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JONATHAN COLLETT is associate professor in the Comparative Humanities Program at the State University of New York, College at Old Westbury. He is founder and faculty coordinator of the Teaching for Learning Center, whose special focus is effective teaching and learning in college student populations that are diverse in age, class, race, and culture.

BASILIO SERRANO is associate professor of teacher education and director of bilingual teacher education at the State University of New York, College at Old Westbury. He is also chair of the board of directors of the Puerto Rican Heritage House in New York City.

The practice of raising teachers' awareness of their own inadvertent biases and presenting them with possible solutions encourages them to plan for equitable interactions in their classrooms.

Ensuring Equitable Participation in College Classes

Myra Sadker, David Sadker

Like most university professors, I was a university student for many years. Most of my classes were concluded a few minutes before the bell—just in time for the professor to ask, "Are there any questions?" This was the discussion part of what was termed the lecture-discussion mode. To me those few minutes were often the most invigorating part of the class. Years later when I made the transition from student to professor, I considered a technique that would expand those last few minutes to the entire class period but would not dilute the content or diminish the intellectual challenge (Crow, 1980, p. 41).

As the professor's above comment suggests, interactive teaching goes beyond the lecture mode to actively involve students in their own learning. Students report that they enjoy participating in discussions more than they do sitting and listening to their professor talk for the entire period. Also, research makes it clear that interactive teaching is effective; when students participate in class, they are likely to achieve more and to have higher self-esteem.

For all of its benefits, interactive teaching has the potential for injecting subtle bias into the college classroom. Studies analyzing classroom dynamics from grade school through graduate school show that teachers are more likely to interact with white male students. Elementary and secondary teachers ask boys more factual and analytical questions, give them more directions on how to accomplish tasks for themselves, and offer them more precise, clear feedback concerning the quality of their intellectual

room into. Non research and analyzed videotapes and live role plays to determine both overt and subtle bias. On the second day, the professors participated in a teaching clinic. They taught brief lessons in their academic discipline to college students who had volunteered to participate. The lessons were videotaped. Colleagues observed their teaching using a systematic observation instrument. They also gave feedback to the professor teaching the lesson and provided coaching on how to improve instruction for both equity and effectiveness.

This training program was unique; it asked professors not only to talk about teaching but also to practice it before their colleagues and give each other feedback about teaching strengths and areas in need of improvement. Faculty reacted positively. As one professor commented, "I've been teaching more than twenty years, and this is the first time a colleague ever watched me teach and talked with me about what I was doing."

Following the clinical equity program, trained raters visited the classrooms of the twenty-three professors who had received training, as well as the classes of the twenty-three faculty in the control group. The classrooms of all forty-six faculty were coded three times for a total of 138 fifty-five-minute observations during the course of one semester. There were significant differences between trained and control group faculty on a number of factors, including frequency and effectiveness of interaction and degree of bias.

In the typical control group classroom, male students dominated interactions. Ten percent of the students, usually male, were involved in 25 percent of the interactions with the professor. Almost half the students did not participate, even minimally, in the discussion; these silent students were usually female.

Trained faculty were 38 percent more interactive than their control group colleagues. They gave more precise and clear feedback to all students. Only seven percent of their students were silent. Females and males were equally active in classroom discussion.

Recommended Teaching Strategies

As a result of our two-year equity training project at the American University and the training sessions that we have conducted at institutions of higher education across the country, we suggest the following teaching strategies. If faculty can incorporate these research-based recommendations into their teaching, they will become more effective and more equitable.

Code the Class. The only way to determine the degree of equity in one's own classroom interactions is to get objective coding of the class. While our training sessions prepare college instructors to use a comprehensive coding instrument, there are several simpler techniques that provide faculty with important new insights into their teaching.

The simplest observation technique is a frequency count. Instructors ask a colleague or even a student in their classes to record each of their interactions with a student. Using a seating chart of the class that indicates the gender and race of each student, the instructor asks the observer to make a mark on the chart next to the name of each student who interacts with the instructor. It is important to record both students who volunteer (perhaps with a V) as well as students who are called on (perhaps with a line). It is best to rely on more than a single class observation, but two or three classes are usually representative of teaching behavior. This collection of data can open up a number of provocative teaching issues. Instructors should consider the following questions: How many interactions are there in the classroom? How many students do not participate in any interactions? Do any students dominate discussions? Does the instructor rely on volunteers or independently decide who will speak? Are there geographical areas of the class that receive considerable instructor attention? Are there other areas that are blind spots, where students receive little or no attention?

Gender, race, and ethnic differences can also be explored using this same data. After determining the proportion of males and females and various ethnic and racial groups in their classes, instructors should consider the following questions: Does the instructor call on females and males equitably, that is, in proportion to their attendance in the class? Does the instructor call on racial and ethnic minorities equitably? How many females or minority males are silent members of the class?

While it is useful for instructors to be aware of research findings concerning gender and race bias in classroom interaction, there is no substitute for objective records of what life in their classrooms is like. While there is a good chance that several of the national findings will apply to one's own teaching, there are likely to be differences as well. The more precise the knowledge of their own teaching, the more focused instructors can be in identifying strategies to improve their classroom practices.

Increase Wait Time. Although an instructor may not be aware of the length of his or her typical wait time, it is important to have a student or colleague determine the average amount of time between instructor questions and student responses. This measure can be taken by observing a few classes and timing the interlude between question and response with a stopwatch. Obviously, it is more important to use longer wait times after difficult questions are asked.

Although it is easy to learn about wait time, it is hard to incorporate this strategy into behavior. Some instructors have learned to increase wait time by actually counting to themselves for three to five seconds. In our research, one teacher explained that she actually puts her hand over her mouth and assumes a contemplative stance; this becomes an actual physical technique to remind her to wait longer and give students a chance to think before answering. Professors who can develop extended wait time will hear

MYRA SADKER and DAVID SADKER are professors of education at the American University in Washington, D.C.

An examination of two feminist classrooms elucidates the instructors' and students' relationship to mastery, voice, authority, and positionality.

Inside Feminist Classrooms: An Ethnographic Approach

Frances Maher, Mary Kay Thompson Tetreault

The transformational impact of the last two decades of feminist scholarship on the academic disciplines and college curricula has been well documented. Feminist theorists and other postmodern scholars have shown us that all knowledge is a social construction and that the male-dominated disciplines have given us at best partial truths and at worst a discourse that silences or marginalizes other ways of knowing. Thus, feminist postmodernists have called attention to women's positions of oppression in society as sources of legitimate claims to truths, truths obscured heretofore by perceived universals based on the male experience. These theorists argue that only consciously partial perspectives such as those derived from women's various positions within society can guarantee the objectivity of knowledge, an objectivity based not on impartiality but on acknowledgement of particular contexts, experiences, and histories.

The pedagogical implications and classroom enactments of a developing feminist theory of knowledge are now being explored in an ethnographic research project done by the authors that systematically uses feminist theories to examine women as teachers, students, and knowers within the classroom context. Classroom pedagogies and the processes of knowledge construction that are emerging in the classrooms of feminist teachers are important topics to explore because they have wide-reaching implications for teaching and learning.

Feminist Pedagogies

Feminist teaching practices have emerged in the margins of and in sharp contrast to the practices of the traditional college classroom—a context marked by the rational critical discourse of positivism and the search for a