Fall 1977

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FACT SHEET ON WOMEN'S STUDIES PROGRAMS IN 1977

1. There are now 276 women's studies programs on college and university campuses in the United States. The growth rate of these programs in the last 18 months was 80 percent.

2. Women's studies programs can be found in the District of Columbia and in all but nine of the 50 states. Those states without programs are Alaska, Idaho, Louisiana, Maine, Mississippi, North Dakota, Rhode Island, West Virginia, and Wyoming.

3. The state with the largest number of programs continues to be California, with 48 programs. Other states with significant numbers of programs include New York (38), Illinois (21), and Michigan (17).

4. Three-quarters of all women's studies programs can be found in public colleges and universities; one-quarter on private campuses. More than half of them (56 percent) are to be found in public four-year colleges and universities; 24 percent in private four-year colleges and universities; and 20 percent at public two-year colleges. There are no programs at private two-year colleges.

5. The largest area of growth is in the public two-year college. Of the 127 new programs, 40 percent are in the two-year community college, exactly twice the general percentage of two-year women's studies programs in the total 276 programs. Eleven of the new two-year programs are in California, and six are in Illinois. In general, the states with the largest numbers of new programs are California (16), Michigan (12), Illinois and New York (11 each), and Minnesota (10).

6. Slightly more than half (51 percent) of all programs offer a structured curriculum leading to the completion of a minor, certificate, or degree. Six programs (all located in California) offer the Associate of Arts degree; 56 programs, the B.A.; 16 programs, the M.A.; and 2 (SUNY/Binghamton and Union Graduate School), the Ph.D.

7. A number of mature programs have, in 1977, instituted the B.A. degree: Barnard College, the University of California at Berkeley, California State University at Sonoma, the University of Georgia, SUNY/Albany, the University of South Carolina.

8. Four older programs have instituted both the B.A. and the M.A. degrees: the University of Maryland, the University of Alabama, California State University at Long Beach, and SUNY/Binghamton.

9. Four older programs have recently established certificates or minors and B.A.'s: the University of Nebraska, SUNY/Stony Brook, Towson State University, and the University of Georgia.

10. Cornell University, with one of the two oldest programs in the country, begun in 1969, has just established a graduate minor, the first in the country.

Compiled by Florence Howe and Frances Kelley

than a dependent relationship with a traditional authority figure.

Because this was the first women's studies course for most of the students, I often had to relate information about women's history, anthropology, and feminist theory. This is what I mean by "lecturing" although it was done in a spontaneous way: I did not give speeches and would stop whenever someone had more information to offer, opinions to express, or questions to ask. When we talked about a subject like women and language, which was completely new to them, I had a responsibility to present at least basic introductory information. Students voluntarily took the lead in discussions about subjects that were more familiar to them.

Perhaps the most important responsibility a teacher has in this kind of workshop is to see that sexist and racist attitudes in the students' work and in the readings do not go ignored or unexamined. This is not only up to the teacher, of course; in this class, this responsibility often was mine because no one else was inclined to speak up at the right moment.

Summary and Conclusion

I do not mean these observations to be in any way definitive for all feminist writing workshops, yet I think my experience suggests ways in which a feminist workshop is crucially different from a traditional (apolitical) writing course. To sum up, emphasis is on

- process rather than product, on learning to trust and challenge oneself, to set a realistic pace, and stick to it.
- content rather than form or style to encourage women to respect themselves and accept their life experiences as material for creative work. Some consciousness-raising is necessary about the neglect and trivialization of women's lives in literature and discrimination against women writers.
- open discussion in which students talk to each other about personal experiences to reconnect with the essential concerns of their lives.
- consciousness-raising about the relationship between our personal lives as women and the patriarchal society in which we live.
- collective sharing of work to establish a supportive environment, generate ideas, and break down strict teacher/student roles.

As an exploration of "how we have been living, how we have been led to imagine ourselves," the feminist writing workshop provides an essential link between the "voiceless" past and the future that women imagine—and work to create.