether you are one speaker among others, whether media are being used, etc.

#### **Preparation:**

1. Develop a theme or question that covers the heart of your subject and center all content on clearly communicating this theme or answering this question.
2. Decide how the information will be presented:
  - a. A theme
  - b. Question to answer
  - c. Around a clinical case
  - d. In an unfolding chronology
  - e. Simplest to most complex
  - f. Pro/con
  - g. Cause/effect
  - h. Others?
3. Develop an outline that consists of not more than 5 points
4. Choose examples or analogies to illustrate or define the elements of your key points.
5. Decide how examples will be presented: chalkboard, diagrams, slides, overheads, demonstrations, case studies, etc.
6. Decide if you're going to give a handout

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### **STAGE 2: The Opening: Introducing the Topic**

#### **Note:**

- This is the best time to capture the audience's attention.
- How you relate the material to the audience will determine your effectiveness as a lecturer.

The opening should be used to:

- Take the audience's mind off of outside issues.
- "Set the stage" for what is to follow
- Create interest in the topic and motivate the audience
- Place the topic into the bigger picture and emphasize relevance
- Establish lecturer rapport with the audience.
- Establish rules / state guidelines for how the session will be conducted (e.g., hold questions until the end or ask at any time, audience will be asked to interact throughout).
- Establish credibility of the lecturer.
- Provide structure and organization to the content.
- Possibly further identify the knowledge level of the audience.

1. Plan an introduction to catch the listener's interest.

- Raise a question to be answer by the end of the lecture.
- State a current problem related to the lecture content.
- Explain the relationship of lecture content to laboratory exercises, homework problems, professional career interests, etc.
- Relate lecture content to previous class material.

2. Provide a brief general overview of the lecture's content.

3. Define or explain unfamiliar terminology.

4. Clearly describe to the audience how they can use what you are about to explain to them.

### STAGE 3: The Body of the Lecture

**Note:**

- This is the point at which the audience's minds begin to wander.
- To minimize this, make the lecture lively, ask questions, involve the audience, and summarize after every main point.

**Design:**

1. Plan for some flexibility in the lecture in order to respond to questions and comments.

2. Determine which key points can be effectively developed during the session.

When every nuance, detail or instance of a topic is discussed the audience often loses sight of the main ideas. Or, when too many ideas are presented and not developed, they fail to gain understanding.

3. Organize material in some logical order – logical to *this particular* audience.

Suggested organizational schemes include:

- *Cause-Effect*: Events are cited and explained by reference to their origins.
- *Time Sequential*: Lecture ideas are arranged chronologically.
- *Topical*: Parallel elements of different discussion topics are focused on successively.
- *Problem-Solution*: The statement of a problem is followed by alternate solutions.

- *Pro-Con*: A two-sided discussion of a given topic is presented.
  - *Ascending-Descending*: Lecture topics are arranged according to their importance, familiarity, or complexity.
4. Develop meaningful transitions from point to point that show the relationships between/among key ideas.
  5. Develop appropriate and meaningful illustrations: examples, analogies, diagrams, slides, overheads, demonstrations, case studies, models, etc.
  6. Identify and develop any specific learning activities that are to be incorporated.

**Delivery:**

1. Prepare so you do not need to read your material verbatim; use outline notes or visuals as cues.
2. Speak clearly, slowly, and loudly enough to be heard by all in the room.
3. Repeat your points in two or three different ways.
4. Cue important ideas by varying speech rate, volume, and pitch.
5. Speak to the audience, not your visuals – don't run your back on the audience.
6. Make eye contact as much as possible.
7. Vary your pace every 15 – 20 minutes. For example:
  - Stop for questions (asked by you or ask the audience for questions they may have)
  - Ask audience to discuss with their neighbor a point just made
  - Move to a different part of the room
8. Avoid distracting mannerisms (verbal tics like "um" or "you know"; tapping a pencil or pen; jingling coins in your pocket, etc.)
9. Be mindful of your body language.
10. Throughout the lecture check on audience understanding by:
  - Asking them to answer specific questions
  - Asking for their questions
  - Presenting a problem or situation which requires use of lecture material in order to obtain a solution
  - Watching the class for nonverbal cues of confusion or misunderstanding

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**STAGE 4: Closing the Lecture**

1. Keep the conclusion brief and simple.
2. Emphasize the key points made in the lecture

3. Review the objectives of the lecture.
4. Relate lecture material to past or future lecture (placement of topic in the bigger picture)
5. Ask for and answer audience questions.
6. Finish forcefully. Be sure to end your talk with the insightful, firm summary statement you have prepared – resist any temptation to add a few last impromptu words.
7. Distribute handout materials – delivering materials prior to or during the session could result in the audience reading ahead and not listening to your lecture.



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The Lively Lecture: 8 Variations

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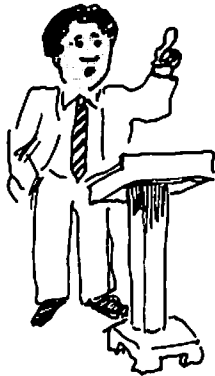
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Drawings by Jim Hull

# The Lively Lecture— 8 Variations

PETER J. FREDERICK

The lecture system to classes of hundreds, which was very much that of the twelfth century, suited Adams not at all. Barred from philosophy and bored by facts, he wanted to teach his students something not wholly useless.

—*The Education of Henry Adams*

**T**he recent flurry of criticisms of higher education, although focusing on an integrated core curriculum and the development of fundamental competencies, all exhort professors and those who administer the faculty reward system to pay more attention to teaching and

higher order cognitive and affective capabilities in students, and promoting more active student “involvement” in their own learning.<sup>1</sup> Since both common sense and educational research indicate that these goals are more readily achieved in smaller rather than larger classes, a likely target of these calls for reform is the lecture.

## Criticism of the Lecture

Although the *lektor* has been the primary medium of college and university instruction since the middle ages,

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**S**tudies on attention span suggest that after 15 or 20 minutes the lecture loses its effectiveness even in transmitting information.

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learning. This means, among other things, increasing faculty “engagement” and interaction with students (especially in the first years of college), developing

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*The author is a professor of history and chair, Division of Social Sciences, at Wabash College in Crawfordsville, Indiana. The drawings were made by Jim Hull to accompany a demonstration/discussion by the author on the ideas in this article. That presentation was sponsored by the Teaching Resources Center at Indiana University in Bloomington.*

in recent years it has been under assault not only by distinguished educational panels but also by student protestors, learning theorists, faculty development consultants, and even by (some) tenure and promotion committees. Faculty members have been bombarded with messages to lecture less and to use discussion and other innovative participatory methods of teaching more.

In the sixth edition of his influential book, *Teaching Tips*, Wilbert J. McKeachie concluded that although lectures are “sometimes an effective way of communicating information,” he had “a suspicion, . . . supported by bits of evidence, that other methods of teach-

ing may be more effective than lecturing in achieving some of the higher level cognitive and attitudinal objectives."<sup>2</sup> Reflecting a decade of further studies, Bette LaSere Erickson and Glenn R. Erickson emphatically state that "the lecture is less effective than other methods when instructional goals involve the application of information, the development of thinking skills, or the modification of attitudes."<sup>3</sup>

Attention span studies, for example, suggest that after 15 or 20 minutes the lecture loses its effectiveness even in transmitting information. Students, of course, routinely respond that lectures are "boring" and "worthless." Thus, as Henry Adams suspected 80 years ago, if a teacher wants to avoid being "wholly useless," it is best not to lecture.

### Justification of the Lecture

Despite all the criticism, however, the lecture has withstood all assaults on its old, yellowed walls, standing up under the siege with battered but enduring strength. The onslaught has done more to cause faculty discomfort and guilt than actually to change practices. From within the safety of the old walls of tenure, tradi-

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**I**'d like to try some new ideas, but I can't—I have 300 students in the class, you know.

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tion, and expediency, faculty members continue to lecture. Only a tone of defensiveness hints at the battle outside. "I'd like to do less lecturing, but I've got too much to cover." Or, "that's all right for you but I have to lecture in my field." Or, "I'd like to try some new ideas, but I can't—I have 300 students in the class, you know." As salvos of rhetoric and reports fly back and forth across the parapets, life in the classroom goes on much as before. Most college professors, even those like myself who advocate a decentralized classroom, still spend more class hours "lecturing" than anything else.

For some good reasons. Other than the expediency of economy of scale, there are many reasonable justifications of the well-prepared, clearly organized, and dynamically delivered lecture. When done well, the best lectures:

- impart new information
- explain, clarify and organize difficult concepts
- model a creative mind at work or the problem-solving process

- analyze and show relationships among seemingly dissimilar ideas
- inspire a reverence for learning
- challenge beliefs and habits of thinking, and
- breed enthusiasm and motivation for further study.

To hear a good lecture is an inspiring experience. We leave with our imagination broadened and our interest piqued; we find ourselves entertained, prodded, and illuminated in turn. What evokes our response is an intricate blend of qualities. The lecture must have sufficient intellectual content to challenge us. . . . Like a dramatic monologue, it engages our emotions and keeps them in play, thanks to frequent shifts in mood and intensity. It mixes humor and erudition, and gives us a sense of the personal involvement of the lecturer . . .<sup>4</sup>

In hearing a lecture like this, Henry Adams notwithstanding, students receive much more than useless facts. Such a lecture, as Emerson said in the "American Scholar" address in 1837, aims "not to drill, but to . . . set the hearts of youth on flame." Ideally, there is engagement, excitement, and intense interaction, albeit passively experienced by students, in the act of listening and recording notes during an inspiring lecture.

In battles over the lecture method, both sides err in holding up a single stereotyped image. Defenders of the lecture usually cite the fiery and inspiring version described above, acknowledging, however, that "in practice . . . too few lectures attain this ideal."<sup>5</sup> Critics paint a dreary picture of the stodgy old pedant (or an uninspiring nervous young one) listlessly mumbling overly long and obtuse sentences read from crumbling, yellowed (or freshly word-processed) notes. Doubtless there are both important facts and gems of wisdom in Professor Mumble's tired words, but they are lost on most students who tune out early to fantasize last night's winning jump shot or the coming weekend's party. At its best, the lecture ends five minutes early as the professor asks, "Are there any questions?" There usually are not.

Neither image of the lecture serves us well. We need, I believe, to redefine the "lecture" in order to achieve the kind of involvement educators have agreed enhances student learning. The purpose of this essay is to suggest several such variations. Although disparate in approach, each variation is motivational; each imparts information; each engages students actively. It is my intention to show that interactive student participation is possible even in the traditional setting of large mass lecture classes in dimly lit halls with tiered rows of immovable seats bolted to the floor.

Other than the obvious importance of content mastery, traditional advice about giving lectures applies to each of the different forms described here. Objectives should be clearly stated and written down on the board with an outline of major topics to be "covered." One

should only make two or three major points in any given class, using several focused examples or experiences to illustrate each main idea. Students should be given specific assignments to practice their mastery of these ideas. Teachers should be sensitive to their audience, aware of its energy level, and prepared to adapt the level and form of presentation accordingly, varying the format for different class periods and often even within one period.<sup>6</sup>

### Importance of Variety

There is no moment more important than when a professor decides—given a wide array of pedagogical variations from which to choose—that for *these* particular primary and secondary goals for *this* particular class period, *these* particular teaching and learning methods make the most sense. For example, if a new topic is to be introduced, the teacher might either deliver a traditional lecture filled with overarching themes and necessary groundwork information or present an emotionally charged film or multi-media show to arouse interest in the new topic. Or, if students' energy and enthusiasm have been noticeably declining, a teacher will want to structure a way of getting student participation and feedback in order to understand what they are thinking and feeling. Or, if a recent examination has revealed a widespread deficiency in some competency, a class period should be devoted to giving students either a model of or practice in that skill.

Deciding which goal and method is most appropriate for any given class—especially when recognizing that students have different learning styles and are at different stages of cognitive and moral development—is a vitally crucial moment for a teacher's effectiveness in enhancing student learning.

As different students learn from diverse approaches, so also are there diverse ways to be a "good" teacher. The point is to select that style most consistent with one's personality. Students are not fooled when we try to be something other than what we are. But at the same time, since we seek to stretch the ways students learn, they appreciate our openly avowed efforts to expand the ways we teach, even in ways we might initially find uncomfortable. It is in this spirit of guarded but willing experimentation that I hope we will approach these eight variations of a lecture.

### 1. The Exquisite Oral Essay

This is the traditional lecture, executed with the kind of excellence to which we all aspire—and once in a while achieve. The oral essay is a final polished work which skillfully treats a single intellectual question or problem. It has unity: the topic is introduced, illustrated, and concluded within fifty minutes; it does not spill over to the following Wednesday. Thus, the single class period

is an "intellectual experience" for the students as they listen in awe to the professor's "perfect" presentation. The purpose of this kind of lecture is not only to convey substantive information but also to demonstrate the professor doing well the job of professing. Students are treated to "a window on the teacher's mind," watching with much the same intensity that one has when observing an unusually skillful pianist or salesman. Our courses, no doubt, should include some of these performances, but not to the exclusion of other approaches. Oral essays reduce students to the role of passive auditors, at best engaged in an "internal dialogue," as David Bergman puts it, with the professor.<sup>7</sup> Although the oral essay is inspirationally masterful, the students witness a finished product, not the process.

### 2. The Participatory Lecture

Would it not be more instructive if students could observe, or better yet participate in, the creation of a lecture? Imagine a group of students clustered around the professor's cluttered desk as he or she prepares a lecture. On the desk are several sources and a crude outline. The students observe their professor deciding what purposes the lectures should fulfill and why certain substantive points and examples are chosen to emphasize and why others are discarded. To be a part of this exhilarating (and sometimes painful) process of creation is a genuine window on the mind at work. The lecture itself the next morning, by comparison, is but a show. Obviously, it is impossible to invite four hundred—or even

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**T**he important point is not the final chalkboard creation but the process. The participatory lecture requires less recording—and more thinking—than the oral essay.

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forty—students into one's office or home for the time it takes to construct a good lecture. But can the process of creation be duplicated, or at least approximated, with student participation, in the classroom itself?

The participatory lecture is best described as orderly brainstorming in which students generate ideas which are then organized in some rational, coherent pattern on the chalkboard. When beginning a new topic, start with a participatory lecture by inviting students to brainstorm together by calling out "everything you know about World War I" (or Freud, Darwinism, China, waves and particles). As recorded on the blackboard (or



on an overhead projection), a list will unfold of a mixture of specific facts, impressionistic feelings and prejudices, and possibly even interpretive judgments. Students bring to most courses both some familiarity and considerable misinformation, both of which can be ascertained in a participatory lecture.

The only rule of brainstorming is to acknowledge every offering by writing it down. As ideas are pro-

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**T**he mini-lecture and discussion format counters the attention span problem by making 15–20 minute shifts in energy from the teacher to students and back again.

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posed, you might even arrange what you hear in rough categories, but tell the students what you're doing lest you be suspected of manipulating their contributions. Better yet, once the board is filled, ask students to suggest categories and to comment on the accuracy and relative importance of the array of facts, impressions, and interpretations. Refinements can be dealt with by use of the eraser, a luxury not allowed in the formal lecture. The action of an evolving creation on the chalkboard, especially for the visually oriented learners of the television generation, reinforces learning far better than the lost words of an entirely auditory presentation.

When the class is over, an organized configuration of the ideas contributed by both students and instructor will appear on the chalkboard. Ask one student to take notes so you can run off copies for the class. The important point, however, is not the final chalkboard creation but the process. The participatory lecture differs from the oral essay by requiring more thinking and less recording. Ideally, students spend their time not transcribing or doodling but concentrating on contributing

to the evolving creation in front of them. Obviously, the participatory lecture can be done badly. When students have not brought to the class the limited knowledge provided by their prior experience or reading, or when the professor manipulates student statements to a rigidly preconceived schema, the experience can be dreary.

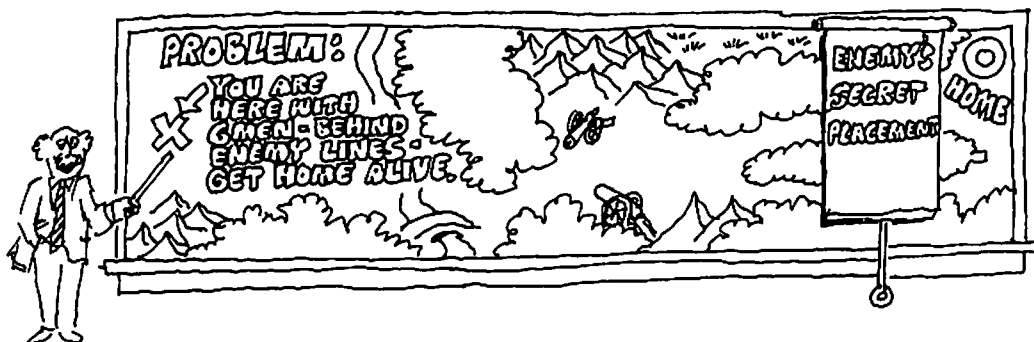
But when the mutual participation is free and open, students are actively engaged and teachers might even learn new insights about familiar material. Roles are blurred and all become learners and teachers. Although obviously less efficient than an oral essay, what is important is that the participatory lecture involves many students actively and *can be done with large classes*.

In a sense, all the remaining variations are versions of the participatory lecture and involve varying degrees of faculty-student interaction. It is the presence of *some* interaction, especially in large lecture courses, that students and recent critics of undergraduate education have been calling for. Martin J. Finklestein's synthesis of recent research on student evaluations concludes that "the teaching practices that a faculty member adopts in the classroom are clearly and strongly related to perceived teaching effectiveness." In defining teaching effectiveness, students consistently rate highest those faculty who show respect for students and their progress, who pay attention to classroom processes, and who use presentational styles that encourage participation.<sup>8</sup>

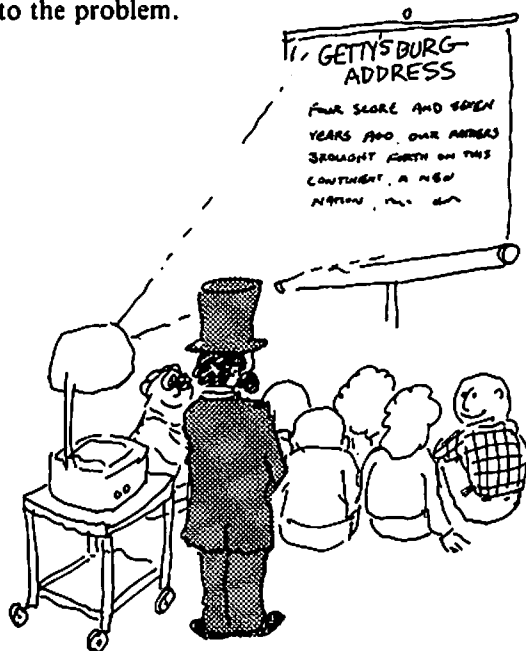
### 3. Problem Solving: Demonstrations, Proofs, and Stories

What brought the two former friends, one in blue and one in grey, to oppose each other on Cemetery Ridge in Gettysburg that hot July afternoon?

This lecture begins with a question, or a paradox, or an enigma, or a compellingly unfinished human story—some tantalizing problem that hooks student interest. The answer unfolds during the class hour; if skillful the unfolding will be completed with only about ten or fewer minutes left in the period. Solving the problem, depending on what it is or in what field, may require a scientific demonstration, a mathematical proof, an economic model, the outcome of the novel's plot, or an his-



torical narrative. The question is woven throughout the lecture, inviting students to fill in imaginative spaces in the story (or model) with their own unfolding solutions to the problem.



The unfolding can consist primarily of a lecture, in which students fill in their successive answers passively, or of an interactive process in which students' tentative solutions to a problem, or completions of a story, are elicited, listed on the board, and discussed. "What do you think will happen?" "Which solution, outcome, or explanation makes the most sense to you?" If no consensus, the teacher lectures a little more, invites a new set of student responses, and asks the question again. Ideally, when the problem is finally resolved, most students will have figured it out themselves just before the teacher's solution is announced.

#### 4. Energy Shifts: Alternating Mini-Lectures and Discussions

I firmly believe that the flow of energy around a classroom has a great deal to do with how well students learn. The following variation, which is similar to the participatory and problem-solving lectures, recognizes the conclusions of attention span studies by making clearly delineated 15–20 minute shifts in energy from the teacher to students and back again. The instructor begins with a 20-minute lecture setting the stage for some issue, which involves a 10–15 minute discussion of implications and effects, followed by another mini-lecture on what happened next. The last 5 minutes might be spent by presenting students with an assignment: a problem or application of the issues raised in the second mini-lecture. Thus, the next class would begin with the mini-discussion, followed by a mini-lecture, etc. This alternating approach can describe any natural or social

science class where instruction calls for a mixture of theory and data, model and findings, or hypothesis and experimental demonstration, with intervening considerations of how best to proceed next. The point is to shorten segments of one method of learning, change the voices(s) heard, and shift the energy.

In a lecture hall filled with 200–400 students, the mini-discussions need not involve "breaking up into groups of five or six" (as they well might in smaller classes of 100 or less). Rather, huge classes can be handled by asking two or three students sitting next to each other to discuss the problem together for a few minutes, and then inviting volunteers to stand and report conclusions and concerns. This process provides public affirmation of the appropriate issues (or not), thus giving feedback both to other students and to the teacher on how well the students were prepared for a particular problem. Even "wrong" feedback is instructive and sharpens the focus of the next appropriate mini-lecture and reading assignment. Without the mini-discussion segment, the teacher might not have known the gaps in student knowledge and gone ahead with the next lesson, which is most serious in sequential science courses. Moreover, with energy shifts students experience a variety of voices and a sense of shared responsibility for their learning.

#### 5. Textual Exegesis: Modeling Analytical Skills

Jennifer, would you read the top paragraph on page 40 please?

One deficiency of undergraduate education we have been hearing about (and often experiencing) is that our students are illiterate. They do not know how to read, we are told, which is a rather necessary prerequisite for developing analytical skills. The lecture setting of any size provides an opportunity to practice an old-fashioned but underused technique: *explication du texte*. We do not often enough go to a text and read and analyze passages together out loud. Students can develop these skills by seeing them modeled, followed by an opportunity to practice analyzing a text themselves.

A class of 50 or 500 students, following along in their books, or on handouts, or on an overhead projection, can watch a professor working through selected passages of a document, speech, sermon, essay, poem, proof, or fictional passage. Upon reaching a particularly ambiguous passage, the mini-discussion in groups of 3–5 students could be employed, thus shifting the energy and providing practice and feedback for students. The professor's response to how different groups of students resolve the ambiguity ("What is Locke saying here?") furthers the learning.

This process of modeling how to read analytically can be done for other than just verbal texts. Art historians,

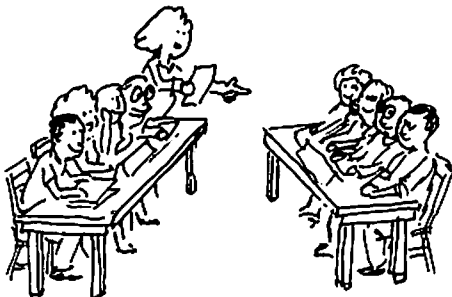
musicologists, economists, and anthropologists have traditionally used lectures to show students how to “read” an abstract painting, sonata, supply and demand curve, or artifact. Natural scientists explain their “texts” with elaborate demonstrations (and labs for practice). What I am suggesting is that in those many courses where the mastery of traditional verbal texts is fundamental to the learning goals of the course, we use the lecture period as an opportunity to teach critical interpretation and analysis to our students—that is, how to read.

A further variation on this approach, especially for social science courses, is to use the lecture period to train students in other analytical skills—quantitative analysis of graphs, charts and tables, and how to read maps, interview schedules, or census and polling data. In sum, make sure students have a copy of the document in question in front of them (or visual access through slides and overhead transparencies), and then follow three steps: modeling by the professor, practice by the students, and feedback.

## 6. Cutting Large Classes in Half without Losing Control: Debates

“But my class is too large for these gimmicks!” “I couldn’t possibly let them go into those little groups in the middle of class. I wouldn’t trust what they’re talking about and am afraid I’d lose control.”

Although assigning specific tasks to small groups of two or three students can disperse energy and achieve interaction in large classes, not all instructors would be comfortable with the uncertainty of “what they’re talking about.” The concern for control is a genuine and important one. Although once we open up the lecture



hall to voices other than our own we risk some diminished control over content and tone, none of these variations is intended to relinquish the teacher’s control of the class. Therefore, let me suggest a few ways of achieving more student participation and engagement in large classes without changing the professor’s central and vital controlling role in the classroom.

One obvious strategy is to take advantage of the central aisle dividing large lecture halls in order to structure debates. Students can either support the side of an issue assigned to the half of the hall where they happen to be

sitting, or as prearranged, come to class prepared to take a seat on one particular side of a debate. Whichever approach you use, you can maintain rigorous control from the podium in guiding the process: “From the right side of the hall we will hear five statements on behalf of the Confederacy, after which we will hear five statements from the left on behalf of the Union.” The process can be repeated once or twice, including the inevitable rebuttals, before concluding by asking for two or three volunteers to make summary arguments for each side.

Although neither one of two polar sides of an issue contains the whole truth, it is pedagogically energizing and valuable (if only to point out the complexity of truth) for students to be compelled to choose and then to defend one side of a dichotomous question. Other obvious debate topics include such questions as: “Burke or Paine?” “Should Nora have left or stayed?” “Pro-life or pro-choice?” “Marx or Adam Smith?” “Waves or particles?” “Declare war or not?”

“But most important questions do not divide into halves. . . . My students would never settle for forced choices.”

When some students (quite rightly) refuse to choose one side or the other, create a middle ground and space and invite their reasons for choosing it. Students might learn how difficult it is to try to remain neutral on heated issues, especially during revolutionary times. Besides, some large lecture halls have two central aisles, which makes legitimizing a third position both intellectually defensible and physically possible. Whichever approach is used in dividing classes, the professor has maintained control and a central focus and students have added a participatory dimension to their learning in a traditional lecture setting.

## 7. Smaller Groups in Large Classes: Simulations and Role Playing

For those teachers willing occasionally to risk a little classroom chaos, the following variation is guaranteed to add energy, participation, and interaction to large lecture hall courses. I have written previously in this journal in more detail about using small groups and role-playing in history classes,<sup>9</sup> so here I will just sketch the outlines of this “lecture” variation. It is adaptable (often as simulations) to political science, economics, sociology, and other disciplines.

First, a crucial mini-lecture clearly establishes the context and setting for the role playing (defined as a loose simulation of actual actors and problems). Second, the class is divided into a number of small groups (of varying sizes and including duplicate roles depending on the overall class size), each group assigned a clearly delineated role—usually of some historical or contemporary group. Third, each group is given a

specific, concrete task—usually to propose a position and course of action. And fourth, the proposals emanating from different groups will inevitably conflict with each other in some way—ideologically, tactically, racially, regionally, or over scarce funds, land, jobs, power, or resources.

The format of such sessions can take whatever direction a professor wishes, given clear planning and instructions, assertive leadership, and a lot of luck. One

The first is based on Martin Duberman's 1960s drama, *In White America*, in which the historian-playwright skillfully pieced together actual quotations from the black historical experience in white America into a compellingly gripping drama. None of us is a Duberman or Arthur Miller, but we all have an eye (or a heart) for particularly moving quotations, poems, or song lyrics. Focusing on a single topic (e.g., male-female stereotypes, the Depression, work, the nature of

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**S**ometimes it is better for the emotional impact of the music and images to conclude the class, letting students leave the room with their hearts thumping . . . and their motivation to study aroused.

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might hear the proposals of different groups and immediately incorporate them into a lecture on what really happened or should happen as a result of these same conflicts and collisions. Or, one might carry out the role-playing process longer by structuring the stages of a meeting or convention that followed the initial proposals. The student groups might, for example, be instructed to prepare speeches and see the deliberations through to some conclusion, or to caucus in order to develop strategies, coalitions, and tactics for achieving their goals. Neat, simple, clear closures are not easy (short of the class-ending buzzer), but this variation for large lecture classes has tremendous potential for experiential learning and of course involves enormous energy and interaction.

When the professor wishes to bring closure, however, debriefing the exercise—which is essential—is an opportunity to restore order. The debriefing also helps to identify what was learned, and to make the transition to the next topic and pedagogical approach, probably a lecture to tie up loose ends.

#### **8. "Bells and Whistles": The Affective, Emotional Media Lecture**

Every time a colleague sees me heading off to class with my cassette recorder, and slide carousel, he says, "here come the bells and whistles." It is not intended as a compliment. No list of variations for large lecture classes is complete without acknowledging the use of media. Since much has been written on the use of films and other audio-visual techniques in teaching, I want to focus on two approaches designed to evoke an emotional involvement by affective, emotional learning, an area woefully neglected in college teaching.

warfare, or Chinese culture), put together a collage of quotations, not necessarily in any particular order. Invite some theater majors or an oral interpretation class (or some of your own students) to read the quotations in class one day, either as an extended presentation followed by a short discussion, or as a brief introduction to your lecture on the topic.

The second affective media suggestion is the synchronized slide-tape presentation, consciously matching a series of visual images with the words of a song or speech. One need not prepare a spectacular show with multiple slide images emanating from several automatically timed projectors. Rather, select two or three songs or a speech that you think captures the mood or tone of an event, era, or issue, and select some slides to represent the words, changing as each new idea in the lyrics calls for a corresponding visual image.

To be sure, the presentation, especially with music, is a blatant ploy to hook student emotions in order to arouse their interest. But there is also extensive content inherent in the visual images and lyrics. After showing five minutes of 20–25 slides to accompany two haunting Harry Chapin songs on what has happened to America since the 1960s, we go back over each slide and talk about the historical context and the meaning of each line of the lyrics, which students have on a handout. The discussion could last for hours. Sometimes though, it is better for the emotional impact of the music and images to conclude the class, letting students leave the room with their hearts thumping, their minds engaged, and their motivation to study aroused. Which, after all, has been the goal of each of these lecture variations.

It must be clear that putting together a slide-tape presentation, or a small group role-playing experience, or

even a participatory lecture, takes planning time and effort, probably about as much as an exquisite oral essay or even an ordinary lecture, the one we know "could have been better but will have to do." It is important to use *all* of these different variations of the lecture, broadening our options as teachers by selecting what works for us. "The test of a good teacher," someone has said, "is how well Plan B works." To have a good Plan B for each major concept implies, of course, enlarging our repertoire.

Above all, I have sought to show in this article that large lecture hall classes need not be barriers to providing the kind of interactive, participatory experiences that enhance student learning and renew faculty commitment to the highest challenges of our calling. And who knows, after using a variety of approaches which involve students actively in the classroom, one could even finish a 30-minute lecture to a large class and ask, "Any questions?"—and be pleasantly surprised by the response.

#### NOTES

1. See *Integrity in the College Curriculum: A Report to the Academic Community*, Association of American Colleges, 1985; *Involvement in Learning: Realizing the Potential of American Higher Education*, National Institute of Education, 1984; and William J. Bennett, *To Reclaim a Legacy: A Report on the Humanities in Higher Education*, National Endowment for the Humanities, 1984.

2. Wilbert J. McKeachie, *Teaching Tips—A Guidebook for the Beginning College Teacher*, 6th edition (Lexington, Mass.: D.C. Heath and Co., 1969), p. 36.

3. Bette LaSere and Glenn R. Erickson, "Presenting and Explaining," unpublished manuscript, University of Rhode Island Instructional Development Program, 1984, p. 1.

4. Heather Dubrow and James Wilkinson, "The Theory and Practice of Lectures," in *The Art and Craft of Teaching*, Margaret Morganroth Gullette, ed., Harvard-Danforth Center for Teaching and Learning (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1984), p. 25.

5. Dubrow and Wilkinson, *Art and Craft of Teaching*, p. 25.

6. Bette LaSere Erickson and Glenn Erickson's "Presenting and Explaining" contains an excellent set of specific "recommendations for planning effective presentations," p. 9.

7. David Bergman, "In Defense of Lecturing," *Association of Departments of English Bulletin* 76 (Winter, 1983), pp. 49-50.

8. Martin J. Finkelstein, *The American Academic Profession—A Synthesis of Social Scientific Inquiry Since World War II* (Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 1984), pp. 109 ff.

9. Peter Frederick, "The Dreaded Discussion: Ten Ways to Start," *Improving College and University Teaching* 29 (Summer 1981), 109-14.

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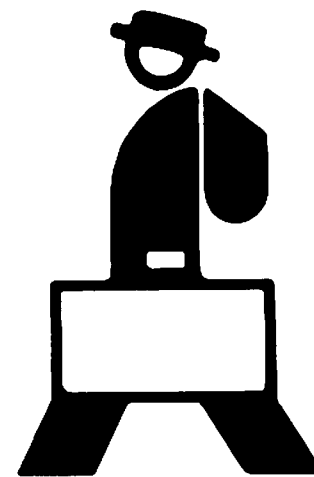
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# Graduate Students' Forum: A Recipe for a Successful Lecture

By Peter Filene

- Teaching in High-Intensity Mode  
by Rudolph M. Bell
- Getting Started  
by Terry Seip

Close your eyes and picture the best history lecturer you recall from college. Perhaps she is striding back and forth across the stage, never looking at her notes, her voice ringing out, each sentence flowing eloquently into the next and the next. She delivers a complex, passionate argument, spiced with vivid details and wit. She reaches her last sentence as the bell sounds.

Are you feeling inspired? Or are you discouraged, thinking: "How in the world can I emulate that?"

Like other aspects of teaching, lecturing is less mysterious than it seems. Let me begin to demystify it by providing a three-part recipe for designing and delivering effective lectures. I wish someone had given me these suggestions when I was starting out or even when I was 15 years into my career.

## 1. Don't Be Brilliant

First, don't emulate that lecturer whom you just now imagined; don't try to write and deliver a brilliant lecture. Although you were inspired, you were not a typical undergraduate. You are a lifelong academic. After too many years in graduate school, it's hard to remember college students' mentality. Recently I overheard a TA remark: "Can you imagine! One of my students asked 'what is a monograph?'" Few of your students will be history majors and fewer still will be looking toward an academic career. They arrive in your classroom for a myriad of reasons: maybe they enjoy watching the History Channel, or they are fulfilling a college requirement, or they needed a class at noon.

Moreover, the questions that interest you as a professional historian are probably not ones that will interest them. As scholars we're interested in certain questions because we were once interested in earlier questions, which intrigued us because of even earlier questions. Don't forget that our students have not yet taken that intellectual journey. While we are digging deep underground at rich intellectual ore, they are standing on the surface wondering why anyone in his right mind would be engaged in that subterranean expedition.<sup>1</sup> So, brilliance will likely be counterproductive. It may dazzle you but leave your students with drooping eyelids.

And then there is this very practical consideration: you won't have time to write trailblazing lectures for every class. Let's suppose that you're teaching three different courses three times a week, while also grading papers, holding office hours, shopping for groceries, and (one hopes) spending time with family or friends.

Under such circumstances, how can one write nine even *semi*-brilliant lectures every week? The answer—gather three or four textbooks or general sources, subject them to a critical reading, and synthesize a coherent narrative lecture from them. Give the students a bibliography of the sources you used. You can then use the opportunity to introduce the students to the important notion that although the *information* in different books may be the same, interpretations can (and do) differ. After all, a lecture is a live communication—an interaction with an audience. Imagine sitting at a café with someone who spreads his notes on the table and reads aloud nonstop for 50 minutes!

As you gain experience and self-confidence, you can transform these rough lectures along more original lines.

## 2. Communicate

How do the best teachers engage their students' interest and understanding? *Enthusiasm* is one ingredient that undergraduates almost unanimously cite.<sup>2</sup> *Clarity and organization* form the second ingredient and, intellectually, the more important one.<sup>3</sup> Undergraduates typically can absorb no more than two new ideas in a single session. So you will do well to divide your lecture into two parts—two main ideas, themes, or issues.

Moreover, audience attention sags halfway through the hour.<sup>4</sup> So, before launching into Idea Number Two, do something different. Create an intermission—like a bench beside the mountain trail, allowing the hikers to appreciate what they have accomplished thus far.

- You may pull out that lame expedient, "Are there any questions?" But I recommend several more effective ways to elicit critical reflection.
- Tell students to write a one-minute synopsis of what they've heard. Then ask for questions or confusions.
- Better yet, add two steps: Think (pose a question, about which they briefly write); Pair (compare answers with a classmate for three minutes); Share (ask a pair to report their answers, then ask whether other pairs have different answers).

- Pose a question and divide students into five-minute "breakout groups" to devise answers.
- Show a slide or a video excerpt.
- Walk away from the lectern and say nothing for 30 seconds, allowing time for mental digestion. Silence also teaches.

### 3. Hook Them at the Start

I've used up my quota of two main ideas. But since this is an essay, not a lecture, let me cheat and add a third recommendation.

The most effective lecturers open the hour with a question—a problem—a grabber. *Something is at stake today, so stick around and see how I solve it.* You can dramatize this "so what?" with a vignette.

- Perhaps a quotation.
- Or an anecdote that dramatizes the day's topic.
- Or a cartoon.
- Or a device like the one with which I began this essay.

All of this may sound dauntingly complicated, but it soon becomes second nature. After a few weeks you'll structure your lectures automatically.

As you become familiar with your 60 or 100 students (and they with you), you will develop a rapport. They will laugh at your jokes. You will learn at what level to pitch your ideas and vocabulary. They will trust you and their classmates enough to answer your questions or even ask their own. Your lectures will not be "an essay standing on its hind legs."<sup>5</sup> Rather, they will form one half of a dialogic relationship in which you teach and your students learn.

Peter Filene is professor of history at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. This essay is adapted from the author's forthcoming book, *The Joy of Teaching: A Guide for New College Instructors* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2005).

### Notes

1. Ken Bain, *What the Best College Teachers Do* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2004), 37.



2. For tips on how to display enthusiasm, see Joseph Lowman, *Mastering the Techniques of Teaching* 2nd

3. Thomas M. Sherman et al., "The Quest for Excellence in Higher Education," *Journal of Higher Education*, 58 (January/February 1987), 66; Peter Seldin, *The Teaching Portfolio: A Practical Guide to Improved Performance and Promotion/Tenure Decisions* (Boston: Anker, 1991), 1.

4. Lowman, *Mastering the Techniques of Teaching*, 136; J.R. Davis, *Teaching Strategies for the College Classroom* (Boulder: Westview Press, 1976), cited in "Improving Lectures by Understanding Students' Information Processing" Wilbert J. McKeachie ed., *Learning, Cognition, and College Teaching: New Directions for Teaching and Learning 2* (San Francisco: Josey-Bass, 1980), chapter 4.

5. James Winans and H.H. Hudson, *A First Course in Public Speaking* (New York: D. Appleton-Century, 1931), 17, quoted in Elisa Carbone, *Teaching Large Classes: Tools and Strategies* (Thousand Oaks: Sage, 1998), 21.

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# **The Art and Craft of Teaching**

**Edited by Margaret Morganroth Gullette**

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This collection of essays was originally published by the Harvard-Danforth Center for Teaching and Learning, an office of the Faculty of Arts and Sciences at Harvard. That publication was made possible by a grant from a fund donated by Dr. Ansel Kinney ('20, A.M. '21, Ph.D. '23), a long-time friend of Harvard University. His fund has made life easier for young people at crucial moments in their graduate training, and we hope that the dissemination of this collection will further that aim as well.

The editor and authors of *The Art and Craft of Teaching* wish to thank President Derek Bok for his assistance. His enthusiasm, his creativity, and his gift of a grant made the original edition possible.

The editor expresses her appreciation also to those of her teachers who, like Chris Christensen, made teaching seem the most absorbing, crucial, and disinterested of callings: Betty Morganroth, Florence Sayer, Stephen Orgel, Richard Poirier, Stephen Booth, Paul Alpers, Warner Berthoff, and Robert Lowell.

dards during the first discussion; students should be aware that a quick skimming of the reading assignment is not adequate preparation.

One often hears about instructors who make the first class particularly difficult and intimidating. Once the dust has settled and students have chosen their courses, the instructor moves to a slower pace and reviews in detail the concepts that were assumed or quickly derived in the first class. The goal is probably to generate a small class of high calibre students. This is inappropriate. The wrong signal is being transmitted to students and will result in a poor match between students and the course. The brightest students will be disappointed by the lower level at which the course is actually run and many students interested in the material who have adequate backgrounds for the course will have been scared away. If the instructor feels that the material cannot be taught properly if enrollment is large, it is more appropriate to discuss this with a superior in the department or university, trying to limit enrollment or establish additional sections of the course. If the goal is getting the brightest students it should be recalled that all instructors can try to squeeze out the poorer students, but these students have to go somewhere. The instructor's aim should be a proper matching of students' interests and course offerings.

## V

Teaching rests on communication. Human beings communicate both verbally and nonverbally, by their attitudes and behavior. All of these forms of communication are important in the classroom because they help students and the instructor understand one another. These subtle communications begin the first day. Only through careful attention to details and recognition of the human aspects of the process can the instructor gain the control of the classroom that is the prerequisite for learning. While knowledge of students and the particular class process will certainly improve over the course of the term, on the first day the instructor can begin to get her or his message across about the substance and conduct of the course and begin to "read" the class for signs of the students' needs, interests, and expertise.

## CHAPTER THREE

# The Theory and Practice of Lectures

**Heather Dubrow and James Wilkinson**

To hear a good lecture is an inspiring experience. We leave with our imagination broadened and our interest piqued; we find ourselves entertained, prodded, and illuminated in turn. What evokes our response is an intricate blend of qualities. The lecture must have sufficient intellectual content to challenge us, and enough clarity of exposition that we are not left disoriented and confused. Like a dramatic monologue, it engages our emotions and keeps them in play, thanks to frequent shifts in mood and intensity. It mixes humor and erudition, and gives us a sense of the personal involvement of the lecturer in his or her topic. It reassures us as well by providing a small island of coherence in an often chaotic world. These elements, taken together, create a series of inner tensions that give life to the lecture. The result may be difficult to define, but is instantly recognizable.

In practice, however, too few lectures attain this ideal. What we find instead is instruction from which one or more essential ingredients are missing, a teaching performance whose good intentions are marred by failures of insight or execution. The industrious but boring lecturer buries students in facts delivered in a monotone, and wonders why the class does not show greater enthusiasm for the material. The energetic but

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JAMES WILKINSON's biography is on page 1.

condescending lecturer fires volleys of stirring rhetoric at her or his students yet misses the mark; the students, overawed, are reluctant to seek out an instructor who appears deaf to the opinions of others. The friendly but disorganized professor tells stories of his war service in Burma, leaves half of the course syllabus to cover in the last three lectures, and wonders why the students do so poorly on their exam. Clearly, no teacher should assume that lecturing is an easy business. But much of what distinguishes a good lecture from the less felicitous examples described above can be learned, rehearsed, and perfected. This chapter is intended as a first step toward closing the gap between lecture theory and practice.

Both the virtues of the fine lecture and the faults of the deficient lecture stem from one central fact: the lecturer runs the show. He or she is in charge of what happens during the fifty or so minutes of lecture time far more directly and completely than if this were a discussion class or a tutorial. Such control allows the lecturer to give full play to his or her strengths; wit, eloquence, close reasoning, and a gift for entertaining anecdotes need not be suppressed. But control magnifies inadequacies to an alarming degree. The dull lecturer can expect no rescue efforts from the class; the confused lecturer has no escape from tangled thoughts and illegible notes until she or he leaves the podium. The realization of this truth is often enough to cause a severe case of the jitters in even the most self-confident academic.

What can be done to quell such nervousness? The first answer is to plan ahead. Because few allowances need be made for the unknowns that accompany a discussion course—above all the uncertainty as to how long it will take to cover the main points, and in what manner—it is possible to lay out a series of lectures in fairly precise detail. Consider the fundamental questions or themes that the lecture course should explore over the semester, and what their logical sequence should be. Determine how many individual lectures you intend to give, and then roughly block out their content and functional relationship to one another. Even if you teach a survey course in which the topics to be studied seem remote from one another, you should be able to identify broad continuities or contrasts that make sense of the whole. The importance of structure on this general level can hardly be overstressed. It is useless to give your students facts and interpretations, however vivid or

stimulating, if you do not at the same time show them how they fit together. A lecture course that lurches from one isolated insight to another without indicating an overall pattern makes it far more difficult to assimilate the material, and far less likely that it will be retained.

This sort of planning requires that you gauge the limits imposed by each lecture. How much can be said in fifty minutes? What sort of unit does a single lecture represent? The answers vary from field to field. But more often than not, novice lecturers try to cover too much ground rather than too little. In some instances, in fact, a good lecture will focus on a single major problem, author, or theorem alone. If it succeeds in doing this, it can be counted a success, provided that links with other lectures are not allowed to disappear from view. One means of drawing attention to such links is through a simple framing device at the start of the lecture. The phrase, “Last time we saw that . . .”—followed by a summary of the foregoing topic—will place the students on familiar terrain, and allow you to show how today’s subject proceeds from yesterday’s. Another strategy is periodically to devote part of a lecture to the broad view. This may be especially appropriate if you have subdivided the semester’s lectures into groups, each focused on one large topic. A course on Victorian fiction, for example, would ordinarily include some lectures on the novels of George Eliot. The first of these might give the students a glimpse of Eliot’s growth as an artist and the literary lessons she gained from her predecessors; the last might deal with Eliot’s significance for Victorian fiction as a whole.

Once your overall plan is prepared and leaves you feeling reasonably satisfied, then (but only then) comes the time to plan each individual lecture in detail. If the course is new, you may wish to prepare well in advance. If you have given it before, then whatever adjustments the lectures need can be made closer to the time of delivery. How much of a head start you give yourself is largely a matter of personal taste and temperament, however. Some lecturers with a taste for living dangerously write their lectures the night before and find the pressure stimulating; others would find it intolerable. The most common practice for a new course is to complete the bulk of the preparatory reading before the course starts and then to keep about a week ahead. What sources you consult when preparing each lecture will clearly be determined by your sub-

ject. In some cases you will confront primary texts, in others you will find yourself heavily dependent on secondary literature. Unlike a book or an article, a lecture can be brought continually up to date, receiving fresh transfusions of ideas from either your own ongoing research or recent scholarship. The best idea is to designate a certain number of old lectures—perhaps as many as a third—for special attention and revision each year, while you tinker with the others as time allows.

Lectures provide the scaffolding without which the course would collapse. But in addition, there are assigned readings for the students and perhaps section meetings as well. How should readings and sections be integrated with your lectures? Do not assume that your students will keep pace with the lecture material as they read; most will fall behind at some point, and a few will lag from the very beginning. The course syllabus should make clear in what order and by what date the assigned readings are to be completed. Your job as lecturer, however, is to introduce the books or articles on your reading list as they come along and whet the students' appetite, if possible, by explaining their value and significance. Like the author of a good preface, you should be informative without presuming that your audience is familiar with the work. When the material is unusually difficult, part of the lecture can be given to illuminating the dark corners of the text in a systematic way. Readings and lectures, that is to say, should at all times complement one another. Nothing so irritates students as a course whose reading assignments are completely divorced from the lecture topics. But neither should lectures simply repeat what the students are required to read on their own. Those lectures on George Eliot, if they do not do more than simply rehearse the plot and characters of *Adam Bede* or *Middlemarch*, will prove a bore for all concerned.

Sections, too, should complement the lectures rather than duplicate them in any significant fashion. Here difficult topics can be discussed in greater detail, alternative questions fielded and opinions solicited. Despite their flexible character, sections should be planned in advance with as much care as you give to the lecture schedule. If you have course assistants or teaching fellows who are responsible for conducting some of the sections, it is essential that you hold a strategy session with them before each section meeting, both to indicate what you

expect to be done and to hear their suggestions. A special section close to exam time will usually be much appreciated by the students, for it is then that many of their questions will suddenly emerge as they reread old lecture notes and try to put the course in order.

The close interdependence among lecturer, readings, and sections imposes a cardinal requirement on the lecturer: do not fall too far behind. However strong the temptation, do not spend six class hours discussing that favorite theory of yours when you had planned to spend only three. Don't decide that Kant really deserves half the semester when you had originally allotted him a week. The course description in the catalogue and the course syllabus that you distribute to your students at the first class each constitute a promise of intent. You cannot disregard your part of the bargain and expect the students to remain oblivious or unconcerned. Some adjustments may be necessary as the semester progresses, especially if you discover that the class is experiencing real difficulty in learning material you assumed would be easily grasped. But always try to work within your overall lecture plan. Use sections to help those in difficulty, or office hours, or a part of a lecture now and then. Don't lose sight of your final destination, whatever happens.

Just as the key to a good discussion is skillful questioning by the discussion leader, the key to a good lecture is delivery. All the preparation in the world will not by itself ensure a successful course; the expert who cannot communicate what he or she knows is useless as a teacher, for the art of teaching is to help others understand by making your knowledge accessible. Fortunately, there is a remedy at hand. The first step, once again, is to chart your itinerary. "Before he opens his mouth," Gilbert Highet writes, "the lecturer must know exactly what points he wishes to tell his audience, in what order, and with what emphasis." For all but the most experienced and most accomplished, Highet's prescription means that the lecturer must come equipped with notes. These need not be a verbatim text of what she or he intends to say. A detailed outline, with the major points and transitions between them set out legibly, is all that is really required. Ten pages of typed, single-spaced notes, including quotations written out in full, is generally a maximum of what you can use in one fifty-minute lecture. Many

lecturers make do with less. Others, however, write out the entire lecture, or append a written first paragraph to the notes that follow. Suit yourself.

No matter what your choice, you should strive for a delivery that is as lively and engaging as possible. Those who prefer notes to an elaborate manuscript find that notes encourage inventiveness and spontaneity. Reading makes for a more polished lecture, but may also invite dullness. You are not really thinking, nor are you likely to be paying attention to the mood of your audience; instead, you are turning printed symbols into sounds. Therefore take care to read with inflection and expressiveness. But whichever approach you use, vary your speed, speaking slowly and emphatically when you come to an important point, relaxing and picking up the delivery when you move on. Under no circumstance should you speak as rapidly as you would in a normal conversation, since students need time to have your words sink in. If this seems strange at first, try mimicking the delivery speed of a news broadcaster on radio or television. You will discover that he or she is speaking much more slowly than you imagined.

Delivery is not simply a matter of planning and inflection, however. It demands variety and balance as well. In order to hold your students' attention, you must alternate between general information and detail, difficult concepts and easy ones, gravity and humor. You can overdo the use of any; the trick is to keep all in proportion. The most effective way to do this requires that you develop a sense for the rhythm of student reactions over the course of a normal fifty-minute lecture. Here, as in writing, the first rule is: start well and end well. The initial ten minutes and final five minutes deserve special attention, since that is when students will be most receptive to your message. One of the best ways to put this time to good effect is to begin with a problem, and end with a solution. During the thirty-five intervening minutes you can present the logical steps and illustrative material leading from one to the other, being especially careful to watch for signs of students' boredom about halfway through the lecture. This is the dead point for most audiences; if you have any entertaining stories that relate to your argument, tell them now.

The teacher has some other aids for keeping student attention besides her or his own voice. Gestures can serve to underline a point quite effectively. One Harvard lecturer of note

used to pace back and forth on the podium, trailing his microphone cord behind him, and reverse direction at the end of each sentence, punctuating it with a snap of the cord. For the less flamboyant, there are also the teacher's old friends, blackboard and chalk. A lecture that involves unfamiliar terms, dates, or names can be made more accessible to the students if this information is placed on the board at the start of the hour. Some teachers go further and outline the lecture at the same time. Others prefer to put up diagrams or short sentences as they go along. For lectures in the sciences, the blackboard is indispensable, and may at times almost supplant the lecture itself as the principal agent of instruction. The two rules to remember when using the blackboard are to be sure that you are speaking audibly when your back is to the class, and that everyone has copied what seems pertinent from the board before you erase it.

Other valuable aids include slides and films. Slides are easier to integrate into a lecture, since you can continue talking with a picture on the screen, and make your points referring to it as you would to the blackboard. For some subjects such as field biology or fine arts, it is difficult to conceive how one could teach properly *without* slides. A common mistake that lecturers make when first showing slides, however, is to misjudge how many they will need. Here it pays to consult an experienced practitioner, since the norm varies according to the topic. Two dozen slides of Rembrandt paintings will be too many if you devote much time to each; if you are discussing fern species, you may want twice that number. Films, especially short ones, can also be a great help in some courses. Developmental psychology and cultural anthropology are two fields that lend themselves especially well to teaching through film. If the film is a good one, it will of course overshadow your lecture, and you should be prepared to base your remarks as much as possible on the film in order to exploit its full effect. Both slides and films demand projection equipment that functions without a hitch. Check beforehand to make sure that you or someone else knows how to operate the relevant machines; otherwise your class will rapidly tune out.

The physical setting of a lecture course affects both lecturer and students. Adequate lighting, easy access to a blackboard, public address equipment, comfortable seating all help a great deal. Unfortunately, there may be little you can do if these or other amenities are lacking. The best course of action

is always to visit the lecture room before your first class begins, try out a few remarks on some imaginary students, and see how you feel. Perhaps you will discover some adjustments you want to make in your normal routine; at least you will know where the light switch is when the time comes to use it later on. Once the lecture course is underway, you may find that the class size itself affects your delivery. If you are used to lecturing to only thirty students and suddenly face three hundred, your tone and gestures will have to become more deliberate and sharply defined. Concentrate on projection. If your class is smaller than you anticipated, you can afford to relax and become more informal. Over time, you will probably develop a variety of lecture styles to meet a variety of demands. As Laura Nash suggests in Chapter Six, the process of adopting a public *persona* before the class is both unavoidable and salutary. But the best lecturers retain as much of their personality and natural manner as possible in every teaching situation.

There are few lecturers who have not asked themselves, looking out at a sea of expectant faces, just what the students want from them. Clearly, different students expect different things; no one approach will please all. Teachers whom beginning students find helpful because their lectures are straightforward and undemanding may appear dull to those more advanced. The best the lecturer can do is to try to gauge the needs of the majority, and try to help the others after class or in section. But there remain a few basic student expectations, commonly shared, that no lecturer should ignore. A surprising number of students, when asked, will regularly say that what they value most in a lecture is enthusiasm. As one undergraduate put it, "I always wonder what makes a professor devote his life to scholarship—watching a lecturer get really turned on by his material helps me understand." Not only does enthusiasm convince students of your love for the subject; it can be contagious as well. Members of the class are more likely to do the course reading (and much more likely to do it as the term progresses, rather than the night before the exam) if they get the sense that this is exciting stuff. The converse is also true. If you find the material boring, so will they.

Students prize clarity no less than intellectual passion. They like a well-ordered course for aesthetic reasons, perhaps, but certainly on the very practical grounds that clarity facilitates retention. Many students walk into a lecture genuinely

concerned about taking good notes. They realize that summaries of lectures will be essential in studying the material later on; often, too, they interpret the contents of their notebooks not only as a source but also as a symbol of what they have learned, believing that records that are both copious and comprehensible prove the course's value. Other students who are struggling to keep up will find their task yet more difficult if the lectures do not lend themselves to easy transcription. The moral is obvious: help your students to take good notes by anticipating their needs. Repeat important points, stress logical interconnections. Prepare them for what you are about to say, speak slowly. If you see students in class who are writing down little or nothing to try to find out why. It may be that the problem is not the material, but you.

Another type of expectation, however, may well be less legitimate and hence frequently poses problems for lecturers. Students often assume that what they hear in a lecture is simply and indisputably true. Some, of course, are still accustomed to accepting the authority of the teacher without question and believing that her or his most casual thoughts are invariably pearls of wisdom. But even students who enjoy the complexities and ambiguities they encounter in discussion groups often expect that lecturers will provide not tantalizing problems but rather tidy solutions, not educated guesses but rather distilled truth. The physical settings of many lectures, with a raised podium placed at some distance from the audience, readily support these students' expectations. Such presuppositions about the nature of the lecture are less likely to be a problem in more advanced courses, although even there certain students will be prone to misinterpret a tentative theory as a well established truth. The lecturer's sole recourse is to present conflicting opinions and hypotheses wherever appropriate, and to stress that no one approach is immune from criticism.

A teacher who does this conscientiously will inevitably encourage questions from the floor. How are they to be handled? The answer depends on your sense of how widely the question is shared. If the point raised would seem of interest to many students, then there is a good case for taking time from the lecture and exploring it on the spot. If, on the other hand, the question strikes you as narrow or decidedly offbeat, then an answer is better saved for after class. Simply tell the student



that he or she should come up to see you once the lecture is over, and that you will explore the topic with them at that time. Never make the student feel that the question is a foolish one. Critical faculties all too frequently tend to be dulled by prolonged sitting and note-taking; an active response to your lecture, as long as it does not disrupt or distract the class as a whole, should be welcome.

There are many other kinds of student response while the lecture is in progress, and all provide useful information to the lecturer. You can actually see a great deal from where you stand on the podium, especially if you lift your head from the lecture notes now and then. Use this contact to monitor your progress. What you hope to observe is a class with their attention riveted on you, the lecturer. If your audience is motionless (save for hands employed in energetic transcription of the lecture) then you have them with you, and all is well. Yawns, fidgeting, staring out of the window are all obvious trouble signs; the more restless the class, the more bored it is. What can you do to calm squirming students? The best tactic is to move on quickly to your next substantive point, thereby hoping to regain their attention, and at the same time to check your delivery by going down a short mental list. Are you speaking audibly? Slowly enough? With enough emphasis? Try varying your delivery somewhat and see if the squirming abates. Although some classes will tell you when you cannot be heard (shouts of "Louder!" from the rear of the hall), few if any will tell you outright that they find you dull and uninspiring. That message they reserve for body language.

There are times in a lecture course when something goes seriously wrong and you find yourself forced to react on the spot. If you make a slip of the tongue or a computational error that elicits laughter or hisses, correct the error (apologize if need be) and move on. If you don't know what you have said to elicit the response, ask. If the lights go out or the pipes begin to bang, send someone for the janitor and explain to the class that you have done so. If your problem is an openly disruptive student or students, however, then you are going to have to show some diplomatic flair. In general, the class will side with you and against the rowdy types as long as you act in a civil manner and do not overplay your authority. To give a little, and then be firm but polite is the best rule. If there are some things you prefer not to have going on in your classroom—

whispering, late arrivals, newspaper reading—say so. Your section leaders, placed strategically around the lecture hall, can often keep these activities from getting out of hand. But remember, there are limits to what you and they can accomplish; nuisances of a minor nature you must learn to tolerate.

Some of the most important types of learning that take place in a lecture course do not necessarily occur during the actual lectures themselves. The teacher may use less formal contacts with students to clarify points, to encourage extra reading, and even to counterbalance the passivity that, as we know, listening to lectures too often breeds. One of the simplest and most effective ways to encourage students to think through the material of the course—and to remove what is so often a barrier to such thinking, an undue sense of distance from and even awe toward the lecturer—is simply to be accessible whenever possible for casual conversations before and after class. Students who are shy about coming in to office hours are often willing, even eager, to talk informally in the classroom itself. They may also respond to indirect signals that the lecturer is happy to chat with members of the class more readily than they do to an overt invitation. If, for example, you step down from the stage immediately after the lecture and linger a bit, students who otherwise might hesitate to do so will often come up to ask questions or just talk about the course.

Office hours assume an especially important role when the lectures are not supplemented by discussion classes. Adding a couple of extra hours during the weeks when students are most likely to need help, such as at the beginning of the term and immediately before exams, is a much appreciated gesture. Students who are having trouble in a course often become entangled in a vicious cycle, especially if they do not have a sympathetic section leader (or any section leader at all) to whom they can turn. The difficulty they are having in following the lectures, doing the reading, or in completing written assignments leads them to avoid doing other work for the course, which in turn encourages them to stop coming to lectures, which in turn makes it even harder, practically and emotionally, for them to catch up. One obvious but important way to counter this pattern is to encourage students to come in to your office hours (or to see their section leader) as soon as a problem arises, rather than waiting until it gets out of hand. If you find members of the class slipping behind, call them or send

a note asking to see them. But even students who are in good standing and do not wish to take advantage of office hours will be pleased to know you are there; your availability is read as a sign that you care.

Students generally welcome review sessions shortly before exams. It can be useful to think beforehand about which topics you might wish to repeat or enlarge on, since questions are occasionally slow in getting started. One format that works well is to begin with a general description of the exam (how many essay questions, how many spot passages or identifications, how heavily it will count) and then to offer practical advice about studying. Even the brightest students have sometimes failed to master efficient study habits. They, no less than others, may benefit from the observation that many people remember best the material that they review immediately before bedtime, or the suggestion that studying in groups may prove particularly helpful given the subject matter of the course. Once you have given the class general advice, try to let them see what sort of answers you expect, and what sort you would rather have them avoid. It is sometimes possible to pass out a sample essay, with comments and corrections, that will show them your standards in a very direct fashion. Then you can turn to the more difficult aspects of the course so far, offer suggestions for coping, and finally solicit questions from the floor.

The feedback you get back from your students throughout the term can be quite as informative to you as the advice you bestow on them during review sessions. Many teachers choose to supplement whatever official evaluation (if any) the university may provide at the end of the term with a more informal questionnaire or even, if the lecture class is small enough, a discussion of the course around the middle of the semester. This procedure makes it possible to take the students' suggestions into account while they are still around to benefit; many undergraduates really appreciate this sign that the teacher is concerned with their reactions. Like so many other proofs of good will on the teacher's part, it carries with it the indirect benefit of encouraging members of the group to devote themselves to the course with enthusiasm.

Useful though the students' reactions may be, they are, of course, only one of the many ways you have to evaluate the quality of your lectures. Arranging with a colleague to sit in on each other's classes can be illuminating (and less threatening

than it may sound). The styles even of teachers espousing very similar pedagogical principles can differ dramatically, so you can often pick up new ideas by watching someone else lecture, as well as benefit from their comments on your own presentation. Videotaping lectures is also both infinitely more informative and substantially less intimidating than one might at first suppose.<sup>1</sup> Many of the mannerisms that can annoy an audience show up clearly on tapes; we are often totally unaware of, say, a habit of frowning at a dramatic moment in the lecture. Recognizing such patterns of behavior is half the battle. Once we acknowledge their existence, mannerisms often disappear on their own.

Watching a tape may remind us once again how many different components contribute to a good lecture—the content, the physical bearing of the lecturer, timing, humor, and delivery. But the very fact that so many elements interact during a lecture is not only a reminder of how many things can go wrong, but also a reminder of how many ways we have to cure or at least to compensate for limitations as lecturers. Someone who is conscious of having a high and reedy voice may, for example, work on modulating it, while at the same time counterbalancing it by standing closer to the audience or adding dramatic pauses to a lecture. Equally important is to discover the things you do well, and build your delivery around them. Literature teachers with a gift for reading verse, for instance, may well choose to do so more frequently than some of their colleagues.

If lecturing is, as this chapter has suggested, a fine art and a difficult one, it can also be very enjoyable. And you will be at your best when you feel the pleasure affecting your lecture style. Enthusiasm for the process of lecturing communicates itself just as readily as your enthusiasm for your subject matter. Despite some residual nervousness, despite the hurried breakfast spent poring over your notes and last-minute worries over whether you have enough to say, you can still step up to the podium and honestly tell yourself: "This is going to be fun."

1. The process of videotaping is described more fully in Chapter Nine, "Learning a New Art," by Richard Fraher, pp. 116-127.

*Although there is no one way to teach a class and no one style that suits everyone, these are methods that have worked for me.*

## *Six Keys to Effective Instruction in Large Classes: Advice from a Practitioner*

*J. Richard Aronson*

There can be great satisfaction in teaching large classes. For twenty years I have taught classes with enrollments of up to seven hundred students and I have never tired of the experience. Mostly I enjoy the accomplishment of helping to start so many people simultaneously on the road to understanding my subject area. Large classes are very efficient and cost effective, but they can also be personal. There is no reason a teacher cannot build into the large lecture setting additional elements that provide individualized treatment to special student groups, especially those who need extra help or those who have developed a deeper interest in the subject.

I would like to suggest six keys to teaching the large class effectively. Although there is no one way to teach a class and no one style that suits everyone, these methods have worked for me and are directly addressed to a teacher facing a large class.

### **Key One: Don't Be Intimidated**

Don't be intimidated by the size of the class. Once the class size passes fifty it does not make much difference how big it gets. You may

experience some nervousness in anticipation of meeting the group, but this is a natural and a healthy sign. In front of a large class you will face some of the same problems and sensations as does a performer; butterflies in the stomach, for example.

Fortunately, anticipatory nervousness provides the energy and the will to prepare your lecture in advance. It may be possible to wing it in a small class where you can rely on class questions to help you rephrase your presentation. But in the large lecture you have only one chance. If you are not expressing yourself well, you will lose the attention of your students. Soon you will see that distant look on their faces, or worse, you will hear heads hitting desks as students pass out from boredom.

Although you should recognize the importance of being interesting, you should not lose sight of the fact that your job is to teach, not entertain. You have to get a lot of material across, and quite often your course is a prerequisite for others. The goal you are striving for is to create an atmosphere where students are eager to learn more about your subject.

Incidentally, it is very important that on the first day of class you establish a good rapport with your students. Be sure to tell them your name (you would be shocked to learn how many students do not seem to know the names of their teachers). Also, spend some time telling them how you intend to run the class. Remove the ambiguity from such things as attendance requirements, seating arrangements, homework assignments, the number of exams, and even exam dates. Tell them how they can get in touch with you and with your teaching assistants. Also settle how you will determine their grades. Your remarks and a well-designed syllabus should get the course off to a good start.

Be a missionary. Not everybody in the lecture hall wants to be there or is interested in your subject at first. Show a little excitement and enthusiasm for your field. Explain why understanding your subject is essential for life-long happiness and fulfillment; why without your course you cannot be an interesting or attractive person. Whet their appetites for what is to come.

### **Key Two: Prepare Carefully**

Prepare carefully for lectures. It is impossible to explain something that you yourself do not understand. I actually consider my preparation time a rehearsal. I know many scholars are offended when theatrical terms are applied to academic activities. We do not like to think we are in show business. Nevertheless, in the large lecture there is little if any chance to benefit from student reaction. What will make your lecture successful is not only what you say but how you say it. If your phrasing is ambiguous or hard to understand, if you mumble or slur your words, or if you have developed some peculiar nervous habits, the material you

intended to cover in lecture may be lost. Preparing for lecture by just going over your notes is not good enough, especially when you are new at the game. It is not a bad idea to write out your lecture, not so that you might read it in class, which generally produces the deadliest of all lectures, but in order to see exactly what you can cover in fifty minutes. The best way to practice delivering a lecture is to deliver the lecture. But who will listen when no grades are at stake? You can practice in the shower, in front of the mirror, or in the car on the way to the university. The important thing is for you to actually hear the lecture you will deliver, to get your phrasing right, and to avoid fumbling for words. If you have television equipment at your disposal, taping a few lectures might be a good idea. I have never done this, however, because I am sure that I would be disgusted with the way I look. But if you are just starting out, risk humiliation and use the television equipment.

#### **Key Three: Be Natural**

It is dangerous to copy someone else's style. Don't tell jokes if you don't enjoy telling jokes. Humor is always a great asset and can be fantastically effective in teaching. But telling a joke for the sake of it, especially one that is not funny, can backfire. Just be natural and comfortable in front of the class. The university accommodates a wide variety of personalities and students enjoy the variety. So if you are the quiet type, be quiet; if you are the tough-guy type, be tough; and if you have a sense of humor by all means let it come out in class. Whatever your style, be sure to enjoy the experience.

#### **Key Four: Be Personal**

Even a large lecture can be personal. There are several vehicles for giving your students individual help. The usual method is the discussion group. It is common for large lecture classes to meet once a week in small groups. This gives the instructor a chance to get some student feedback and to understand better which parts of the material are troublesome. However, the discussion groups are usually run by teaching assistants with whom the lecturer must have a good working arrangement. Key Six discusses lecturer-teaching-assistant relations.

Other methods of achieving closer contact with your students include making yourself available to students immediately after lecture, making use of a computer network, and instituting a tutorial class, which I have affectionately called "The Loser's Club." Remaining in the lecture hall for a few minutes after class can do a lot to convince students that you are interested in them. One problem students have with large-class lectures is that they are anonymous. By remaining after class you can

answer a few questions and show that you are accessible. You may also get a sense of what may have gone wrong with the lecture. Sometimes one bungled word or a mislabeled diagram can throw off one hundred students. They usually will not tell you when you have done something dumb in class, though they will remember it far longer than the material they are supposed to be learning. They may be afraid to speak up or they may get a kick out of watching you get deeper and deeper into trouble.

If your school has a computer network, you have another vehicle for personal communication. The computer can be an excellent teaching tool. Perhaps you can find an interactive teaching program that can be incorporated into your course. Self-teaching programs or problem sets and question-and-answer routines allow more advanced students to move at a faster pace to a higher level of understanding. The network also offers a method of direct and immediate communication with each student. It can be used to organize homework assignments or simply to send messages.

Another way to get closer to your students and to protect those who are not doing so well or not living up their own expectations is through the "Loser's Club." A number of years ago a student came up to me after the first lecture of the semester and very politely said, "Hi Professor Aronson, I'm here again. It's my third try, but this time I'm going to pass." I was depressed to think that not only could a student flunk my course twice but, even worse, that I wasn't even aware of it. At that moment I invented the Loser's Club.

The club is a tutorial that meets on a weekly basis throughout the semester. At Lehigh undergraduates are permitted to serve as apprentice teachers. Each semester I select one or two outstanding undergraduate majors in the College of Business and Economics to serve in this capacity. Each week they hold question-and-answer sessions with students seeking extra help.

Attendance at the "Loser's Club" is never compulsory but I constantly remind students who are repeating the class or who have done poorly on an hour exam to attend. It will come as no surprise that the students who get the most out of the experience are the tutors themselves. But I monitor the process and remain convinced that the students in need also gain much. I also encourage all students performing below their own expectations to join. I have found the club to be useful to those eager and hardworking students who need just a bit more help in getting to the B or A level.

I might also mention that care must be taken in calling this class the "Loser's Club." It is, of course, done to make light of the problem. If you decide to use such a blatant title, be sure to make a little joke about it. Some students are very sensitive and are fearful of being labeled "losers." Occasionally I've called it the "opportunity class" or the "special tutorial," but I keep coming back to its original name.

**Key Five: Prevent Students from Feeling Insignificant and Anonymous**

The law of large classes is that each individual feels insignificant and anonymous. Students sitting at the rear of the hall believe that they are out of your sight and hearing range. They also believe that if you don't know that they missed a class it won't have an effect on their grade and achievement in the course. Such problems will be compounded if you are lucky enough to have your class scheduled for 8 A.M.

The best and perhaps only way to keep your students interested in the subject is to deliver stimulating and exciting lectures. But how can you keep the interest of a student who has not come to class or who is asleep before the lecture has started? I have been living on campus for three years as faculty master of a residential college, and have been impressed with the hours students keep. Most students do not live normal lives. The lights of our building burn continuously and many students do not get to bed until 2 or 3 in the morning—and it's not all studying. This makes it very difficult for them to be alive at 8 A.M. I have found two solutions for this problem: the cordless microphone and the "curve buster."

The cordless microphone allows me to wander anywhere I wish while lecturing. I lecture from the front of the class, which is normal, or from the back. I can lecture from any seat in the hall or from outside the hall. Such moving around tends to keep the students awake. At a recent 8 A.M. lecture a young woman had fallen asleep in her seat. (I presume she was asleep before the lecture started.) Since the seat next to her was vacant I sat down and continued to lecture from that position. I even took some notes for her. Needless to say, when she awoke she was a little disoriented. I have kept an eye on her. She is in class every morning; she is wide awake and she smiles. I think she knows I care about her performance.

The "curve buster" is a device for maintaining class morale. It provides students with an opportunity to improve their grades by answering extra credit questions that are administered during lecture hour. CBs, as they are called, are unannounced. Sometimes I give a curve buster at the start of class and sometimes at the end. Curve busters take only about ten minutes to administer. Sometimes they are problems; sometimes they are multiple-choice questions. Three variations are run simultaneously to keep everyone honest. Curve buster points are aggregated and taken into consideration in setting a student's grade, which is determined in a two-step fashion. The original distribution is determined by the scores on the hour exams and the final. Then boundaries are set for letter grades. Next we add the curve buster points. This allows students near grade boundaries to improve their letter grades. Curve busters have encouraged students to come to class and, more important, to keep up

with their work. The curve buster problem usually tests material covered during the previous hour or in the current lecture. It is joyously accepted as a device that can only help and not hurt a student's grade.

#### **Key Six: Stay in Touch with TAs**

Teaching assistants can make or break your class, so it is important to know what they are doing and how the students are reacting to them. I do not believe in overtraining TAs or even in observing their classes. I feel that they too must develop their own style and that they should be as independent as possible. As teachers-in-training, the sooner they understand that they are responsible for the success of their classes, the better. TAs must attend all lectures, which provides them with material for their own classes. They not only see what I covered but how I covered it. I may have been particularly obscure on some points. Good TAs tell you when you have been ineffective. They are encouraged to use any style they want, to use homework assignments if they want, and to keep regular office hours. I want my TAs to get as close to the students as possible. Students hesitate to approach the lecturer of a large class. A good TA can usually develop a closer working relationship with a student than can the professor of a large class. Incidentally, I do not let the TAs see advance copies of the hour exams. This frees them to work with students to outfox the professor.

Lehigh University runs a summer prep program for TAs. In this brief training program each student works in front of a TV camera and participates in discussions with several professors and TAs who have already served for a year or two. The program has proven successful, especially for many of our foreign-born graduate students for whom English is a second language. During the semester I meet with my TAs and apprentice teachers on a weekly basis. These meetings are for discussing problems they might experience and for exchanging ideas on what to bring up in class or how to assign homework. With those who run the Loser's Club we keep track of those individuals who are receiving or are in need of extra help.

The TAs play an important role in determining each student's grade. The distribution of grades is first set by points accumulated on hour exams, the final exam, and the curve busters. A large number of students land on the border between one grade and another. The TAs have the power to push a student over or under the line. The over-and-under procedure is carried out with all TAs present, which helps us provide fairly good inter-discussion group uniformity in setting grades. We know that the TA experience varies from person to person and we know that some TAs tend to be easier graders than others. Since we set the grades with all the TAs present, we can aim for fairness.



### **Conclusion**

Teaching the large class is an important responsibility for which there is great satisfaction and reward. If you are successful you will have influenced the lives and thoughts of a great number of people, and you will have made it possible for your department to offer a wider selection of courses. Most of all, you will notice that your colleagues will treat you with great care, admiration, and respect. Why? Because they want you to keep teaching the course. They all harbor the fear that should you decide to move on to something else, they will be next. So enjoy the experience and wear the position well.

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