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ABSTRACT

This study analyzes catalog descriptions from a large state university in ten-year increments from 1965 to 1995 to look for evidence of a transformation of colleges and universities as a result of the introduction of women as a subject in the curriculum. Feminist scholars in the 1980s predicted the transformation would occur gradually and theorized a process called feminist phase/stage theory. The paper concludes that the curriculum at this institution under study has experienced both a quantitative and a qualitative transformation that follows the spirit of the predicted process. Contains two tables and an appendix. (EH)



How Women Become the Subject: The Transformation of a University Curriculum

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How Women Become the Subject: The Transformation of a University Curriculum Abstract

Feminist scholars in the 1980's predicted a transformation of colleges and universities as a result of the introduction of women as a subject in the curriculum. They predicted the transformation would occur gradually and theorized a process called feminist phase/stage theory to describe this transformation (Tetreault, 1985, Schuster & Van Dyne, 1985, MacIntosh, 1983). For this study I analyze catalog descriptions from a large state university in ten year increments from 1965 to 1995 to look for evidence of this transformation. I conclude that the curriculum at this institution has experienced both a quantitative and a qualitative transformation that follows the spirit of the predicted process.



How Women Become the Subject: The Transformation of a University Curriculum

As the Women's Movement gained momentum in the 1960s and 1970s, women faculty and women students in the academy noted that the study of the disciplines was androcentric and called for inclusion of the study of women across the curriculum (e.g., Fowlkes & McClure, 1984). Feminist scholars in the 1980's predicted a transformation of colleges and universities as a result of the introduction of women as a subject in the curriculum. They predicted the transformation would occur gradually and theorized a process called feminist phase/stage theory to describe this transformation (Tetreault, 1985, Schuster & Van Dyne, 1985, MacIntosh, 1983).

As this transformation began to occur, feminists conducted research on the process of transformation. Most research that has investigated the entry of "women" as a subject in the curriculum focused on changes at the course level through examination of course syllabi or by surveying or interviewing faculty (see Schmitz, Butler, Rosenfelt, & Guy-Sheftall, 1995 for a review). Another research strategy was to look for changes in the number of institutions across the country which offered courses in Women's Studies. For example, Levine and Cureton (1992) reported that 40% of all colleges and universities in their sample offered Women's Studies courses and 16% of the institutions had Women's Studies departments or programs. However, no known research examines the transformation of an institution's curriculum to ascertain how the number and content of courses about women have changed over time. In this study, I analyze the curriculum of a research university to explore if and how this transformation occurs.

Most institutions require a rigorous peer-review process for the institutionalization of curricular offerings. The college catalog collects the results of this process, capturing, to some extent, the unspoken norms of the academic community. Feminists argue that the peer review



process of curricular change also marginalizes certain bodies of knowledge (Howe, 1984; Minnich, 1990). So an examination of the college catalog over time can clarify what bodies of knowledge are preserved through the decades but can also illuminate how the curriculum is transformed by the incorporation of a previously marginalized body of knowledge.

I performed a content analysis of the course catalog, over a thirty year period looking for evidence of a transformation toward a curriculum that is more inclusive of women. Specifically, I answer three important questions: 1) Do the number of courses that include women in the title or description increase over time? 2) Are the courses that include women in the title or description isolated in a few departments or are they spread across the curriculum? and 3) Is there a qualitative shift in the way women are treated as subjects in the course titles and descriptions?

Conceptual Framework

I used Schuster and Van Dyne's (1985) curriculum transformation model as a framework for examining the qualitative changes in course descriptions over time and as a guide for noting changes in the institutional structure that support these changes. Schuster and Van Dyne theorized a six stage model (see Table 1) describing the changes within courses and institutions as the curriculum in higher education became more inclusive of women. Their model suggests that the curriculum transforms from one that does not include women, to one that partially includes women, to a curriculum that is transformed in its epistemology by the inclusion of women.



Method

I reviewed the undergraduate catalogs for the Pennsylvania State University for the years 1965-66, 1975-76, 1985-86 and 1995-96 to locate course titles or course descriptions that specifically contained the keywords woman, women, female, females, wife, feminine, or feminist. I did not include courses that contained the words sex, sex roles, gender, marriage or family although it is possible, but not conclusive, that courses using these keywords contain material related to women. I reviewed the context of the keywords that might provide evidence of a curriculum transformation. I also reviewed the history of the institution (Center for Women Students, 1996) over this same time period and noted institutional and curricular changes that indicate shifts in the climate of the university (such as the addition of a Women's Studies minor).

Results

1965-66. Twenty-three courses contained one or more of the keywords in the title or description (see Table 2). Of these, 20 courses were Physical Education courses that were segregated by gender. The three remaining courses were: Art 56, Clothing and Textiles 10, and Liberal Arts 15 (see Appendix 1). The art course was a costume design course that emphasized dress selection for "feminine types". The Clothing and Textiles course was "Personal Clothing Selection for Men and Women". The Liberal Arts course was a career planning course for women.

The courses in this period reflect Schuster and Van Dynes' stage of invisible women. The courses reveal separate physical education and separate careers for women as exemplified by the Liberal Arts course which is "a general survey of occupations for women..."



The university offered a Home Economics major, but none of the courses were specifically designated as pertaining to or restricted to women. Many course descriptions throughout the catalog referred to the universal term "man" as a substitute for "human" or "person" (Such as SO SC 1: Contemporary Man and Society). In the institution in 1965, a controversy erupted suggesting that the Admissions Office enforced a policy of admitting two men for every one woman.

1975-76. Three courses in the 1975-76 catalog contained keywords in the title or description. All the 1965-66 courses were dropped and Physical Education courses were no longer sex-segregated in the catalog descriptions. Sociology 230 examined marriage and the relationships of men and women. Liberal Arts 200 was an interdisciplinary study of "contemporary issues concerning women" and carried the title "Woman Studies". Psychology 170 looked at historical and current issues related to women's social-psychological health.

The courses in this period primarily reflect Schuster and Van Dyne's stage one, but I also find evidence of Schuster and Van Dyne's stage four: women studied on their own terms. Both the Liberal Arts and Psychology courses analyze women's issues.

The use of the word "man" as a universal continued in many disciplines. By 1975, the gender ratio in enrollment at Penn State was now to 1.6 men to 1 woman.

1985-86. Eighteen courses in the 1985-86 catalog with titles or descriptions contained one or more of the keywords. These courses were spread across thirteen departments. English, Music, Psychology, Sociology and Women's Studies departments all offered two courses. The remaining departments offering a single course were: Economics, Educational Theory and Policy, History, Individual and Family Studies, Journalism, Physical Education, Political Science, and Religious Studies. Both Music courses were choral groups specifically geared



toward women. Similarly, one of the Women's Studies courses was a career planning course for women. The two English courses examined the work of women writers. The Political Science and Religious Studies courses specifically addressed feminism, while the Economics and Journalism courses explored issues related to minority groups as well as women.

In this catalog, several of Schuster and Van Dyne's stages are represented. Many departments and colleges are still in stage one: invisible women. Several courses reflect stage two: the search for missing women as exemplified in the Religious Studies course, "...thought and lives of important religious women..." I find an example of stage three, women as disadvantaged, in "an examination of the relationship of education to the status of women in American society" in the Education department. Stage four, women studied on own terms, is represented by an English course with the description "American and British literature written from the perspective of women." The description of the Political Science course hints as stage five, women as a challenge to disciplines, with "critical analysis of contemporary issues in political thought such as representation, obligation, loyalty, equality, feminism or environmentalism." Many of the courses in the 1975-76 catalog stressed an interdisciplinary focus.

The addition of a Women's Studies Program and a Women's Studies Minor were the most significant structural changes. The new program offered five courses, three of which were independent study or special topics. At this point, the minor was dependent upon other departments to offer courses to fulfill requirements. The university established a Commission for Women in 1981 and a resource center for women students in 1985.

1995-96. Twenty four departments offered thirty-seven courses in the 1995-96 catalog containing one or more of the keywords. The Women's Studies department independently



offered six courses and cross-listed with other departments on 23 others. Eight courses were offered in other departments and were not cross-listed with Women's Studies. The History department, across two campuses, offered four different courses. The English, African and African American Studies, and Psychology departments each offered three courses and the departments of Science, Technology and Society and Health Education both offered two courses. New departments offering courses were Management, Russian, French, Comparative Literature, Labor and Industrial Relations, Theatre Arts, Administration of Justice, and Exercise and Sport Science. Fifteen of the 37 courses suggested some examination of ethnic, racial or cross-cultural differences among women. Many of the courses explored the status of women, gender roles, feminism or sexism.

All six stages theorized by Schuster and Van Dyne are represented in the 1995-96 catalog. Women are still invisible in many departments (stage one). Many courses reflect the search for the great women (stage two) or discuss issues related to women as a disadvantaged group (stage three). There is an increase in the number of courses that study women on their own terms (stage four). Most noticable, are the additions at stage five, women as challenge to the disciplines as exemplified by the Science, Technology and Society course description, "critical analysis of the roles women, gender, and minorities have played in the natural sciences." The beginnings of a transformed "balanced" curriculum (stage six) is evident in the description of an English course. "Female identity and its construction in textual representations of gender, class, color, and cultural difference in English-language literatures."

In 1995-96, students at the university could pursue a major or a minor in Women's Studies. Many of the courses on the target list fulfilled the "diversity focused" general education requirement for all university students.



Discussion

The results clearly indicate that there has been a dramatic increase in the number and type of courses offered at the university which included women as subject matter. Courses in the 1965-66 catalog primarily separated women from the "real focus" of study. In the 1975-76 catalog, the study of women in their own right was added, but the general tone was one of women as a problem category. By 1985-86, the study of women blossomed. Several departments were studying "great women" and a few were comparing the experiences of men and women. A few courses examined issues of gender and discrimination at a theoretical level. In the 1995-96 catalog, the study of women spread across the university and was offered in departments in the humanities, social sciences, natural sciences and professions. Women and women's issues were examined in multiple ways, including: the study of "great women"; comparisons of the experience of men and women; theoretical and methodological implications of the study of women to the disciplines; and the intersection of gender, class, race and culture.

The text of the curriculum at this university gives unequivocal evidence that courses and disciplines changed over this time period to include women. This analysis demonstrates how the study of women has been institutionalized and how the norms of "acceptable knowledge" have changed over time. All of the courses in this study would have been approved by numerous layers of curriculum committees across diverse colleges, highlighting that the changing norms have spread across disciplines. This change is both quantitative and qualitative. There is also evidence of a qualitative shift in women as subject, with fewer courses treating women as problems and more courses focusing on the intersection of gender with multiple identities.



Most institutions offer structures for faculty to offer experimental courses and seminars. This analysis may miss the cutting edge of curricular change by not examining the topical seminars that do not require peer review. A more thorough analysis would explore the actual course taught each term and examine changes in the institution from year to year. A cross-institutional study could illuminate national rather than local trends. A comparison of different types of institutions, community colleges, liberal arts colleges, comprehensive colleges and research universities might find different patterns of transformation across institutional types.

The transformation of the curriculum which I describe does seem to follow the pattern suggested by Schuster and Van Dyne. Some might argue that the change in the college curriculum is too slow. For those of us who remember colleges or universities that had no courses on or for women, the signs of change are still hopeful.



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1. Invisible Who are the truly great Women thinkers/actors in history? 2. Search for Who are the great women, the female Shakespeares, Napoleans, Darwins? 3. Women as Why are there so few women Anger/ Social Justi Disadvantaged, leaders? Why are women's roles subordinate group devalued? 4. Women What are differences among Terms women? 5. Women as How valid are current definitions by the court of historical periods, greatness, disciplines our questions change to account for women's experience diversity	lards	Back to basics	Dre_1060s exclusionary core
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our questions change to account for women's experience diversity		as category of	 Student collaborates in
for women's experience diversity		analysis.	learning
difference?			
omen's and men's	Inclusive vision of	Transform the	 Reconceptualized inclusive
"balanced" experience be understood human experi	human experience based	paradigms	core
curriculum together? How do class and race on difference	on difference and		 Transformed introductory
intersect with gender? diversity, not	diversity, not sameness		courses
and generaliz	and generalization		 Empowering of student

ble Two: Summary of Courses by Year

YEAR	TOTAL # of COURSES	TOTAL # of DEPARTMENTS	DEPARTMENTS REPRESENTED	SCHUSTER AND VAN DYNE CATEGORIES REPRESENTED
1965-66	23	4	PE (20); Art; Clothing and Textiles; Liberal Arts	Invisible Women
1975-76	3	3	Liberal Arts; Psychology; Sociology	Invisible Women Women Studied on Own Terms
1985-86	18	13	English; Music; Psychology; Sociology; Women's Studies (2 ea.); Economics; Educational Theory and Policy; History; Individual and Family Studies; Journalism; PE; Political Science; Religious Studies	Invisible Women Women as Subordinate Group Women Studied on Own Terms Women as Challenge to Disciplines
1995-96	37	24	Women's Studies (6); History (4); African American Studies; English; Psychology (3 ea.); Health Education; Science, Technology and Society (2 ea.); Administration of Justice; Comparative Literature; Economics; Educational Theory and Policy; Exercise and Sport Science; French; Individual and Family Studies; Journalism; Labor and Industrial Relations; Management; PE; Political Science; Religious Studies; Russian; Sociology; Theatre Arts.	Invisible Women Women as Subordinate Group Women Studied on Own Terms Women as Challenge to Disciplines ?Transformed "balanced" curriculum?

Appendix A

The 1965-66 Undergraduate Catalog

ART 56: Costume Design (1:0:3). Principles of design and color as applied to costume; proper dress selection for various *feminine* types.

CL TX 10. Personal Clothing Selection for Men and *Women* (1:1:0). Emphasis on economic and art factors resulting in maximum value and satisfaction from clothing purchases.

LA 15: Occupations for *Women* (2:2:0). General survey of occupations for women; major considerations in job-getting.

(20 Physical Education courses)

The 1975-76 Undergraduate Catalog

LA 200: Woman Studies (3:3:0). Interdisciplinary study of woman; analyses of relationships between definitions of woman provided by various disciplines and contemporary issues concerning women.

PSY 170: Psychology of *Women* (3:3:0). Psychology of *women* in historical perspective and present evolvement. Stresses *women's* self-concepts with relation to individual and social psychological health.

SOC 230: Sociology of Marriage (3:3:0). Sociological analysis of marriage, past and present societies; sociocultural factors influencing contemporary patterns of marriage, man-woman relationship changes.

The 1985-86 Undergraduate Catalog

ECON 336: Economics of Discrimination (3:3:0). Examination of the economic positions of *women* and minorities; with analysis of race and sex discrimination and related government policies.

EDTHP 412: Education and the Status of *Women* (3:3:0). An examination of the relationship of education to the status of *women* in American society.

ENGL 194 Women Writers (3:3:0). Short stories, novels, poetry, drama and essays by major English and American women writers since 1870.



- ENGL 490: Women Writers and Their Worlds (3:3:0). American and British literature written from the perspective of women.
- HIST 117: *Women* in Modern History (3:3:0). Modernization and *women*; changing images and roles since mid-eighteenth century in family, workshop, politics, society; cross-cultural comparisons.
- IFS 218: Foundations of Marriage (3:3:0). Factors influencing the husband/wife relationship across the life course.
- JOURN 250: *Women*, Minorities, and the Media (3:3:0). Analysis of historical, economic, legal, political, and social implications of the relationship between *women*, minorities and the mass media.
- MUSIC 91: Women's Chorus (1:0:2 per semester, max. of 8). Rehearsal and performance of choral repertoire for treble voices from the sixteenth to the twentieth centuries, including sacred and secular compositions.
- MUSIC 92: Hi-Lo's/Keynotes (1:0:2 per semester, max. of 8). Select group of singers from the Penn State Glee Club and *Women's* Chorus (twelve to fourteen) performing choral music.
- PH ED 424: The *Female* in Exercise and Sport (3:3:0). An interdisciplinary approach involving historical, sociological, psychological, physiological, biomechanical, and legal considerations of the *female* in exercise and sport.
- PL SC 117: Contemporary Problems in Political Theory (3:3:0). Critical analysis of contemporary issues in political thought such as representation, obligation, loyalty, equality, *feminism* or environmentalism.
- PSY 170: Psychology of *Women* (3:3:0). Psychology of *women* in historical perspective and present evolvement. Stresses *women's* self-concepts with relation to individual and social psychological health.
- PSY 471: Psychology and *Women* (3:3:0). Theories and research on biosocial differentiation during the life cycle as related to *women's* position and activities in society.
- RL ST 137: (3:3:0). Jewish and Christian religious views on womanhood; thought and lives of important religious *women*; and *feminist* understandings of these.
- SOC 110: The Sociology of Sex Roles (3:3:0). Changing sex role expectations and behavior for men and *women* in contemporary society.



SOC 230: Sociology of Marriage (3:3:0). Sociological analysis of marriage, past and present societies; sociocultural factors influencing contemporary patterns of marriage, man-woman relationship changes.

WMNST 200: Women's Studies (3:3:0). Interdisciplinary consideration of the scholarly theories and research pertaining to women's experiences and women's status in contemporary American society.

WMNST 201: Career Implementation Strategies for *Women* (2:2:0). Determining career goals, developing strategies to achieve these goals, and developing skills to assist in the job search.

The 1995-96 Undergraduate Catalog

Courses Cross-listed with Women's Studies

AAAS/WMNST 101. (GH;DF) THE AFRICAN AMERICAN WOMAN (3:3:0) The sociological, historical, and political experiences of African American women, their roles and contributions to society.

AAAS/WMNST 102. WOMEN OF COLOR: CROSS-CULTURAL PERSPECTIVE (3:3:0) Global examination of value systems of women of color; attention to minority ethnic groups in the United States and developing countries.

AAAS/WNST 410 SPIRIT, SPACE, SURVIVAL: CONTEMPORARY BLACK WOMEN (3:3:0) How recent Black women have used spirit and space to survive.

ADM J/WMNST 453. (DF) WOMEN AND THE CRIMINAL JUSTICE SYSTEM (3:3:0) The experience of women as offenders and professional in the criminal justice system.

AM ST/WMNST 104. (DF) WOMEN AND THE AMERICAN EXPERIENCE (3:3:0) Selected aspects of the role of women in U.S. history and culture from colonial to modern times.

COMM/WMNST 205. (DF) WOMEN, MINORITIES, AND THE MEDIA (3:3:0) Analysis of historical, economic, legal, political, and social implications of the relationship among women, minorities, and the mass media.

EDTHP/WMNST 412. (DF) EDUCATION AND THE STATUS OF *WOMEN* (3:3:0) An examination of the relationship of education to the status of *women* in American society.

ENGL/WMNST 194. (DH;DF) WOMEN WRITERS (3:3:0) Short stories, novels, poetry, drama, and essays by British, American, and other English-speaking women writers.



ENGL/WMNST 490 (DF) WOMEN WRITERS AND THEIR WORLDS (3:3:0) American and British literature written from the perspective of women.

EXSCI/WMNST 424 THE *FEMALE* IN EXERCISE AND SPORT (3:3:0) An interdisciplinary approach involving historical, sociological, psychological, biomechanical, and legal considerations of the *female* in exercise and sport.

HIST/STS/WMNST 457. (DF) THE HISTORY OF WOMEN IN SCIENCE (3:3:0) Critical analysis of the roles women, gender, and minorities have played in the natural sciences.

HIST/WMNST 117. (DH) WOMEN IN MODERN HISTORY (3:3:0) Modernization and women: changing images and roles since mid-eighteenth century in the family, workshop, politics, society. Cross-cultural comparison.

HIST/WMNST 419. THE HISTORY OF *FEMINIST* THOUGHT (3:3:0) A critical analysis of European and United States *feminist* thought from Renaissance to the present.

HIST/WMNST 421. THE HISTORY OF EUROPEAN WOMEN (3:3:0) European women's lives from the Middle Ages to the present.

HL ED/NURS/WMNST 452. WOMEN'S HEALTH ISSUES (3:3:0) Exploration of major health issues concerning women today, with an emphasis on social, cultural, and medical influences.

HLED/WMNST 458. CRITICAL ISSUES IN REPRODUCTION (3:3:0) Examination and analysis of the new reproductive technologies from the standpoint of medical ethics, feminism, and sociocultural influences.

LIR/WMNST 136. (DF) WOMEN, MINORITIES, AND EMPLOYMENT (3:3:0) Industrial relations and legislative policy responses to labor force participation of women and minorities.

PSY/WMNST 471. (DF) THE PSYCHOLOGY OF GENDER (3:3:0) Theories and research on gender differences and gender roles. Emphasis on *women's* and men's current positions in society.

RLST/WMNST 137. (DH;DF) WOMEN AND RELIGION (3:3:0) Jewish and Christian religious views on Womanhood; thought and lives of important religious women; and Feminist understandings of these.

RUS/WMNST 130. (DF) WOMEN IN RUSSIAN LITERATURE (3:3:0) Survey of Russian women characters and writers from the Medieval period to the present.

SOC/WMNST 110. (DS;DF) THE SOCIOLOGY OF SEX ROLES (3:3:0) Changing sex role expectations and behavior for men and *women* in contemporary society.



STS/WMNST 005. (DF) INTRODUCTION TO *WOMEN* IN SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY, AND ENGINEERING (3:3:0) The role of *women* and gender in science, technology, and engineering.

THEA/WMNST 407. (DF) WOMEN AND THEATRE (3:3:0) A study of theatre practice and dramatic literature as informed by issues of gender, race, and ethnic background.

Courses Not Cross-listed with Women's Studies

CMLIT 406. WOMEN AND WORLD LITERATURE (3:3:0) Literature written by women, especially women from non-Western cultures; the spectrum of genres in which women writers have excelled.

ECON 436. (DF) ECONOMICS OF DISCRIMINATION (3:3:0) Examination of the economic positions of *women* and minorities, with analysis of race and sex discrimination and related government policies.

ENGL 462. (DF) READING BLACK, READING FEMINIST (3:3:0) Female identity and its construction in textual representations of gender, class, color, and cultural difference in English-language literatures.

FR 471. (DF) FRANCOPHONE WOMEN IN LITERATURE AND CULTURE (3:3:0) Women's issues in literatures and cultures of French-speaking countries in Europe, the Mediterranean, Africa, the Caribbean, and Quebec.

MGMT 461. INTERNATIONAL MANAGEMENT (3:3:0) Examines issues of nations and cultures including motivation, communication, negotiation, leadership, ethics and social responsibility, and *women* in management.

MUSIC 091. (DA) WOMEN'S CHORUS (1:0:3 per semester, maximum of 8) Rehearsal and performance of choral repertoire for treble voices from the sixteenth to the twentieth centuries, including sacred and secular compositions.

PSY 170. (DS;DF) PSYCHOLOGY OF WOMEN (3:3:0) Psychology of women in historical perspective and present evolvement. Stresses women's self-concepts with relation to individual and social psychological health.

PSYCH 472. (DF) THE PSYCHOLOGY OF GENDER (3:3:0) Theories and research on biological, psychological, and social differentiation of *females* and males.

Courses Listed through Women's Studies Only

WMNST 001. (GS;DF) INTRODUCTION TO WOMEN'S STUDIES (3:3:0) Interdisciplinary consideration of the scholarly theories and research pertaining to women's experiences and women's status in contemporary American society.



WMNST 003. (GH;DF) INTRODUCTION TO *WOMEN*, THE HUMANITIES, AND THE ARTS (3:3:0) Interdisciplinary consideration of primary works and scholarship pertaining to *women* in the humanities and the arts.

WMNST 201. CAREER IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES FOR WOMEN (2:2:0) Determining career goals, developing strategies to achieve these goals, and developing skills to assist in the job search.

WMNST 400W. (DF) FEMINIST THEORY (3:3:0) Consideration of feminist theories of women's experience in transforming understanding, reconceptualizing old problems, raising new ones, and expanding traditional disciplines.

WMNST 401. *FEMINIST* PERSPECTIVES ON RESEARCH AND TEACHING (3:3:0) *Feminist* approaches to methodological issues in research and teaching in the social sciences and the humanities.

WMNST 492. CURRENT FEMINIST ISSUES (3:3:0) Critical analysis of major contemporary feminist research and writing in the arts and humanities, and the social and natural sciences.





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