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Now You See It, Now You Don't: Women's Studies at the Pre-College Level in Ontario, Canada

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athletic experience for the women's teams or to discontinue the games altogether. When the archdiocese refused, the playoffs, a longtime Philadelphia tradition, were discontinued.

Other sports-related contract agreements over the next several years resulted in the allotment of more money for women's sports, the equalization of salary schedules for male and female coaches, and a unified list for all coaching positions so that women could coach all-male teams and vice-versa. Initially, because of seniority provisions, the coaching list has had limited employment opportunities for women coaches. With equal salaries, men began to take over the coaching of women's teams.

As early as 1973, the union won back pay for a teacher who had been denied an after-school job (and more money) because her principal said she had to go home and cook dinner for her family. At the same time, the union's Women's Rights Committee began producing its own sex-fair materials for students and began working toward desegregating the district's vocational education classes by urging changes in course selection and recruitment.

Pennsylvania NOW took an active role in the sex equity movement, surveying practices in the 505 school districts in the state, threatening law suits, and advocating women's studies programs at School Board meetings. (These were televised on the local PBS stations, usually providing the most interesting programs of the evening.) In 1979, in response to this campaign, a Sex Equity Coordinator was employed by the Affirmative Action Office. Some viewed demands for sex equity as a joke; others, who perceived them as a threat to their share of the pie, responded with anger. There were public accusations of racism against women seeking equity. It required courage for them to stand in front of TV cameras, and face students, colleagues, and neighbors the next day.

Three years of fairly continual pressure finally resulted in some union contract movement, a virtually penniless Committee, and one inservice course—in a district whose expenditures exceeded two million dollars per school day. But by 1976 the Curriculum Division produced its first publication, A Teacher's Resource Guide on Women's Studies, designed to help teachers to focus on the issues and on women's history in the classroom. The Women's Rights Committee of the Federation subtly forced the district to appoint a highly-effective Title IX Coordinator who has enabled Philadelphia to meet federal timetables for sex desegregation of gym classes and vocational arts classes. By 1977 the Office of Intergroup Education had applied for and received a federal grant to conduct a series of two-hour sessions of sex equity staff development for kindergarten and primary level teachers.

The current superintendent has, during the past several years, promoted many women to administrative positions. Women in Education (WE) helped to exert pressure in this area, forming an old-girls' network to assist colleagues in passing the principal's examination and other tests. For the first time, sample questions and answers that old boys had always shared with friends and colleagues were available to women.

Until 1977-78, when the Women's Studies Advisory Committee received a grant for $15,000 from the Women's Educational Equity Act Program to develop elementary and secondary curricular materials, the district had spent only a few thousand dollars on women's studies, mostly for meetings and printing. (It did cost the district money to begin to equalize medical benefits.) This is still true because the district's current projects are federally funded. Money from the state helped to implement state sex equity and vocational education regulations, and minimal cost was involved in integrating classes by gender. So the citizens of Philadelphia have spent very little (in comparison to the school budget) to achieve the sex equity programs we have now.

One of the best assets we have is our students' sense of fairness and justice and their understanding of their own needs and aspirations. We may have problems with the availability of funding and with recalcitrant administrators, but our students' demands will keep the concept of equity alive. Ultimately, though, the responsibility for the survival of these programs rests with us, the few feminist teachers, parents and school administrators among the millions who are closely watching our educational institutions.

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Now You See It, Now You Don't: Women's Studies at the Pre-College Level in Ontario, Canada

by Anne Chapman

Women's studies at the college level has taken root, flourished and spread in Canada as in the United States. But information about women's studies at the crucial pre-college level seems to be altogether lacking. The following report, based both on reading and interviews, surveys efforts in Ontario, Canada, to counter the male-biased curriculum, including the establishment of courses in women's studies. Although far from exhaustive, the survey may encourage others to amplify, supplement, correct and update it as well as to extend it to other parts of the world.

The extension of women's studies to the pre-college level has had some support in Ontario, particularly from a major Ontario Ministry of Education policy statement in 1975, Sex-Role Stereotyping and Women's Studies, and from Women's Studies: A Multimedia Approach, produced by the Ontario Educational Communications Authority for secondary school teachers, among others, in 1977. The 1978 Federation of Women Teachers' Associations of Ontario booklet, Challenging the Double Standard, suggests that the "development of a course devoted to women's studies" for grades 7-10 is something the schools "may want to consider," though it cautions that "considerable thought..."
and planning on the part of the number of committed teachers and a fairly receptive climate throughout the school are necessary preconditions." The Board of Education for the City of Toronto has had a permanent, full-time "consultant in women's studies" since 1977, as have a number of other metropolitan Toronto municipalities. Yet even Toronto, a leader in its concern with women's issues, reports only one high school women's studies course (taught at the urging of the female principal of a 90 per cent female student body); those knowledgeable about other Ontario school systems were not aware of courses elsewhere in the province. This does not mean that such courses do not exist, but it suggests that there are not many of them.

The Ontario Ministry of Education, by means of policy statements, circulars, guidelines, and lists of approved textbooks, controls rather closely what is taught in grades K-13. Clearly, the official position, while not exactly discouraging separate women's studies courses, cannot be said to favor them; the commitment is to ensuring equal opportunity for self-actualization for women and men. Although women's studies could be promoted in this context, it has not been; consultants, education officers, and superintendents of curriculum as well as teachers have generally focused their efforts along integrationist lines.

The government mandate, in The Formative Years: Provincial Curriculum Policy for the Primary and Junior Divisions (up to grade 7) is "that education in the Primary and Junior Divisions be conducted so that each child may have the opportunity to develop abilities and aspirations without the limitations imposed by sex-role stereotypes. Sex-Role Stereotyping and Women's Studies, described as "a resource guide for teachers, including suggestions, units of study, and resource lists," is the supporting document for this policy. Its 87 pages suggest units for levels up to grade 13, ranging from "Pioneer Women" to "Philatelic Study," "Family Relationships," "Women in the Arts," and "Industrial, Technological and Science Education." Each contains questions and activities as well as a brief list of print and audio-visual resources. Nowhere is it suggested that the units be combined into a course, nor would they lend themselves to such use. On the contrary, the explicit expectation is that teachers will "use only two or three of the units," and have them "inserted into, or adapted for, courses developed from other Ministry guidelines,"

Few changes in government policy have occurred since 1975. The 24-page Changing Roles in a Changing World: A Resource Guide Focusing on the Female Student, distributed to every teacher in the province and available in French as well as English, deals only sketchily with women's work outside the home and its implications for both sexes. It presents a 16-question checklist to help uncover sex-role stereotyping in the school, a suggestion to "consider the development of women's studies courses in your school," and some three dozen annotated print and audio-visual resources. The similarly slim Girls and Women in Society lists some 300 books, records, and films with brief annotations. In 1977, a Ministry guideline for intermediate history (grades 7-10) required the addition of a unit on women's suffrage to the mandatory topics; but the document explaining how to do so has yet to be released; and the Ministry's revision of the intermediate science guidelines has resulted only in some rather subtle changes in language and illustration.

In this effort, resources, especially textbooks are vital. Partly in response to... And Then There Were None, a report on sexism in Ministry-approved readers for grades 4-6, commissioned by the Status of Women Committee, Federation of Women Teachers' Associations of Ontario in 1975, texts must now pass a test for sexism developed by the Ontario Status of Women Council and applied by a five-person committee in order to be included on the Ministry's "approved" list. Indeed, a science text that failed the test was recently excluded.

Some feel, nevertheless, that a required review of the drafts of texts would allow more effective intervention against sex-role stereotyping. Moreover, schools have not been required, because of the expense of buying new books, to replace the older, sexist textbooks.

Although genuinely non-sexist texts are still in the future, school boards have commissioned kits, units, curricula, and guides from their own consultants, curriculum officers, and teachers. The Women's Press also produces supplementary materials for teachers. Their Never Done: Three Centuries of Women's Work in Canada, is used in schools—but in Ontario it is a library resource rather than a classroom text, since it is not on the "approved list" that is the key to cracking the school market. The Women's Press staff is at work on teachers' guides. Available also in Ontario are Ready, Aim... Aspire!, a book on career education in high school by a New Brunswick team of teachers, and the British Columbia Teachers' Federation's Breaking the Mold, lesson plans and a teachers' guide to fighting sex-role stereotyping in grades up to the eighth. From all accounts, though, neither is extensively used.

More ambitious efforts include the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education's (OISE) The Women's Kit (1975), a box of 150 multimedia items, focusing on women and their socialization, accompanied by a 37-page manual. Praised for its versatility and criticized for its lack of structure, it has sold 1,500 copies nationwide. OISE's Women in Canadian History Project is developing a series of four books for the secondary level that follow standard periodization and are intended for use along with standard textbooks. Those working on the project have been invited by individual school boards, largely in Toronto, Ottawa, and southwest Ontario, to hold workshops and speak with teachers, as well as to give sessions at national and regional conferences.

Workshops and conferences sponsored by local boards, the Ministry of Education, the Ontario Association for Curriculum Development, the Canadian Teachers' Federation, the Association of History Teachers of Ontario and others, have developed from a focus on method rather than content in sex-role stereotyping ("ask boys to water flowers, girls to move equipment") to subject-oriented conferences that attempt to bring together the research community and pre-college classroom teachers. The success of this approach is due to institutional frameworks: "professional development days" for teachers that can lead to graduate credit and higher pay are structured into the school year, and Ontario school boards subsidize teachers' attendance. The Canadian Teachers' Federation maintains a "resource bank for status of women activities," including "women's studies in elementary and high school curriculum, and sex-role stereotyping," and pays the expenses of resource people for conferences, seminars and workshops.

An interplay between individual initiative and institutional imperatives seems to have characterized the developing interest in non-sexist education at the pre-college level in Ontario. The Ontario Ministry of Education is currently conducting a review of its anti-sex-role stereotyping policy. The province-wide survey, addressed to principals, school board superintendents responsible for curriculum, and high school heads of guidance, is based on a random sample of 316 schools spanning grades K-13. The report, when it is issued next fall, will reveal how many schools have instituted women's studies courses, and how many have chosen to oppose sex-role stereotyping in other ways.

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**International News:**

**First National Conference on Women’s Studies in India**

*by Florence Howe*

Nearly 350 delegates from all parts of India—from Gauhati to Gujarat, from Kashmir to Kerala—attended the five-day National Conference on Women's Studies, held at the S.N.D.T. Women's University in Bombay, April 20-24, 1981. Teachers, researchers, students, voluntary workers, and government personnel were among the participants—including 25 men. In addition, delegates from such neighboring countries as Nepal, Srilanka, and Bangladesh attended, as well as representatives of Unesco, UNICEF, the Ford Foundation, and such Indian organizations as the Indian Council on Social Science Research (ICSSR).

More than one hundred papers were presented; and, through a number of working groups, the conference sought to identify major problems affecting women in all areas of life.

Recognizing the crucial role of the educational system in perpetuating or changing social attitudes, values, and institutions that tend to exploit, oppress, and marginalize women in all spheres, the conference recommended urgent and imperative changes in educational curricula, and in the ethos and organizational patterns of educational institutions. Such changes would help to remove those ideological or conceptual ambiguities and biases that currently prevent both the development of independent and democratic consciousness among women and the acceptance of such women's consciousness by men. Spokespersons at the conference observed that women's problems have to be understood in the context of general patterns of inequality, poverty, unemployment, and exploitation. These maladies can only benefit from a movement for the liberation of women from the forces that oppress and exploit the mass of them.

Conference participants examined a series of documents about the male-centered curriculum prepared by the National Council of Educational Research and Training (NCERT), and made recommendations for revisions in social sciences, literature, science, technology, and mathematics. It was agreed that, in general, the Women's Studies component be incorporated into all disciplines, rather than organized into separate courses. The University Grants Commission Chair, Madhuri R. Shah, former Vice-Chancellor of S.N.D.T. Women's University, promised grants to faculty for the revision of course syllabi.

At the Conference, a proposal to establish an Indian Association for Women's Studies won approval. Its goals include the following:

1. To provide a forum for interaction among individuals, institutions, and organizations engaged in teaching, research, or action for women's development.
2. To provide and develop information centers in different parts of the country for the promotion of women's studies and for the scientific analysis of action for women's equality. To this end, to develop a network for the collection of information relating to women's studies teaching, research, and action program.
3. To develop documentation, bibliographic, and other services needed for women's studies.