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WESLEYAN CONFERENCE (continued)

sciousness-raising, cognitive styles, increasing self-esteem, as well as increasing knowledge are all entwined? What should be the subject of the research? Should we look into "feminist pedagogy" (if we can define it) or courses and programs? And should we include noncredit courses in and outside the formal university structure? Should we examine the other courses taught by women's studies teachers, for example, to compare their impact with that of the women's studies course? And, finally, what kind of evaluative mechanism is appropriate to measure such goals and such programs?

There was a good deal of criticism of traditional social science modes of inquiry, particularly where an outside researcher, coming in with his or her own preconceived notions, administers a paper and pencil test, which is then scored and analysed by a computer, providing no direct feedback to any particular class. What the group found more desirable were ideas such as videotaping classes for later review, content analyses of personal journals that students and teachers keep during such courses and in-depth interviews which include impressions as well as formal information. Could this be enough?

At this point, the group heard from Marcia Guttentag, Visiting Professor of Social Ethics at Harvard, who introduced a more human approach to evaluation. The system she described is based on "decision theory" and permits groups of participants to formulate goals, weight their importance relative to one another, and to determine personal probabilities as to the feasibility of reaching these goals. Using this system, researchers can be participants (and participants researchers), and the examination can provide immediate feedback on each course for every value it established. Moreover, the system is "iterative" which means that the testing is not one-shot, but can be done and done again over time. Finally, we were told, the instruments in such a system can be classical social-science research tools (questionnaires, projective tests) and/or other, newer measurements developed by us to answer our particular questions.

During the last two days, the group digested the ideas that had been presented and concluded: An evaluation of women's studies will be worthwhile if, indeed, women's studies teachers and students can control what is done. The primary audience for any evaluation should be the teachers and students of the courses to be studied and only secondarily should the audience be other groups of people in and out of academe. Ethical considerations are important if the people involved in women's studies are to control their own evaluation.

No definitive list of goals was arrived at, but the following give an idea of the kinds of values attached to women's studies: heightening awareness of the differences between actual and mythical roles of women; self-actualization of women; creating more positive attitudes toward women on the part of men as well as women; active involvement of women in women's issues; increasing women's intellectual competence; generating new methods within the disciplines, especially social science and history; enhancing the capability for collective responsibility; enhancing the competence of women teachers; and integrating material about women into the rest of the curriculum.

NEWS FROM ABROAD

Oonagh Hartnett writes from the Department of Applied Psychology at the University of Wales' Institute of Science and Technology in Cardiff that her course, "The Role of Women in Modern Society," was a great success last year and that she has been asked to repeat it.

Joanna Ryan of Kings College, Cambridge, is organizing an interdisciplinary course on women for the fall of 1973. Part of the social and political science degree program, the course will include politics, economics, social history, sociology, anthropology, and psychology.

The method presented by Marcia Guttentag was enthusiastically received because it seemed the most sensitive to our needs. The group assigned three of its members, Lorelei Brush, Alice Gold, and Grace Baruch, to become competent in the method as soon as possible, and intends to have Dr. Guttentag return to teach a larger group the method.

One possible outcome of the Wesleyan Conference might have been an agreement that evaluation of women's studies is premature, undesirable, and/or impossible. Rather, the group that remained decided to consider seriously undertaking some research, and named itself the Research Group on the Nature and Impact of Women's Studies. Next steps involve learning more about the best methods for measuring impact and contacting other women's studies programs for cooperation. A second conference will take place, either to train a small number of persons (some of whom will be free to travel in the coming year) in the Guttentag method, or to present a larger, and more representative group of women's studies people with the full range of issues that the Wesleyan Conference considered. The choice will depend partly on resources, partly on Dr. Guttentag's schedule, and largely on what kind of response we get by mail from persons who were not in attendance at the Conference.

At this point, we at Wesleyan would be grateful to hear from anyone who has attempted any kind of descriptive or evaluative research on women's studies courses or programs, or are interested in participating in this project. We would be grateful to have samples of questionnaires or other measures used. We were turned on by this conference to new ideas and new people and hope our enthusiasm can be communicated. Do ask what we are about.

Sheila Tobias, Lorelei Brush, Alice Gold

CORRECTION OF A CORRECTION

Our faces are red, since we have been wrong twice about the institution formerly called San Francisco State College. It is now called California State University, San Francisco, and it is possible to earn both the B.A. and M.A. degree there with a "Focus on Women."