

WOMEN'S STUDIES IN AUSTRALIA: A SEARCH FOR DIRECTIONS

Cheryl Frost*

Whether or not you agree with the broader aims of the radical feminist movement, it has already one undeniable achievement, namely, an increase in awareness among Western intellectual elites. The new feminist perspective has revealed neglected areas of research, especially in the literary, sociological, psychological and historical fields, sufficient to occupy generations of scholars. However, women's studies in Australia at present have three characteristics which should be eliminated if the causes both of scholarship and women's liberation are to be properly served. These are separatism, sexism and elitism.

Where women's studies have been accepted as a valid discipline in Australia, they have usually been kept quite separate from other disciplines. This is most evident in the key areas of course-structuring and the publication of research.

Women's studies courses established at Australian tertiary institutions characteristically cut across traditional divisions to incorporate elements from several disciplines. The course at Flinders University in 1973, for instance, introduced students to biology, history, psychology and economics as these related to women. When women's studies courses have been included within a single department, their ideological difference from other courses in the department has been manifest. For example, in the English Department of the University of Queensland the two courses of 1976 which relate to women — Women's Studies, and Twentieth-Century Literature and Society: Social and Sexual Liberation — are obviously anomalous to the traditional courses, Renaissance Literature, Restoration and Eighteenth-Century Literature, and the rest.

Research dealing with women is usually published separately from other kinds of research. This was unavoidable in the pioneering works of the new feminist movement — by de Beauvoir, Friedan, Millet, Greer and Firestone — which had the general aims of defining women's oppression and inspiring resistance. Recently, however, books on women have usually been confined to a single field. This is true of the half-dozen sociologies and histories of women which have appeared in Australia in the last two years. The findings of such research are now capable of being included, as an intrinsic part, in the major, general studies.

My knowledge of learned periodicals is confined to those dealing with literature. The long-established overseas journals, such as *Review of English Studies* and *PMLA*, are at present publishing very few items dealing with women writers or with the image of women in literature. Somewhat surprisingly, Australian literary journals include such material rather more often. *Meanjin*, for instance, published five articles relevant to women in 1975, admittedly International Women's Year. Feminists have increased the venue for women's studies by starting their own journals, which are usually interdisciplinary. Several are now in production in Australia, notably *Refractory Girl* (Sydney) and *Hecate* (Brisbane). These publications are of high quality, but have the unfortunate side-effect of fostering the separateness of women's studies.

Women's studies, which radically contradict the relative evaluation of the sexes in our society, are sexist themselves only in that they are carried out almost exclusively by women. Male scholars have not participated, probably partly in response to indoctrination by the patriarchal society, whereby anything connected with women is regarded as inferior. Established academics are also probably reluctant to undertake the extensive revision of received learning which an honest consideration of feminist thought inevitably entails. Not all scholars in Australia (alas) are engaged in a disinterested search for truth. It might be objected that male participation in women's studies would limit one considerable outlet for women's creative energy. But, against this, it would strengthen the appearance of objectivity, and substantiate the viability, of the new field.

Women's studies are elitist in that they are confined to the tertiary educational level. If their potential for enlightenment is to be fully realized, the results of research into women must be disseminated to the schools.

The separate existence of women's studies has a polemical value at present, and their sexism and elitism may similarly be regarded as characteristic of an early phase in the development of a field which has had, after all, to face considerable resistance. But this should not be permitted to blind either the opponents or the exponents of women's studies to the fact that they have a rightful place within established disciplines both at tertiary level and in the schools.

ON-CAMPUS FACILITIES FOR EXTRA CURRICULAR ACTIVITIES: THEIR USE AND RELATIONSHIP TO ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT

E. P. Otto*

Abstract

The academic achievement over three years of students attending two tertiary institutions was related to their use in the first year of extra-curricular activities which were provided on campus. Apart from the number and type of recreational activities engaged in, students were asked to indicate which activity they enjoyed most and whether or not their on-campus recreation influenced their subject grades. It was found that the number of activities a student undertook was significantly related to academic progress, as was the type of recreational activity indicated as most preferred. Participation in club activity by way of organising new clubs on campus during the first academic year was positively related to examination performance in the first two years of tertiary studies, suggesting that recreational facilities which allow students to demonstrate personal qualities of organizational and leadership ability may be a worthwhile investment for academic as well as social development reasons.

Introduction

The research findings concerning student's extra-curricular activities on campus and how these relate to academic achievement are generally inconsistent. Small (1966) found that students who joined three or more clubs performed better than students who joined less than three. It was hypothesized that students who passed most but not all of their subjects or who were "partly successful" were, as a group, more "ordinary" in that they were closest to the cultural norms of the student body as a whole. Those who passed all and those who passed none of their subjects, however, were seen to be atypical students. The former might be giving academic achievement a higher priority than that given to social interaction (of an organised club type), whereas the latter group was completely unsuccessful because they turned increasingly toward social activities rather than study. The one consistent finding in the field, however, is that what really matters for examination achievement is not how much time the student spends in extra-curricular activities but rather the time spent in study (Otto, 1974).

Another possibility which comes to mind is that perhaps it is the nature of the activities engaged in that might have some relationship with academic achievement. Mahan (1969) investigated this

possibility for college students. He found that active student participation in journalism, publication, music, listening to pop music, watching television, reading literary material and automotive activities were positively but not significantly related to academic performances. Pieper (1969) found that business administration students who had not used campus extra-curricular facilities were 18% less likely to graduate than students who claimed they used at least one facility and 23% less likely to earn the degree than those students who were president of one or more organizations. In the above study, though, there was no relationship between extra-curricular activity and level of final degree results. The relationship between likelihood of graduating and use of recreational facilities which was found was explained by postulating that what was in fact being measured were factors such as initiative, breadth of interests and the ability to apply practical knowledge.

Holland and Richards (1965) studied students in 24 universities and colleges in an attempt to assess the relationship between academic performance and achievement in non-academic areas such as literature, drama, science and social fields. The conclusion was that achievement in academic and non-academic areas was relatively independent, being based on separate talents but information about non-academic accomplishments could be used to forecast outstanding achievements in later life.

Method

Sample:

The study group was a sub-group from a larger investigation concerning the academic progress of students who matriculated for tertiary entry at the 1970 South Australian Matriculation Examination and who commenced tertiary studies in 1971 (Otto, 1974).

Questionnaires were distributed to randomly-selected samples of students in the Faculties of Arts and Science at the University of Adelaide and the Salisbury College of Advanced Education. Both samples were taken in 1971. Table 1 indicates the size of the groups relative to the populations studied in the original larger investigation, together with the questionnaire returns related to the present study.

Data Collection and Procedure:

Examination results were obtained for the first, second and third years of a course and related to the

*Department of English, James Cook University. This article was also intended for inclusion in the symposium on "The Student Population".

*Capricornia Institute of Advanced Education. This article was also intended for inclusion in the symposium on "The Student Population".

- academic performance criteria which were,
 (a) The average of the examination marks (percentages) obtained in each year of the course, and
 (b) The proportion of subjects taken in which a "pass" grade or better was achieved.

From the questionnaire, details concerning the student's use of on-campus extra-curricular activities were obtained, including the activities nominated as most and as least preferred and a statement that the extra-curricular activities engaged in did or did not interfere with academic work.

Table 1

Questionnaire Returns by Study Group

Course	Population ¹	Sample	Returns	
			No.	%
Arts ²	233			52.8
Science ²	316	65	39	60.0
Dip.Teach. ³	234	93	61	65.6

1. Comprising all full-time entrants
 2. University of Adelaide
 3. Salisbury C.A.E.

Statistical Analysis:

Cross-tabulation analyses were performed on the data for males and females separately, to control for the effects of sex of student upon academic achievement (Otto, 1976). The test of association which was considered most appropriate for the data was Lambda (asymmetric). As there was no independent test of significance for Lambda, the significance level obtained from application of the Chi-square test to the data was taken as indicating the significance of Lambda. Although this procedure is open to error, the inaccuracy is not so great as to render the technique inappropriate for the exploratory nature of this study.

Results and Discussion

Taking the extra-curricular variables in turn, results were as follows:

- (a) The number of recreational facilities students used on campus was found to be related to

Table 2

Number of Students Undertaking from None up to Six Separate Extra-Curricular Activities

No. of activities	Number of Students		
	Arts	Science	Dip.Teach.
0	9	5	11
1	30	15	18
2	27	13	9
3	3	5	7
4	3	1	6
5	0	0	2
6	0	0	0

examination performance in the Arts course. Females who undertook no more than two extra-curricular activities performed better in the first two years of their course than students who spent their time on more than two (Lambda 0.20, sig. level 5%, N = 40). Table 2 indicates the numbers of students who participated in one or more activities in their first year.

- (b) The type of activity a student engaged in was unrelated to academic achievement for any of the groups studied, as was the type of role which was adopted in any activity (leadership position versus non-leadership). Table 3 indicates the type of roles students played in each of the activity types studied.

Table 3

Type of Role Assumed by Students Undertaking Certain Extra-Curricular Activities in their First Year

Activity and Student Role	Number of Students		
	Arts	Science	Dip. Teach.
Cultural:			
Responsibility	1	10	2
No responsibility	22	1	16
Religious:			
Responsibility	4	2	4
No responsibility	12	8	8
Political:			
Responsibility	1	2	3
No responsibility	10	2	5
Journalism:			
Responsibility	0	0	1
No responsibility	1	0	0
Hobby:			
Responsibility	2	1	1
No responsibility	12	4	9
Sport:			
Responsibility	4	2	7
No responsibility	32	24	21
Sporting:			
Responsibility	1	1	2
No responsibility	6	4	9

- (c) Male Arts students who established new clubs on campus in their first year passed more of their first year subjects and obtained higher marks in their second year than students who showed no such initiative (Lambda 0.10, sig. level 10%, N = 17). Table 4 gives the numbers of students who started new clubs.

- (d) Although the type of extra-curricular activities actually engaged in bore no relationship to student's examination performance, the activities which were nominated as first and last preference were related to performance. First year females who said they enjoyed sport most of all their on-campus recreation performed better academically

Table 4

Number of Students who Started New Clubs in their First Year

	Number of Students		
	Arts	Science	Dip.Teach.
Started New Clubs:			
Yes	3	0	3
No	68	38	49

in both the Faculty of Science (Lambda 0.14, sig. level 10%, N = 11) and at college (Lambda 0.14, sig. level 10%, N = 32). Similarly, males doing Arts who preferred sport over other activities during their first year obtained higher marks in their third year and also passed more of the subjects they enrolled for in that year than students who gave other activities as first preference (Lambda 0.25, sig. level 10%, N = 15). Table 5 gives the numbers of students who gave various activities as their first preference.

Table 5

Number of Students Indicating Certain Activities as First Preference

Activity ¹ Most Preferred	Number of Students		
	Arts	Science	Dip.Teach.
Cultural	28	10	12
Religious	8	5	3
Political	7	1	2
Journalism	2	0	1
Hobby	4	1	3
Sport	30	20	22
Sporting	3	1	4

¹ For explanation of classification used see notes for Table 3

These results would appear to suggest that students who prefer more vigorous outdoor activities instead of less physically active pursuits are better able to sit down to private study and gain more benefit from studying because their body's need for physical activity has been satisfied.

Table 6

Number of Students Giving Certain Activities Lowest Preference

Activity ¹ Least Preferred	Number of Students		
	Arts	Science	Dip.Teach.
Cultural	6	0	3
Religious	35	20	23
Political	14	12	16
Journalism	10	4	7
Hobby	2	2	0
Sport	4	0	0
Sporting	3	0	1

¹ For explanation of classification see notes for Table 3

- (e) Students who ranked "religious" activities lowest on their list of preferences obtained higher examination marks. The relationship was significant for male students in their second Science year (Lambda 0.10, sig. level 5%, N = 18), and for college females in their first (Lambda 0.16, sig. level 1%), second (Lambda 0.04, sig. level 5%) and their third year (Lambda 0.07, sig. level 1%, N = 25). Table 6 gives the numbers of students who gave various activities as their lowest preference.

It is possible that there were certain differences in personality or ability or motivation or combinations of these factors which were responsible for these observed differences in achievement as related to preferences for certain types of recreational activities. These possibilities were not explored because introducing further controls apart from sex of student would have reduced cell frequencies drastically to a figure too low for any meaningful analysis.

- (f) Student's perceptions of whether their extra-curricular activities did or did not influence their examination results in a course were not significantly related to achievement for any of the groups studied. This would suggest either that students were unable to assess accurately the effect that their recreational behaviour was having on their studies or that this variable not responsible for performance variations between students, whether it was perceived accurately or not. Table 7 indicates the numbers of students who responded to this item.

Table 7

Number of Students who Perceived their Recreational Activities as Influencing their Subject Grades Somewhat

Degree of Influence Perceived	Number of Students		
	Arts	Science	Dip.Teach.
A lot of influence	2	1	12
A little	13	6	23
No influence	41	21	24

Conclusions

This analysis of student use of on-campus recreational facilities in two tertiary institutions suggests that a wide range of facilities is used by students in their first year of a course. Another aspect of student recreational behaviour which should be considered when facilities are provided on campus is that sporting activities are preferred by the majority of students, a preference which appears also to be related to how well students fare in their examinations. Another type of facility which appears to have implications for student academic achievement is the organised social club, where opportunity exists for students to commence new

clubs and thereby exercise a degree of organizational and leadership ability which opportunity might otherwise be denied them. On-campus recreational facilities, therefore, appear to be justified not only on social-development grounds as traditionally argued but also for academic reasons.

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NOTES:

1. Table 3 — the list of all available and advertised student extra-curricular activities on campus was provided by the Student Union representatives of each institution. The activities were categorised independently by three persons and the final agreement reached was the following system which is the basis of Table 3:
Cultural activities — e.g. chess, bridge, choral society, film society, drama, debating.
Religious — any activity of a religious nature carried on by a recognised religious denomination, e.g. church service
Political — e.g. Democratic Club, Labor Club, Liberal Club, Social Action, etc.
Journalism or Publication — self-explanatory
Hobby Groups — e.g. modelling, photography
Sport — e.g. football, tennis
Sporting — e.g. Car Club, Motorcycle Club.
2. Table 3 — the level of student involvement in activities was classified under two headings, after agreement had been reached with two other persons apart from the author. The headings were as follows:
(a) Responsibility — if the student participated in the capacity of a leader (e.g. sports captain, chairperson, etc.) or held some other responsible office (e.g. treasurer, secretary, etc.)
(b) No responsibility — if the student participated in the activity but not in any leadership capacity and held no office requiring some responsibility.

POTENTIAL EMBARRASMENTS FOR UNIVERSITY PRESERVICE TEACHER TRAINING PROGRAMMES IN AUSTRALIA

A. J. Fielding*

G. B. Shaw once wrote: "A fool's brain digests philosophy into folly, science into superstition, and art into pedantry. Hence University education."¹ I think this maxim is currently reflected in the relationship between the university as a whole and education faculties in particular. With specific reference to preservice courses, there may be grounds for believing that in the minds of some, the terms 'folly', 'superstition', and 'pedantry' fall dangerously close to being definitional attributes of the teacher training concept.

In this paper I will outline six problems which I think pertain to the university environment of preservice teacher training. My conjecture is that these problems are fundamentally related to the eventual outcomes of preservice programmes but that, in general, they may not formally be recognised as intrinsic factors affecting those outcomes. The paper will also strongly imply that unless these problems are satisfactorily resolved they will act as severe embarrassments for education faculties and preservice students and that, in the limit, they may be instrumental in denying the university the opportunity to mount an adequate preservice programme. I will contain the discussion to the one-year consecutive Diploma in Education programme commonly adopted by the majority of Australian universities. I make no claim that the following analysis and conjectures necessarily apply to institutions other than universities.

The 'Two Masters' Problem:

Education faculties in Australian universities may find themselves trying to serve two masters. The university itself with its explicit policies on academic standards and awards demands that each of its departments develop and implement programmes that are beyond academic reproach. Even if an education faculty wishes to emphasise the training aspect of preservice education (the non-academic aspect), it must seem to be teaching a programme which is academically adequate. If it does not, other faculties, committees, and boards may begin to suspect that preservice education is not a legitimate university activity and that therefore its place alongside the more respectable, disciplinary-based departments is unwarranted. When this suspicion arises, or has become a commonly held but unvoiced

attitude, it may generate an atmosphere of uneasy tension within the university. Educationists may find themselves to some degree academically estranged from their inter-departmental colleagues, and professional and scholarly activity may become narrowed down to the isolated efforts of a virtual enclave of educationists who derive their sustenance from each other rather than from the university as a whole. But there are at least two other discernible responses made by education faculties to this situation. Firstly, educationists may seek external (off campus) activities and projects which serve to moderate their perception that they are academically unworthy or unwanted, and which allow them to preserve their academic self-image among groups whose first interests or professional roles lie outside the academic scrutiny of the university. Secondly, an education faculty might devote increasing attention to research, postgraduate teaching, and interdisciplinary collaboration, for, within these areas, it is possible to explicitly demonstrate academic respectability. In this latter case the academic master is well served, but the second master — the school — is not.

When the academic master reigns supreme the fate of the preservice programme is gloomily clear. Those who teach in the programme will tend to be inexperienced, partially qualified and heavily overburdened lecturers and tutors, or, they will be jaded academic work horses, patiently awaiting retirement. Those faculty who by dint of research capability, probably buttressed by membership in a respectable professional association (e.g. A.P.S.) and senior academic rank, will be far too busy managing both a funded research programme, with its bevy of research assistants, and a surfeit of Ph.D. students to be able to give more than token support to the preservice programme. For their part, preservice students will tolerate the programme in the long run because, after all, it promises a secure meal ticket at its conclusion. From the perspective of the practising profession in the schools, the faculty of education will be unassailable because, in the eyes of the university, it will be fulfilling its academic mission. Of course the practitioner will grumble and criticise, but he will tolerate all equally with the student. He knows he need only wait nine or ten months before he will have the unfettered opportunity to straighten out the student currently being misguided by the inhabitants of fantasy land.

On the other hand, the practitioner in the school is bound, in turn, to support a viewpoint of educational

*Department of Education, University of Wollongong
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