

Feminist Pedagogy: Issues Challenging Today's Instructors

*By Diana Philip, M.S. graduate student
Department of Women's Studies, Towson University
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Many young people entering university classrooms in the United States today have not been meaningfully exposed to theories about gender inequality or comprehensive accounts about the evolution of feminism. A significant number have shown resistance to learning about feminist thought and hold negative views they are unwilling to shake (Carillo, 2007; Waite, 2007). When questioned, students describe feminism as bashing men as a whole, believe that feminism tells women that should not act feminine, or think that feminism should be discussed only in a historical context (Edwards, 2008; Stake et al, 2008).

Considering feminism to be a thing of the past, many young people believe that American society is now post-feminist (Deeb-Sossa & Kane, 2007; Love & Hembrecht, 2007). Many give credit to activists in generations before them whose hard work allows young women opportunities to live feminist lives. Some are aware that the successful activism that produced many emancipated changes for women has also expanded opportunities for men. Yet, youth who have not directly felt the impact of sexism feel that the gender war is over and there is no need to revisit how social structures and public policies can produce and/or maintain an inequitable world for women. Today's youth have been told that they can accomplish anything. Many believe that any deficit they experience in realizing their goals is due to personal weakness, and not anything to do with attempts to negotiate an unequal playing field rooted in gender politics. It may be upsetting for college students to hear that outside forces can determine their future options and alter how others perceive their potential for learning, working or leading based upon stereotypes surrounding gender, race and class (Edwards, 2008).

Due to preconceived notions about power dynamics in American society, it can be difficult to successfully engage students in discourse about feminism. Some scholars claim that the conservative social climate in the United States has increased significantly resulting in a backlash against multiculturalism in education, especially since the events of 9/11 (Stake et al, 2008; White, Wright-Soika, and Russell, 2007; Abdulhadi, 2005; Larson, 2005). Students' initial resistance to feminism has become well documented in studies examining the learning outcomes of women's and gender studies courses (Stake et al, 2008; Markowitz, 2005). Some of the students share concerns that they are being taught according to the instructors' personal feminist agendas (Seymour, 2007). They comment that the theories and experiences professors share with students are ways to indoctrinate one into becoming a feminist that smacks against their belief systems about gender, race and class identities (Kishimoto and Mwangi, 2009). Others complain that the materials being taught are based upon the instructors' opinions, rather than historical facts or peer-reviewed research (Stake et al, 2008; White, Wright-Soika, and Russell, 2007).

One of the main criticisms of today's undergraduates is that they lack basic skills in critical thinking as well as the ability to grasp the politics of knowledge production (Waite, 2007). It is difficult for them to recognize how "truth" is constructed and are wary of ideas that do not reflect their personal experiences. (White, Wright-Soika, and Russell, 2007; Markowitz, 2005). However, professors caution that although students may appear not to be open to critical thinking, this does not mean that they are incapable of learning or real engagement. Within the space of resistance are opportunities for teachable moments (Feigenbaum, 2007; Barnett, 2004).

Among many progressive professors in the social sciences and the liberal arts, feminist pedagogy has become essential in promoting critical thinking and consciousness raising among undergraduate students (Larson, 2005; Markowitz, 2005). By making students more aware of gender stratification, dynamics and politics, they can learn that oppression does not occur by personal fault, but due to social constructed barriers created to protect privilege and power over others. Feminist pedagogy seeks to engage students in political discussion of gender justice. Not only should students be able to analyze information provided to them about the roles of gender, race and class in determining the positionality of individuals and groups, but to engage in actions to help end oppression (Zimmerman, McQueen, & Guy, 2007). As a form of emancipatory or liberatory education, this type of pedagogy can help students make sense of their emotional responses to social injustice (Larson, 2005). By using pedagogies that seek to connect with students and transform them into critical thinkers who can decide their own positions on issues, professors can serve as agents of change.

Feminist pedagogy honors the notion that students are partners in the process of knowledge construction. Although some may not consider themselves as part of a feminist wave or view themselves as post-feminist, students still have knowledge to be offered in the classroom (Maher, 2008). Whether they associate with Third Wave ideology or not, young women and men who claim to be feminists also deserve attention and the opportunity to explore ideas using new pedagogies. They have the right to seek collective ownership of the classroom and benefit from further development of their analysis, discourse, research and activist skills.

The following is a select list of 50 journal articles that have been published in the last five years by professors who have faced challenges in using feminist pedagogy in their college or university classrooms. Some share stories of their perspectives, experiences and tools they have used to connect with a variety of students. Others provide research in determining how to improve learning outcomes using feminist pedagogy or discuss new ways of creating pedagogies that address the more controversial issues among students. Many give credit to feminist theorists such as bell hooks, Jennifer Gore, Robyn Wiegman, Kathleen Weiler, Adrienne Rich, Peggy MacIntosh, Frinde Maher and Mary Kay Tetreault. These articles are full of quotes and citations of their work. Readers will benefit from the breadth of the authors' exploration of ideas about feminist pedagogy and, be it as an instructor or student, recognize teaching methods that have remained salient over the years.

For the purposes of this paper, the pedagogies described apply mainly to courses in the social sciences and the liberal arts. Since more universities are requiring students to take classes to meet diversity or cultural pluralism requirements, many of the articles chosen concern how professors have learned to introduce theories regarding the intersectionality of gender, race, class, ethnicity, nationality, ability, age and/or sexuality to students who hold little interest or knowledge about feminism prior to enrollment. The following are organized by the type of central issue the authors sought to address in each of their papers:

Authority/Positionality
Body Issues/Embodied Self
Contemporary Feminism/Post-Feminism
Disability Issues/Ableism
Elder & Girls Studies/Ageism
Ethnicity/Racism
Gender Violence/Trauma Issues
Religion/Spirituality
Sexuality/Reproductive Issues
Strategies/Methods
Studies about Students and Feminist Pedagogy
Tools /Resources

Please note that an excellent manual on developing higher education courses involving service learning components is available through Towson University's Institute for Teaching and Research on Women: **The Handbook on Service Learning in Women's Studies and the Disciplines**. For more information, visit <http://www.towson.edu/itrow/index.asp>

Authority/Positionality

- 1) Abdulhadi, Rabab. 2005. Tread Lightly: Teaching Gender and Sexuality in Time of War. *Journal of Women's History*. 17 (4) 154-158

This essay is a commentary regarding the challenges of feminist professors of Arab/Muslim/Middle Eastern/Central Asian backgrounds teaching in the United States since 9/11. As a defense mechanism in avoiding discrimination and disparagement, many of these academics have chosen to not correct Americans about the misperceptions and stereotypes that many have about their cultures. The author discusses fear of conflict with universities about choices made regarding assigned readings affected by the dearth of translated materials that accurately reflect gender and sexuality issues in the Middle East. With students tightly gripping their images of what it means to be American in a time of war, foreign born instructors are not feeling safe in the classroom. There is a struggle regarding hierarchy and an impulse towards maintaining neutral discourse.

- 2) Breeze, William. 2007. Constructing a Male Feminist Pedagogy: Authority, Practice, and Authenticity in the Composition Classroom. *Feminist Teacher*. 18(1) 59-73.

A professor describes his experiences as a male feminist instructor in a Women in Literature course. He discusses being challenged by students who have questioned his authority in teaching about feminist theory and his authenticity in being able to personally relate to feminism. The author offers commentary on the absence of male scholars in a field that seeks diversity to end oppression of all marginalized groups. Using an assignment given to students about The Vagina Monologues, an example of the challenges of feminist pedagogy used by a male instructor are detailed, especially in terms of the challenge in identify the speaking position of the instructor.

- 3) Carillo, Ellen. 2007. "Feminist" Teaching/Teaching "Feminism". *Feminist Teacher*. 18(1) 28-42.

The author explores concern among those in feminist pedagogy regarding how expectations of authority in the classroom have resulted in negative student feedback – greatly affecting female professors as they are compared to male professors and resulting in veteran instructors to doubt their methods. Using examples of student evaluations she has received about her teaching practices, the professor discusses the ambivalence some students have about the use of feminist pedagogy in non-women's studies courses. She offers suggestions on how such comments and feedback can inform strategies in feminist pedagogy. These include openly discussing with the students at the beginning of the course regarding what constitutes teaching and learning as well as discussing the role of the instructor.

- 4) Copp, Martha and Kleinman, Sherryl. 2008. Practicing What We Teach: Feminist Strategies for Teaching about Sexism. *Feminist Teacher*. 18(2).151-177

The article discusses the challenge of teaching students about sexism – a subject whose legitimacy students have a tendency to dismiss more than racism, classism or heterosexism. The authors discuss how their authority has been questioned in the classroom when discussing gender inequality and feminism. Examples of strategies and activities are offered regarding ways students can be taught to become more aware of sexism in their daily lives. The professors detail the use of five techniques to organize a class to prepare students for meaningful discourse about sexism while maintaining collective ownership of the course.

- 5) Edwards, Wade. 2008. Teaching Women with a Y-Chromosome: Do Men Make Better Feminists? *Feminist Teacher*. 18 (2) 145-159

The author says that the answer is, "no." In this article, a male instructor of an introductory women's studies class offers the pros and cons of teaching such a course for students and himself. His presence in the classroom brings provocative discourse about the meaning of feminism and how feminist activism that produced many emancipated changes for women has also done so for men. The author discusses his strengths and limitations as a pro-feminist male professor and describes his struggles with authority and privilege in the classroom. Examples of how he structured his first course include examples of failure as well a success and ideas of how he would improve his pedagogy. The author also discusses challenges in addressing students' negative preconceived notions about female feminists and the pedagogical paradox of teaching one's experience.

- 6) Kishimoto, Kyoko and Mwangi, Mumbi. 2009. Critiquing the Rhetoric of "Safety" in Feminist Pedagogy: Women of Color Offering an Account of Ourselves. *Feminist Teacher*. 19 (2) 87-102

The essay describes the challenges of women of color teaching about women of color at predominantly white colleges and universities and how their experiences have often been marginalized by their institutions as well as within mainstream feminist pedagogy. The authors explore the concept of safety in the classroom by examining issues such as self-justification and self-disclosure. In describing their experiences with students who have questioned their authority, the professors explain how they have turned to teaching about vulnerability in order for classes to better understand the dynamics between dominant and marginalized populations. The article concludes with implications for feminist pedagogy in the classroom as well as in the academy.

Body Issues/Embodied Self

- 7) Fisanick, Christina. 2007. "They Are Weighted with Authority": Fat Female Professors in Academic and Popular Cultures. *Feminist Teacher*. 17 (3) 237-257

The physical appearance of a professor in the classroom conveys the air of authority as much as the ability to articulate the beauty of one's mind. The author speaks to the issue of how academics that are fat often face one of the last acceptable forms of discrimination in American society. She offers an overview of how the fat body has been viewed in history and popular culture, notions regarding the normal professor body, and the dismissal of fat academic women. The professor shares her experiences and how students bring cultural meanings about the body to the classroom that affect the way they participate with the instructor. She discusses how making the body of the professor both an object and a subject in the classroom can create a teachable moment and shares strategies to make the classroom (and outside the classroom) less hostile to all bodies.

- 8) Kazan, Tina S. 2005. Dancing Bodies in the Classroom: Moving toward an Embodied Pedagogy. *Pedagogy: Critical Approaches to Teaching Literature, Language, Composition and Culture*. 5 (3): 379-409

A professor discusses the role of the embodied self in the classroom and how cues from the physical presentation of the instructor guides how students choose to interact. Likewise, when assumptions are made about students based upon their bodies, instructors may engage with students based on those assumptions. The author shares a story of when she another woman took a ballroom dancing class together, identifying appropriate use of language became confusing to the teacher. She discusses how the female body can be socially constructed and perceived by students as unable to carry an authoritative role in the classroom. She offers thoughts on how embodied pedagogy can occur in the classroom and provides an example in which a class is shown the film "Oleana" after first engaging in discussion about it online.

- 9) Moore, Lisa Jean. 2007. Incongruent Bodies: Teaching While Leaking. *Feminist Teacher*. 17(2) 95-106

The author discusses students' views of instructors based upon observations about their physical attributes and how professors use body language and embodied performance to maintain stability in the classroom. She describes two instances of incongruence that have occurred during her career as a professor – an unintentional breast milk let-down in the midst of class and what she deems as a "leaky mouth" event revealing her lesbian relationship to her students. Discussing how these events challenged gender power assumptions and heterosexism, the author examines how the choice of an

instructor to disclose the embodied self as well as using one's body to disrupt the normativity of a classroom carries both risks and opportunities in pedagogy.

- 10) Silbergleid, Robin. 2009. An Introduction to Gender Studies: Pregnancy, Parenting and Authority in the University. *NWSA Journal*. 21(1). 131-150.

A professor describes experiences teaching a gender studies course while visibly pregnant. She describes how the pregnant body served as a pedagogical function in the classroom and the strategies she employed to respond to students' assumptions about her identity. The author explains how her body served as text - a starting point for discussion about gender, family, and heterosexual norms. However, she also discusses the experience of the pregnancy drawing attention to her body that may be incongruent to ideas of what serves as the normal professor body. The article addresses the politics of authority within the classroom as well as how a pregnant professor, and subsequently new parent, can be received by faculty and administrators within the university setting.

Contemporary Feminism/Post-Feminism

- 11) Bardsley, Alyson. 2006. Girlfight the Power: Teaching Contemporary Feminism and Pop Culture. *Feminist Teacher*. 16(3). 189-204

A professor describes the experience of creating and teaching an American Studies course cross-listed with Women's Studies on Third Wave and popular culture. Taught in the evening as a research seminar, the class was a mix in terms of gender, race, class and age. The attitudes and reactions of the students to the material led the instructor to examine unanswered questions she had about her own relationship with feminism post-Second Wave. The main issues involved the appropriation of masculine attributes used to empower young women and girls, and the primary criticism of the Third Wave generation of being excessively individualistic and consumer driven. The author provides information about the texts and media she used to teach the class, the learning outcomes and how she would alter the course when offered again.

- 12) Maher, Frinde. 2008. Twisted Privileges: Terms of Inclusion in Feminist Teaching. *Radical Teacher*. 83: 5-9

A known expert in the field of feminist pedagogy, a professor revisits her teaching practices in light of the challenges that have been brought about from writings of Third Wave generation feminists and students' perspectives about living in a post-feminist world. The essay describes her strategies in the classroom and how they have become a synthesis of Second and Third Wave ideologies with the goal of getting students to better understand and analyze privilege and oppression, especially among white students. The article lists many works the professor has used over the years in teaching feminist theory and how she has recently fine-tuned her discussions of these readings with her students.

- 13) Feigenbaum, Anna. 2007. The Teachable Moment: Feminist Pedagogy and the Neoliberal Classroom. *Review of Education, Pedagogy & Cultural Studies*. 29 (4) 337-349

Offering analysis regarding two teachable moments experienced with students, a professor explores the results of the corporatization of universities that have made students less likely to engage in

critical thinking and more likely to pursue education driven by the job market. She offers the perspective that resistance by students in the classroom is not an indication of their inability to learn as suggested by other scholars, but signifies opportunities to engage students and to use the space created for transformation. Two anecdotes are offered from the author's experiences of teaching radical feminist theory courses. According to the professor, each encounter between teacher and student demonstrated a yearning for critical consciousness that is not easily promoted within classrooms affected by the political economic conditions of neoliberalism.

- 14) Love, Meredith A. and Helmbrecht, Brenda M. 2007. Teaching the Conflicts: (Re)Engaging Students with Feminism in a Postfeminist World. *Feminist Teacher*. 18(1) 28-40.

The authors provide a comprehensive overview of the challenges professors face in teaching about feminism to students who consider themselves as part of the Third Wave or as post-feminists. The article describes the differences between Second Wave and Third Wave ideologies as well as the arguments used about how feminism should be described only within a historical context. They describe how the focus of young women has changed from collective concerns and social activism to self-fulfillment and consumerism. The professors offer methods they use in their pedagogy such as analyzing statistics, teaching media literacy, and providing students to engage in argumentative discourse in the classroom. They also suggest using media texts to engage students in analyzing conflicting views between Third Wavers and post-feminists. Three examples are offered: the song writing of Pink, the Dove Campaign for Real Beauty and the film "The Devil Wears Prada".

Disability Pedagogy/Ableism

- 15) Blizzard, Deborah and Foster, Susan. 2007. Feminist Pedagogy and Universal design in Deaf and Hearing World: Linking Cultures through Artifacts and Understanding. *Feminist Teacher*. 17(3) 225-236.

The authors offer the perspective that feminist pedagogy should be supportive of a communication model used in classrooms known as "universal design". The principles of universal design originated from disability studies with the goal to promote inclusiveness of all students in the classroom to maximize learning potential. Strategies to allow deaf students equal opportunity to participate alongside hearing students who are used to competitive discourse in American universities have been found to also be useful to those who have more introverted personalities or are non-native English speakers. The authors discuss their experiences with universal design and discuss the politics of its use. They describe tools for their pedagogy such as the use of a cultural artifact being held by a student when speaking to help encourage turn-taking and mutual respect in the classroom.

- 16) Knoll, Kristina R., 2009. Feminist Disability Studies Pedagogy. *Feminist Teacher*. 19 (2) 122-133

Although many professors strive to promote access and participation for students with disabilities through models such as "universal design", the author calls for attention to be paid in how those with varied bodily and psychological differences experience lives that also intersect with the dynamics of gender, race, class, ethnicity, nationality, ability, age and sexuality. Commenting on the perspective that ableism is often not discussed in women's studies courses, the article describes the need for awareness of the social construction of disability. The author argues that people require more than modifications of physical barriers. The professor offers advice on course development and

preparation, how language can contribute to social privileging, setting the classroom environment as disability-positive space, the use of presentation of styles, avoiding discrimination by easing course requirements for disabled students, and using a model of interdependency in order to promote an ethic of caring. Examples are provided of able-bodied privilege.

Elder & Girls Studies/Ageism

- 17) Barnett, Barbara. 2006. Focusing on the Next Picture: Feminist Scholarship as a Foundation for Teaching about Ageism in the Academy. *NWSA Journal*. 18 (1) 85-98

A professor offers the argument of how feminist pedagogy in the classroom is a good strategy to use when presenting the concept of ageism to students. Teaching an introductory mass communications course, she describes the use of media literacy to heighten the awareness among students of how older people are often placed as “the other” and the consequences of social structuring that risk the elderly being treated as a marginalized group. Given that there is a dearth of research about pedagogy in this area of women’s studies, the author offers three steps in her teaching practices and suggested assignments for students.

- 18) Kaplan, Carey and Kuntz, Susan. You Can’t Be Old Before You Are Young: Aging and Pedagogy. *Feminist Teacher*. 18 (2) 125-146

Having taught for over 30 years, two professors share their experiences and perspectives as aging academics constantly surrounded by youth. They describe how their pedagogies have evolved into more collaborative teaching styles which decenter notions of a traditional classroom. The authors explain how they reject expectations of how aging is to soften their teaching practices and stereotypes that older people are expected to be warmer in personality and weaker in competence. The authors share their experiences of presenting a working version of this essay with their colleagues and were met with resistance from the younger faculty members and unexpected feedback from others. Having actively sought more “experimental, expansion, challenging and interactive pedagogy”, they share their current strategies in teaching about feminism.

- 19) Kearney, Mary Celeste. 2009. Coalescing: The Development of Girls’ Studies. *NWSA Journal*. 21(1) 1-29

This article is a comprehensive overview of the emergence of girls’ studies scholarship and how research and discourse about female youth has endured decades of marginalization in many disciplines, including women’s studies. The author details the types of research that has been conducted in this new field (officially recognized by NWSA in 2006) and the dearth of scholarship that still exists. Five trends in research focusing full attention on girls as opposed to women are provided which can help professors who are interested in building a course on girls’ studies. The author is a professor in media studies who is part of the growing interdisciplinary field that centers on girls, girlhood and girls’ culture.

Ethnicity/Racism

- 20) Daly, Brenda O. (2005) Taking Whiteness Personally: Learning to Teach Testimonial Reading and Writing in the College Literature Classroom. *Pedagogy*. 5 (2) 213-246

A professor writes about her personal experience in exploring the emerging scholarship and discourse on “whiteness studies” and how this has affected her writing and teaching about women in literature. She describes adopting the use of testimonial reading and writing in her pedagogy as a way for students to examine text as well as themselves as readers. Providing an example about reconstructing a course, she discussed the strategies involved in assigning testimonial writing or the creation of zines for students to explore the construction of their own cultural or racial bias and offers an analysis of their learning outcomes.

- 21) Gillman, Laura. 2007. Beyond the Shadow: Re-scripting Race in Women’s Studies. *Meridians: feminism, race, transnationalism*. 7 (2) 117-141

This essay explores dynamics in the classroom as students and academics struggle in how to effectively respond when defensive posturing occurs in discourse about race. Notions about feminist whiteness scripts, double-voiced discourse, the racial alibi, and racial dualist discourse are examined using two frameworks: intersectionality and feminist whiteness studies. The author provides an extensive analysis regarding the use of race scripts and suggests that a conjunctural approach in feminist pedagogy may be best in disrupting hegemonic power and discourse in the classroom setting. She provides examples of racial conflicts as they have occurred in her classrooms, detailing the reactions of students.

- 22) Johnson-Bailey, Juanita and Lee, Ming-Yeh. 2005. Women of Color in the Academy: Where’s Our Authority in the Classroom? *Feminist Teacher*. (15(2). 111-122

This article contains an overview of feminist pedagogy and how it forces instructors to examine their individual practices as well as how authority is perceived by students. The authors discuss racism and cultural discrimination in the classroom and offer recommendations to counter or mitigate bias among students. These include the use of particular curriculum development, group debriefings, and online discussions to manage sensitive topics. The article describes three incidents that have most challenged the two professors engaged in team teaching multicultural studies courses: a student who insisted on interviewing the professors prior to enrolling in a course, unexpected student evaluations by those claiming that expectations rooted in stereotypes of the ethnicity of the professors were not met, and the experience of co-teaching with a white professor that undermined the authority of the authors in their classroom.

Gender Violence/Trauma Issues

- 23) Dragiewicz, Molly. 2008. Teaching about Trafficking: Opportunities and Challenges for Critical Engagement. *Feminist Teacher*. 18 (3) 185-201

A professor provides insight on developing a course on human trafficking. She offers an overview of why this topic should be of special interest to feminist scholars, the divisions in the debate over the issue, and the public policy framework around sex work she uses to structure her course. The article provides examples of activities assigned for students to explore their attitudes about poverty, racism, migration, gender, sex, sexuality and sex work. An extremely complicated crime, human trafficking forces scholars to consider the variations in the theoretical approaches to the subject, data reliability issues due to the covert nature of the activities, how attention to the topic has been framed, and

the different definitions and language used to describe the overall problem. A list of texts and media used in the course concludes the paper.

- 24) Durfee, Alesha and Rosenberg, Karen. 2009. Teaching Sensitive Issues: Feminist Pedagogy and the Practice of Advocacy-Based Counseling. *Feminist Teacher* . 19 (2) 103-121

Although there are a variety of resources available in feminist pedagogy for instructors planning courses about social problems, some professors face struggles with how best to respond to students in crisis or who react adversely to course material that reflect personal traumatic life experiences. Acknowledging the pressure to maintain traditional teacher/student relations in the classroom setting, the authors ask, "What are the limits of our responsibilities as instructors to these students?" Finding little in feminist pedagogy literature, these professors suggest a practice known as advocacy-based counseling. The authors discuss the elements of this pedagogy as it relates to preparing students to process the course content and offering meaningful interactions with students when issues arise from presentations made about sensitive topics. They provide advice regarding disruptions in the classroom and address issues such as setting limits and assessing safety risks.

- 25) Lee, Janet. 2008. Survivors of Gendered Violence in the Feminist Classroom. *Violence Against Women*. 14: 1451-1466

Many challenges face instructors in teaching about gender violence in the university setting. A professor describes her research study conducted among students in introductory women's studies courses about the level of violence experienced prior to their enrollment in the classes and how the teaching practices affected those who self-identified as survivors. Implications for pedagogy based on the results of her study are offered. The author calls for instructors to discuss more inclusive types of gender violence that are also acts performed without consent such as stalking, street harassment and online violence. She asks instructors to be aware of the dynamics of the ratio between the number of women and men in the class when discussing gender privilege, the feelings of culpability that may still be present among survivors in the classroom, and the opportunities to introduce the notion of community building and contributing to social change.

- 26) Wagner, Anne and Magnusson, Jamie Lynn. 2005. Neglected Realities: Exploring the Impact of Women's Experiences of Violence on Learning in Sites of Higher Education. *Gender & Education*. 17 (4) 449-461

This article explores whether feminist pedagogy used in higher education courses has effectively addressed the issues of female students who have experienced trauma from physical or sexual violence. The authors question whether there are any special educational needs of this group. As professors, they raise concerns that women's studies as a discipline has been silent on this issue since victimization of women and girls is more common than generally acknowledged. After reviewing the scant literature of how trauma impacts learning, they call for a better awareness in academia about this marginalized group to better inform pedagogy. The article includes discussion of a journaling project completed by three undergraduates who, as survivors of violence, provide details of learning difficulties and coping mechanisms. The authors urge instructors to reexamine how discussions may negatively affect survivors who try to hide their experiences of trauma in the classroom setting.

Religion/Spirituality

- 27) Deeb-Sossa, Natalia and Kane, Heather. 2007. "It's the Word of God": Students' Resistance to Questioning and Overcoming Heterosexism. *Feminist Teacher*. 17 (2) 151-169.

This article explores challenges instructors face of students using religious – based rhetoric to argue against homosexuality and justify heterosexism. The professors share strategies used to address students' resistance to engage in meaningful discourse, including collaborative teaching techniques. They offer three methods of their pedagogy: comparing different translations of scriptures, distinguishing writing that is literal from metaphorical, and encouraging students to consider the agendas of translators of Biblical text within a historical context. The authors also discuss conveying to students how religion can bring about social change rather than maintain oppression and how it can be compatible with feminism. Examples of Christian scripture appear throughout the paper.

- 28) Jabbra, Nancy W. 2008. Theories of Gender Hierarchy for an introductory Women's Studies Class. *Feminist Teacher*. 18 (3) 229-233

A professor shares a chart she uses in an introductory women's studies course at a Roman Catholic university describing ten theoretical frameworks about gender inequality. The course is designed for reading assignments of particular scriptural texts to correspond with each theory. Explaining her lecturing strategy in detail, the author presents how to use the nine questions in the chart that guide basic understanding and analysis of each framework. The article includes quotes from students with positive feedback about the use of the tool. The professor comments that she has also found success among students in utilizing the chart for advanced classes.

- 29) Miller, Julie B. 2009. Forming Future Feminists: Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza, Conscientization, and the College Classroom. *Journal of Feminist Studies in Religion*. 25(1) 99-123

A professor describes how Schussler-Fiorenza's pedagogical theory can be applied to any feminist classroom. She uses student writing to promote conscience raising in a religious studies course called "God and Human Sexuality". Her model seeks to engage students in critical thinking and to expose them to the idea that they are capable of contributing to knowledge-production - a challenge when many students have been taught to not question historic works such as the Bible or have dismissed such religious work as inherently anti-woman and patriarchal. The author shares a five-step process of the pedagogy she uses to in her course

Sexuality/Reproductive Issues

- 30) Deeb-Sossa, Natalia and Kane, Heather. 2009. Not Avoiding a "Sensitive Topic": Strategies to Teach about Women's Reproductive Rights. *NWSA Journal*. 21(1). 131-150.

This article provides strategies used to introduce the reproductive justice framework when teaching about sexual health and rights. Some instructors may be reluctant to lead discussions on abortion care for fear that the topic may be too sensitive for some students while too toxic for others. The authors offer ways to respond to various anti-choice views aired by students in the classroom, such as religious arguments against abortion and concerns regarding abortion used as racial genocide. In keeping with the philosophy that fuels feminist pedagogy, the professors stress that the goal for the

course is for students to learn tools to analyze the abortion debate and develop their own positions on the issue.

- 31) Muñoz, Victor and Garrison, Ednie Kae. 2008. Transpedagogies: A Roundtable Dialogue. *WSQ: Women's Studies Quarterly*. 36 (3-4) 288-3098

The authors served as moderators at an eleven-member round-table discussion about the contested space within women's studies scholarship regarding trans-focused pedagogical issues. The term "transpedagogies" is inclusive of transsexual, transgender and gender/queer pedagogical perspectives. The comments made by the participants are useful in developing theories about gender identity in the classroom, but they also raise the question whether transpedagogies belong within the scope of feminist scholarship as some worry that feminism is grounded by the gender identity "woman".

- 32) Meyerson, Marlyn; Crawley, Sara L.; Antsey, Erica Hesch; Kessler, Justine and Okopny, Cara. 2007. *Hypatia*. 22 (1) 92-115

Noting the conservative backlash occurring in sexuality education that seeks to ignore queer theory and promote heterosexism (among other topics), the authors suggest that offering an introductory human sexuality course in women's studies rather than in other disciplines may be a worthwhile solution. The essay describes a project in which a feminist and queer theoretical content analysis was conducted to find the right textbook in developing such a course. After detailing problems identified with the available materials, suggestions are offered as to what an alternative textbook would contain. These include explaining how sexuality is socially constructed, offering sex positive discussion, and making the curriculum interdisciplinary, rather than just multicultural.

- 33) Nathanson, Jessica. 2009. Bisexual Pedagogy: Bringing Bisexuality into the Classroom. *Journal of Bisexuality*. 9: 71-86

A professor talks about the process of coming out as a bisexual individual in the classroom as a tool in her feminist pedagogy. She describes how the potential for enhancing critical inquiry regarding multiple identities is always there, but the process contains much risk in terms of the negatively affecting dynamics in the classroom as well as within the academic department. The author explains how although there are common issues of coming out as gay or lesbian in terms of managing identity and classroom authority, the key difference is in how the instructor must navigate the misinformation students have about bisexuality. She offers five scenarios in which the decision whether to come out affected students' sense of safety in discussing their own sexual identities and assumptions about the heteronormative paradigm.

- 34) Pryor, Jacklyn. 2006. Passing / Out in Texas: The Challenges of Progressive Pedagogy in Conservative Climates. *Theatre Topics*. 16 (1) 65-84

A professor describes a non-theatre major course she taught exploring multicultural theories using feminist pedagogy. Seeking to emphasize response over intent, she experienced instances in which the classroom setting was disrupted by students' resistance in her attempts to connect performance with cultural and political reality. Sensing that the instructor was an activist, liberal and lesbian, a number of students shut down at the introduction of feminist and queer theory in discussions and assignments. The author provides examples of responses she made to individual students'

complaints about the course not meeting their expectations and to those who sought to justify their homophobia to excuse non-compliance with course requirements. The article examines whether students' acts of resistance can be used as productive space in progressive pedagogy.

Strategies/Methods

- 35) Colwill, Elizabeth and Boyd, Richard. 2008. Teaching without a Mask? Collaborative Teaching as Feminist Practice. *NWSA Journal*. 20 (2) 216-246

In this essay, the authors explore the challenges of team teaching using feminist, anti-colonial and critical pedagogies in general education courses. Non-authoritarian or emancipatory classroom environments hold hope for transformative experiences for both faculty and students, but the process can be more disruptive and unpredictable than first planned. In their analysis, the authors offer an example of racism and nationalism that occurred in a class and how the team-teaching faculty and students responded.

- 36) Crawley, Sara L.; Curry, Heather; Dumois-Sands, Julie; Tanner, Chelsea and Wyker, Cyra. 2008. Full-Contact Pedagogy: Lecturing with Questions and Student-Centered Assignments as Methods for Inciting Self-Reflexivity for Faculty and Students. *Feminist Teacher*. 19 (1) 13-30

In her goal to effectively engage students in the classroom, the lead author describes the importance of feminist pedagogy as a professor and offers two student-centered techniques: lecturing with questions and autoethnography or "feminifestos" (student-centered final assignments that allow students to examine the relationship of theory to themselves). In describing the nuances of each pedagogical strategy, the professor presents this information while encouraging readers that her self-reflective teaching methods can be applied to disciplines outside of gender studies. The article concludes with examples of written feedback provided by students in her courses about their learning outcomes.

- 37) Larson, Laura M. 2005. The Necessity of Feminist Pedagogy in a Climate of Political Backlash. *Equity & Excellence in Education*. 38 (2) 135-144

The author argues that due to the increasing efforts of conservatives invested in a backlash against multiculturalism in education, the author argues that feminist pedagogy in higher education continues to be an important way to engage young people in liberatory consciousness. She defines feminist pedagogy, the methods she uses in class, and the challenges of bringing theories of pedagogy into actual practice. Providing examples of challenging classroom experiences, the professor covers four tenets of feminist pedagogy: 1) using personal experience as legitimate sources of knowledge; 2) connecting experiences to larger socioeconomic structures and dominant frameworks; 3) setting the environment to encourage inclusivity, equality and empowerment of students; and 4) identifying strategies to exercise personal agency and promote collective action.

- 38) Seymour, Nicole. 2007. The Interests of Full Disclosure: Agenda-Setting and the Practical Initiation of the Feminist Classroom. *Feminist Teacher*. 17(3) 187-203.

A new professor shares how she went about researching ways to introduce the idea of feminist pedagogy to her students at the beginning of her courses. She provides a literature review that

effectively discusses defining the concept of a feminist classroom as well as the risks of using feminist teaching methods, but states that writings on the open initiation of their use are absent. The author shares interviews conducted with students on their perspectives about the use of feminist classrooms, her experiences in openly discussing the use of feminist pedagogy at the beginning of her own courses, and feedback she has received from students about the outcomes.

- 39) Waite, Stacey. 2007. Action Literacy: Position, Movement and Consciousness. *Feminist Teacher*. 17(2) 107-121

The author describes pedagogy using action literacy in teaching students to read with more awareness and engage in discourse within the space that lies between polarized concepts and assumed binaries. The article provides definitions of the meaning of literacy and conscious reading. From a personal perspective, she also talks about her physical appearance and manner as a professor and how students have responded to her based upon their socially constructed assumptions. She shares her personal experience in integrating social constructed meanings of gender as an example of the politics of knowledge production.

- 40) White, Aaronette M., Wright-Soika, Marcia and Russell, Monica S. 2007. Epistolary Connections: Letters as Pedagogical Tools in the Introductory Women's Studies Course. *Feminist Teacher*. 17(3) 204-224.

With more students resistant to ideas about feminism and rejecting scholarship when it does not coincide with their personal experiences, the authors describe turning to letter writing as a non-threatening way to introduce critical thinking about women's issues. They offer a template for an introductory women's studies course, a list of required texts, examples of student assignments and feedback from students. The articles details how the letter reading, writing and sharing meets the goals of creating a feminist classroom and concludes with comments on the implications for feminist pedagogy.

Studies about Students and Feminist Pedagogy

- 41) Langan, Debra and Davidson, Deborah. 2005. Critical Pedagogy and Personal Struggles: Feminist Scholarship Outside Women's Studies. *Feminist Teacher*. (15(2). 132-145

This article discussed ways to introduce feminist pedagogy in a non-gender studies course and strategies to engage students. The authors focus on how to address students' resistance to learning about feminist perspectives so that they will learn to recognize oppressive structures that may undermine their learning and agency. The article provides an overview of why university students are more ambivalent about identifying with feminism and tend to be invested in individual solutions to collective problems about inequality. The use of reflectivity, alternative discourse and group work are described as methods to encourage students to be engaged in critical thinking as well as with one another. The article is based upon the results of a three-year participant observation study using feminist pedagogy in a social psychology class. The syllabus of the course appears in the endnotes.

- 42) Markowitz, Linda. 2005. Unmasking Moral Dichotomies: Can Feminist Pedagogy Overcome Student Resistance? *Gender & Education*. 17 (1) 39-55, 17

A professor explores whether feminist pedagogy successfully helps students overcome resistance to engaging in critical analysis. For her study, two videos were created depicting scenarios in which the instructor provides examples of how gender is a relational construct and is met with disapproval by three different students. Students in different gender studies classes completed anonymous surveys after viewing one video at the beginning of the course and the other at the end of the course. The author discussed the results of her studies and examines the concepts of moral dichotomies and student resistance. She also offers details of the pedagogies she uses in the courses of the study participants. The findings support the instructor's premise that feminist pedagogies help students create cognitive frameworks beyond moral dualism

- 43) Sharp, Elizabeth A.; SoRelle-Miner, Danielle; Bermudez, Judith M. and Walker, Maria. 2008. "The Glass Ceiling is Kind of a Bummer": Women's reflections on a Gender Development Course. *Family Relations*. 57: 530-541

The authors describe a study conducted to collect feedback from students taking a required family studies course cross listed with the women's studies program. The concern is that there has been more of a backlash against the gains made by the women's movement since 9/11 and that feminist pedagogy may be what families studies courses need to counter a social climate that seems encouraging of policies adversely affecting women, girls and their families. Focus groups were used to collect the data and findings showed that preconceived notions about traditional gender dynamics and sexism were not effectively addressed in the classroom resulting in rejection of the course materials. In discussing the results, the authors discussed the apparent ease in which students embraced sexism and offer implications for feminist pedagogy.

- 44) Stake, Jayne E.; Sevelius, Jeanne; and Hanly, Sarah. (2008) Student Responsiveness to Women's and Gender Studies Classes: the Importance of Initial Student Attitudes and Classroom Relationships. *NWSA Journal*. 20(2) 189-214

This is an overview of a study comparing a large sample of women and men of different ethnic identities enrolled in 48 women's and gender studies classes among 6 colleges in the Midwest. Results demonstrated a greater awareness of sexism, the ability to be critically analytical of social structures, and openness about gender roles upon completion of the courses. The authors were particularly concerned with how to best address students' initial resistance to such a course, encourage an overall attitude change using feminist pedagogy and increase the quality of classroom relationships. Implications for teaching practices are offered in the discussion.

- 45) Zimmerman, Lynn W.; McQueen, Laura; and Guy, Gwendolyn. 2007. Connections, Interconnections, and Disconnections: The Impact of Race, Class and Gender in the University Classroom. *Journal of Theory Construction & Testing*. 11 (1) 16-21

Three professors offer personal views of their use of critical feminist pedagogy in the classroom using strategies such as "connected teaching" and reflective teaching practices. The article details a research study using autobiographical narratives to explore the notion of positionality in the classroom. Analysis of the results identified common themes and differences. Although race, class and gender play a part in the different ways the instructors chose to connect with their students, the common praxis was grounded in the ethic of caring. They share the hope that students would become engaged enough in their communities to work toward a less oppressive society.

Tools/Resources

- 46) Gilley, Jennifer. 2007. Women's Studies Information-Seeking: A State of the Union Address. *NWSA Journal*. 19 (2) 220-229

With the information explosion of the last twenty years, it has become difficult for feminist researchers to find relevant materials. The article explores how professors and librarians must prepare students looking for information sources in addition to women's studies databases. In addition to the complications brought about the variety of new publications (such as zines and blogs called "gray literature"), interdisciplinary works are yielding mixed results in database searches resulting in confusing classifications in cataloguing print materials and too broad descriptions of articles in electronic searches. The author also discusses access issues concerning the use of special collections, women-focused archives and stand alone libraries in order to promote information literacy that successfully realizes the goals of feminist instructors.

- 47) Lenard, Mary. 2005. Dealing with Online Selves: Ethos Issues in Computer-Assisted Teaching and Learning. *Pedagogy*. 5(1) 77-95

This article describes the ethics of online learning in the university setting. Studies have shown that an online discussion in a course can encourage more participation among students who have introverted personalities or are less proficient in spoken English than in the traditional American university classroom. Overall online discussion generates more student participation and is touted as a way to create more egalitarian opportunities for discourse. However, the technology also allows for students to engage in inappropriate or abusive behavior toward students and instructors resulting in unproductive conflict. The author addresses issues in course planning and teaching practices such as guiding how student may present themselves to others in the classroom community and strategies in evaluating students' work.

- 48) Radeloff, Cheryl L. and Bergman, Barbara J. 2009. Global Perspectives: Developing Media Literacy Skills to Advance Critical Thinking. *Feminist Teacher*. 19 (2) 168-171

The authors share strategies used in restructuring a women's studies course to increase critical thinking by teaching media literacy. The course required the faculty to work with the media services librarian to help students become aware of the variety sources of materials available and analyze the usefulness of their content. The article details how course assignments were designed using media formats such as websites maps, graphic novels, documentaries and literary films. The authors comment that visual media helps enliven the class and connect students to the lives of others in ways that the traditional lecture and discussion format cannot achieve.

- 49) Stone-Mediatore, Shari. 2007. Challenging Academic Norms: An Epistemology for Feminist and Multicultural Classrooms. *NWSA Journal*. 19 (2) 55-77

This essay challenges notions about what text are considered legitimate within feminist scholarship. Writings that do not follow traditional academic formats can be dismissed when in fact they may be more representative of certain groups and more valuable when representing marginalized populations. The author argues that texts that are creative in format and more accessible to a broad

range of readers should be included in the classroom. She calls for their legitimacy to be supported through a new theory of knowledge she calls "ethnically oriented engagement".

- 50) Turpin, Cherie Ann. 2007. Feminist Praxis, Online Teaching, and the Urban Campus. *Feminist Teacher*. 18(1) 9-27.

A professor discusses how she expanded her feminist pedagogy to encourage more participation among students and create a less hierarchal classroom setting by using web-based technology. She shares how electronic communication allows interactive dialogue, mentoring and individual exploration among a wide variety of web resources that are relevant to the students' individual cultures. The author describes the pros and cons of introducing feminist praxis into high tech online learning in an urban college setting using virtual classrooms, discussion boards and chat rooms. She provides examples of assignments and postings as well as strategies in building online curriculum.