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Chasing a Gendered Agenda: Collaboration and Team Teaching in Higher Education

Dana E. Christman
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The pursuit of social justice should appeal to all. In the academy, we acknowledge the concept of social justice that we must deal with the issues of legal, moral, and economic obligations of both the individual and the collective. We may even believe that gender inequity is a misdeed of the past. Surely, raised consciousness and federal laws have addressed inequities. Although academic women have been a part of the faculty at American colleges and universities for more than a hundred years, we would be mistaken to believe that social justice has been fully embraced and embodied by the academy.

Academic women earn less salary across all ranks than do men (Bentley & Blackburn, 1992; Davis, Ginorio, Hollenshead, Lazarus, Rayman, & Associates, 1996; Hensel, 1991); experience greater social isolation (Beaman-Smith & Placier, 1996; Clark & Corcoran, 1986; Johnsrud & Atwater, 1993; Johnsrud & Des Jarlais, 1994; Johnsrud & Heck, 1994; Kelly, 1993; Ramey, 1995); spend less time in research activities and more in teaching (Frohlich & Holtz-Bacha, 1994; Johnsrud & Atwater, 1993; Johnsrud & Des Jarlais, 1994; Menges & Exum, 1983); do not receive the same returns on research productivity (Burns, 1992; Clark & Corcoran, 1986; Hensel, 1991; National Science Foundation, 1994); experience more difficulties in relationships with departmental colleagues and chairs (Johnsrud & Atwater, 1993; Johnsrud & Des Jarlais, 1994; Johnsrud & Heck, 1994); and tend to feel like outsiders in their own departments (Clark & Corcoran, 1986; Hensel, 1991; Johnsrud & Atwater, 1993; Johnsrud & Heck, 1994; Kelly, 1993). Gender inequity is still present.

Problem, Purpose, and Significance of the Study

Given our knowledge of women faculty experiences in the academy, we might assume that collaboration and team teaching experiences reflect

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similar inequities. However, there is a dearth of literature related to women's experiences in collaborating and team teaching in mixed gender groups in higher education. Further investigation is merited.

This case study sought to characterize and give voice to women faculty working in collaboration and team teaching with male faculty in a higher education setting. The experiences of the women, as well as how they made sense of their experiences are presented. Then, cast against the framework of Feminist Phase Theory, particular attention is paid to the structure, climate, and culture of the work experience. The significance of the study is found in the multiple realities of women faculty members' experiences, and in the suggestions provided for improving the chances of success for female and male faculty to collaboratively work and teach together.

Institutional Structure, Climate, and Culture

The structure of higher education institutions contributes to the barriers women faculty face. Women's experiences do not constitute the dominant paradigm and are frequently misunderstood, devalued, and discounted. Research indicated that women and minority members experience their academic careers differently than do white males (Johnsrud & Des Jarlais, 1994). The research results suggested that a sense of isolation for females is often a reason that they leave institutions. Sandler (1992) hypothesized that the existing structure of the university is the "right" one, so there is no need for change. That this structure is based on male career patterns only is not taken into consideration.

One of the most frequently documented structural barriers that women faculty face is salary. Men's and women's academic careers are distinguished by the difference in salary that persists across all faculty ranks (American Association of University Professors, 2000; Davis et al., 1996; Johnsrud & Des Jarlais, 1994; U.S. Department of Education, 2000). Women's salaries indicate that they are disproportionately found in the lower ranks of faculty. Women are tenured at a lower rate than are men (AAUP, 2000; Davis et al., 1996). Those with tenure are disproportionately found in the ranks of associate professors, rather than full professors (AAUP, 2000; Blanke, 1999).

Women's research is consistently not valued and is discredited or trivialized (Burns, 1994). Women are often considered outsiders (Aisenberg & Harrington, 1988; Kelly, 1993) and feminist scholarship challenges basic assumptions through alternative paradigms (Kelly, 1993). Such challenges can be threatening to stakeholders of the status quo, which provides impetus to discredit women's research.

The small number of women faculty underlines, rather than undermines, the majority culture. Women find it difficult, if not impossible, to gain entry into the socializing networks necessary for advancement because the dominant males in the cultures in which they work often deny the existence of such a network (Davies-Netzley, 1998).

The climate for women in many institutions can be characterized as "chilly." Of reasons given for leaving prior to tenure in Johnsrud and Atwater's (1993) study of new faculty, institutional sex discrimination was the only issue that appeared among priorities of women faculty, with 24% of women ranking it as first, second, or third. The issue of intellectual isolation was represented by 43% of those who left and the issue of career support and personal relations with the department chair was also commonly reported. The conclusion was that "women act on this perception [barriers to advancement]; they leave" (Johnsrud & Heck, 1994).

Team-Teaching and Collaboration

There are a number of examples of collaborative efforts between teachers in K-12 settings. Yet, there seem to be far fewer examples of collaborative efforts among university faculty (Moore & Wells, 1999), due in part to the fact that “Historically, the primary focus of faculty development efforts has been on the individual faculty member and his or her ability to be productive” (McMillin & Berberet, 2002).

There are benefits and challenges associated with faculty teaming. The increased amount of time required for course-planning, teaching, and workload present certain challenges, yet benefits include “richer and more rewarding course experience[s] for both faculty and students” (Austin & Baldwin, 1991, p. 228). Bowles (1994) provided a view of the benefits of team teaching from two faculty members:

The dynamic of planning together, team teaching, troubleshooting problems together, reflecting on and assessing the program’s impact on students, and navigating the paths of institutional proposals and approvals together has become an unusual process of professional growth for both of us. (p. 15)

When faculty from different departments teach together, students experience a cross-fertilization of teaching techniques, and faculty reap enhanced and expanded knowledge bases (Austin & Baldwin, 1991). Team teaching provides for modeling and support of best practices and exposure to new research from other faculty colleagues (Austin & Baldwin, 1991). Researchers (Belenky, Clinchy, Goldberger, & Tarule, 1986; Freire, 1971; McDaniel, 1987; Quinlan, 1998) reported that faculty might best learn about teaching by working together and sharing experiences and insights with colleagues and peers. Quinlan (1998) suggested that collaborative activities, such as team teaching, may even be able to create a new culture in the academy, one in which teaching achievements are valued publicly. Shulman (1993) stated that team approaches to teaching have the possibility of making teaching “community property” (p. 7).

The challenges of team teaching and collaboration cannot be overlooked. Collaboration naturally involves skillful coordination and discussion. Collaborative courses are more time intensive than traditional courses. Extra time is needed for faculty to plan, and faculty must find mutually agreeable times to meet, despite having demanding schedules (Austin & Baldwin, 1991).

Faculty need skills for successful collaboration. Greene and Isaacs (1999) specified voluntarism, parity among participants, mutuality in goal selection, shared responsibility for participation and decision making, shared resources, and shared accountability as requirements for successful

collaboration efforts. These collaborative consultation skills work in contrast to traditional consultation skills that provide for only one person, deemed to be an expert, to have control, while others accommodate and learn (Greene & Isaacs, 1999). Acquiring collaborative skills in the academy provides for faculty professional growth and development that cannot be acquired with any other teaching methods.

In this study, the collaborative team is “a small number of people with complementary skills who are committed to a common purpose, performance goals, and approach for which they hold themselves mutually accountable (Katzenbach & Smith, 1993, p. 45). By definition, the group responsibility for the work infers mutual accountability and acceptance for both processes and outcomes.

Studies have emphasized the need to examine team *processes* [emphasis added] critically (Briggs, 1997; Hargreaves, 1991; Little, 1990). Team processes refer to (a) the interactions occurring during collaboration in formal and informal meetings and team teaching experiences, and (b) the factors contributing best to team effectiveness. To develop effectiveness, however, team members must analyze and review team processes, vigilantly monitor team actions and interactions, and make adjustments in their processes for optimum functioning. Indeed, Fleming and Monda-Amaya (2001) explained that one of the most important factors in determining a team’s effectiveness may be the process that the team follows.

Theoretical Framework—Feminist Phase Theory

Historically, our thinking has focused on the public lives of men (McIntosh, 1981, 1983). The experiences of men are often mistaken for the experiences of everyone in a culture (Andersen, 1988). Of particular concern is the notion that “theories and concepts emerging solely from a male conscience may be irrelevant for the female experience and inadequate for explaining female behavior” (Shakeshaft, 1989, p. 324).

Feminist Phase Theory (FPT), as developed by Tetreault (1985, 1987a, 1987b), is a five-phase classification model designed to evaluate the awareness levels of thought about women in academic disciplines. The goal of Feminist Phase Theory is “the eradication of all oppressive gender (and related race, class, age, affectional orientation, ability) categories of analysis and the creation of a world in which difference does not breed domination or subordination” (Warren, 1989, p. 49). “Such an analysis is a necessary and helpful precursor to setting a future research agenda as well as a guide to changed practice” (Twombly, 1991, p. 14).

FPT Phase One. The first phase, Male Dominant, “assumes that the male experience is universal, that it is representative of humanity and that it constitutes a basis for generalizing about all human beings” (Tetreault, 1985, p. 367). All categories of thought are written by men about men and the male model is accepted as the norm (Tetreault, 1987b). “What is at issue is the practice of studying male behavior and then assuming that the results are appropriate for understanding all behavior” (Shakeshaft & Nowell, 1984, p. 188).

FPT Phase Two. The Compensatory Phase, the second phase, recognizes the absence of women, although maleness is still considered the standard for humanness. In this phase, there is a search for women, but male thought is still the norm. Traditional structures are not confronted or disputed. Theories are still constructed from men studying other men, causing the majority of women to be thought of as subordinate. When women do not match the male’s paradigm of the world, it is not seen as a problem with extant theory, but a sign of their weakness (Schuster & Van Dyne, 1984; Tetreault, 1985). The few women that are noted are exceptional, outside the norm by gender, novelties among the males (Schmuck, 1987; Tetreault, 1987a).

FPT Phase Three. Efforts to include women begin in phase three, the Bifocal Phase. Here, women’s efforts to overcome under-representation are recognized; however, male experience is still seen as more appropriate. In this phase, women are no longer thought of as substandard and the differences between men and women are examined (Tetreault, 1985).

FPT Phase Four. In the fourth phase, Feminist, other factors (race, social class) as well as gender are recognized and lead to diversity. Women’s experiences begin to be used to define the human experience and are analyzed within social, cultural, historical, political and economic contexts (Tetreault, 1985, 1987a).

FPT Phase Five. A fully developed perspective that unites men’s and women’s experiences into a holistic view of human experience describes the final phase of Feminist Phase Theory—Multifocal or Relational. Femininity and masculinity are on a continuum of humanness and both can be used to define a person (Tetreault, 1985). This phase may be considered “corrective” as it provides for varying viewpoints and the transformation of knowledge (Schmuck, 1987).

Methodology

Activating the voice of participants through qualitative research (Merriam, 1998; Patton, 1990) yields multifaceted findings that guide us to participants' strengths (Nicholson, Evans, Tellier-Robinson, & Aviles, 2001). This study was concerned with participant perspective, a qualitative research design was chosen as the appropriate approach. Further, a case study methodology was selected as the study was bounded by the teams and the context in which they worked (Merriam, 1998).

Data were collected through interviews using an open-ended, semi-structured questionnaire. The interviews were audio taped and transcribed verbatim by two of the researchers. A third researcher reviewed the tapes and transcripts for accuracy. The gender of the researchers included two females and one male. The written text, together with the recording and observations taken during the discussion, aided in triangulation and interpretation of meaning. Participants kept journals during the period in which they were engaged with the collaboration and team teaching for this study. Triangulation was accomplished through reading the journals of the respondents' experiences and member checks (Erlandson, Harris, Skipper, & Allen, 1993), and audit trails (Creswell, 1994). Participants provided copies of their curriculum vitae to aid in the interpretation of the analysis.

Data from the interviews were analyzed in three stages: first by open coding, then by axial coding and, finally, selective coding (Strauss & Corbin, 1990). Coding involved working with data, "organizing them, breaking them into manageable units, synthesizing them, looking for patterns, discovering what is important, and what is to be learned" (Bogdan & Biklen, 1998). Open coding involved breaking down, examining, comparing, categorizing and conceptualizing the data. The process continued into axial coding that involved sorting and defining data into categories and themes. Selective coding involved developing the story, revisiting the categories and discovering the interrelationships among categories (Strauss & Corbin, 1990). Selective coding guided both interpretation and meaning and helped to aid in explanations, conclusions, inferences and linkages, and dealing with rival explanations.

Participants and Background to the Study

Interviews in this case study were conducted with two female faculty members in medium sized, public universities in the Midwest. Both women held the Ed.D. Collectively, they had 44 years experience in education. Both had served in increasingly responsible positions in education, including administration, outside of the traditional higher education faculty roles for a combined total of 31 years. Collectively, they had served for a total of 13

years as faculty members in higher education. One participant held the rank of tenured professor and the other was a tenure-track, assistant professor.

Both participants had active research and presentation agendas. Together they had three book chapters, 18 refereed journal articles, and numerous books, web-site, and other reviews. They had also presented at numerous national, regional, and state professional conferences and were active on their campuses, having served on and chaired numerous committees. Both women had had formal leadership training and had been responsible for training others for service in leadership. Both had collaborated with others as members and leaders of past teams.

The participants were given pseudonyms of Nelda and Elisa and were chosen by purposive sampling (Patton, 1990). Both women had had recent collaboration and team teaching experiences that had lasted for the majority of a year. We gained consent to participate, guaranteed confidentiality, gained permission to use journals, to obtain copies of their curriculum vitae, as well as permission to audio-tape and to use transcripts from their interviews. Each woman was interviewed during the course of a collaboration and team teaching experience—once during the planning session phase, once immediately following the team teaching experience, and once for a follow-up interview.

Procedures

Specific data needs, sources, and analysis strategies emerged from the purposes of this study. The selected women faculty members were preparing to have team teaching and collaborative experiences in mixed gender groups during a period of time, no less than one semester. We asked the potential participants about the goals of the collaborative team (Katzenbach & Smith, 1993) and team processes (Briggs, 1997; Hargreaves, 1991; Little, 1990), so that we could determine whether the initial goals and objectives of the participants' collaborative teams aligned with our predetermined definitions of collaborative team and team teaching. After we had initially screened several women faculty who had agreed to be participants, we found that two women's experiences met the criteria for inclusion in the study. We gained consent from these women to be part of the study.

We then made certain that we would be able to secure the interviews, journals and curriculum vitae from the women. To facilitate analysis, the structure, culture, and climate of collaboration and team teaching, as well as each phase of Feminist Phase Theory, were operationally defined. Each is detailed as follows.

Structure, Culture, and Climate. Structure referred to the organization and hierarchy of the collaboration and team teaching efforts. Culture was defined as the set of patterns, beliefs, and artifacts associated with collaboration and team teaching endeavors. Climate referred to the milieu in which the women found themselves and their degree of comfort within that milieu.

Feminist Phase Theory Phases. Phase One of FPT characterized collaborative and team teaching endeavors in which women were rendered invisible. Their involvement could not be described as peripheral; they were essentially absent from discussions and conversations and had no voice. In this phase, women would have no role to play in the planning or team teaching sessions. The focus was on men and about men.

Phase Two of FPT described experiences for women when they were visible at times to the men in team teaching and collaboration. Though their involvement would be peripheral, their voices would be heard occasionally. When their voices were heard, they were thought to be the exception, rather than the rule. Women in this phase would not play active roles, but support roles, in discussions and conversations about collaboration and team teaching. Consistent with the framework of FPT, women would be considered compensatory. Their overall role would be provisional or conditional from the overall focus on their male colleagues.

Phase Three of FPT was characterized by women's visibility in the arena. They would be visible and have equity in involvement in discussions and conversations. Their roles, though different from those of the men, were still equitable. The women could impact and be impacted by certain issues, but the same could be said for their male colleagues.

Phase Four of FPT was defined by dominance of the women. Here, women would be the focus and only women's experiences would be valued. Women would be visible and men would have no voice in this feminist phase. Involvement in discussions, conversations, and team teaching issues would surround how they would impact women. Any perspectives from their male colleagues would be absent.

Phase Five, the final phase of FPT, was characterized by the absence of gender as an issue. The emphasis would be on processes and how to improve collaboration to enhance the team's processes. There would be no reference to gender in the women's experiences.

Data Presentation

Four major themes emerged: (a) alienation, (b) feeling devalued, (c) expectations for traditional roles, and (d) "chasing the hidden agenda."

Alienation. The respondents repeatedly voiced concerns that they wanted all members of the team to have a voice, but were often silenced throughout their experiences. One participant, Nelda commented, "Someone has to be willing to say, 'Let's hear everyone's voice.' In a group setting, no one should feel isolated." The other participant, Elisa, tried to carefully explain why she felt she and another woman were silenced during a team teaching experience: "I don't think either one of us wanted to seize control or was in any power play; I think we just wanted to have a voice."

Elisa went further to explain that collaborative and team teaching meetings were "hard work," that it took conscious and persistent effort to be heard. Both participants indicated that it had become a conscientious decision of how hard to work to be heard in such settings. Nelda commented that with one group with whom she had collaborated, she had to "make a great deal of effort to be heard." Elisa explained that "anytime I work with more than one male faculty member - and there aren't any female faculty members in the group - I have to really work to be heard." Nelda indicated that "I also know that I have to try that much harder to get heard, to be visible. Sometimes, it's just not worth all the effort it takes." Elisa echoed similar sentiments:

If I don't feel too passionately about something, then chances are I won't speak up too loudly or assertively. However, it does sometimes make me mad. Other times, it's just not worth the effort [of getting mad], because it's an on-going sort of thing and I've come to expect it.

Nelda added that she was "perfectly willing to speak, but had a hard time getting 'the floor.' Over time, it became less important to even try," Elisa laughed when she noted that "I've certainly learned to adapt to a certain amount of . . . well, invisibility."

Both women expressed concern for others who seemed to be alienated from groups during collaboration and team teaching. Elisa spoke about one woman with resignation, "For *two days*, she didn't talk at *all* during meetings. And she is also Asian. Talk about *silencing!*" Elisa also expressed concern about differentiating between being simply a new member of a collaborative effort and a new *female* member of a collaborative effort: "So, I don't think it's a 'new' thing, but more of a gender thing. John's situation—being new—was different. He had *no* difficulty being heard."

The women also talked about how collaborating in same sex groups was different. Nelda stated that "everyone was valued and everyone had a chance to talk. The climate was warm and nurturing." Both women stressed the need for balanced collaboration efforts. Nelda remarked that she believed "collaboration and team teaching are important aspects of a university setting and if we want to enhance that setting, then we better make sure everyone's

voice is heard.” Elisa summed up the feeling of a need for inclusiveness: “In a perfect world, each person would have a voice, no one would be silenced, there wouldn’t be undue competition for attention, and the students would benefit out of each experience, too.”

Both participants spoke repeatedly of feeling invisible and isolated during team teaching and collaborative faculty efforts. Elisa spoke of one occasion in a mixed gender group, how “whenever the other woman or I tried to get someone to tell us what the ‘plan’ was, we didn’t get an answer.” Nelda talked somewhat bitterly about one particular occasion in a similar collaborative effort and how she had diligently tried to get involved in planning efforts for teaching: “By the time we were finished, the *only* thing I knew was that I was going to do the same thing another female had done before.” Nelda continued by explaining how she felt later: “I found myself not saying much of anything for awhile. Sometimes I think we forget what collaboration should really look like, which can be sad because not everyone’s voice will be heard.” Elisa also tried to explain how she felt. “I am the one out of the loop. Do you know what I mean? Like there is a conversation going on, but regardless of what you add to it, no one really cares.” Elisa remarked that in one experience, a new male member of a team that was planning for a team teaching experience gave important suggestions to the group, suggestions that would improve the team’s effectiveness. She stated that “the other woman and I had said essentially the same thing for the last two meetings and it was like ‘whoosh,’ right past them!”

The feeling of alienation and isolation in collaborative efforts was persistent throughout the women’s responses. Nelda spoke about how she learned some of the lingo of a group only after a long time. She had been one of only two women in a group and, though she had asked for clarification several times about certain key words being used, it took a long time for her to understand what was meant. She remarked, “We learned some of the lingo at the next to last meeting. It really would have helped to understand some of those key terms they were using at the beginning!” Elisa echoed a similar experience when she described attending the first meeting of a mixed gender group who was to work together on team teaching. She wrote in her journal: “We met today as a group. No one was introduced to each other. Finally, I introduced myself to a few other people there.”

Feeling devalued. Both participants talked about feelings of being less valued or even devalued in mixed gender faculty groups that met for collaboration and team teaching efforts. Elisa commented on the irony of team teaching without a team: “We were to decide as a team. There was no *team* to it. It was like one or two of the guys would decide for everybody

else.” She went further to remark on the team concept and evidently felt that, though male members of the group were aware that planning and tasks were supposed to be a collaborative effort, they chose to overlook it. “They had to *know* it would be like this. You can’t just assign a person to a topic at practically the last moment and expect people to team teach!” Elisa later became somewhat angry, stating, “They [the male faculty members] talk to us like we *know*. *Why* should we know? *How* could we know? No one had bothered to explain the whole concept!”

Nelda also reported that planning and assignment of tasks had become the domain of the male faculty members. She wrote in her journal:

By the end of the meeting, I did not know any more of what was expected of me than before. I did observe that neither the other woman nor I were ever asked for input regarding the design of any lesson. It was a long meeting that seems wasted.

She later commented that she viewed “that experience as [one in which] the ‘guys’ really didn’t know what to do with me.” Nelda also noted the effect another female faculty member had when she tried to become part of planning and decision-making:

She told about all the things she did with research and methods. It was very apparent that that was *not* the turf she should be on. Kind of like [using a sarcastic voice], “Right, that sounds good; now, let’s go back to what *we* planned.”

Both women also discussed feeling as if the male members of the teams did not value them. They believed that what they had to add or say during discussions was not perceived as being worthy, although the women clearly felt that this was not the case. They were confused about the lack of attention paid to matters that would affect the group as a whole. Elisa commented: “All this wasted time has gone by and we were *assigned* how much time we would be spending on our topics and all that. Where’s the *team*?” She explained further about the experience: “It was intense and we [the other woman and I] were treated like stepchildren or distant, country family members who just didn’t know how to act in the city.” Nelda remarked that once another female faculty member had come to a planning meeting with an enormous amount of materials and articles to substantiate her point. Nelda commented that the males in the group never brought additional materials, since they seemed to have no problem in having their viewpoints heard. Instead, she said, this woman had to “force the guys to listen to her.”

Looking for the hidden agenda. Both Nelda and Elisa discussed spending time trying to figure out what was really happening. They had difficulty, at least initially, in believing that the men in the mixed gender groups of which they were part were not valuing them as colleagues. Both women felt that they could expect collegiality and they certainly had evidenced competence to be part of such teams. Yet, they discovered that, for the most part, they were not brought into the “inner circle.” Elisa commented that she felt, at times, like the men in her group were speaking another language and, about the time that she began to attain some sense of fluency, they changed the language again.

Elisa talked about returning to her regular routine following the team teaching experience. She claimed,

I tried to explain to [a male professor] what had happened. As I related some of the experiences, I decided to tell [him] about an incident, which I thought was particularly critical to understanding the experience from my point of view. [He had] no reaction whatsoever. It was like, “Well? And your point is. . . ?” [It was] disappointing.

Elisa was especially disillusioned that a male colleague whom she felt certain could understand her point of view seemed to miss the importance entirely. She later sighed and said, “Anyway, I am certain that the men in our group really didn’t see it. Not like we [women] did.”

Elisa went further to say,

I would also think that they [male members of the team] for the most part, felt very “progressive” about the whole thing, but I would hazard a guess that most of them don’t even give the gender differences a first, much less second, thought. I just don’t think it ever occurs to them. If it did, they would probably feel compelled to change.

Nelda concurred. She stated that she “would be very surprised if they [male colleagues] knew there were those of us who felt devalued or that we had to really work to be heard.” She went further to state, “I don’t sense that most male faculty with whom I team teach even think about equity or balance when we team teach. Not all males I have taught with, but most. Yeah, most.” Elisa added, “Most male colleagues seem unaware that a problem might exist with the way most female faculty members are treated in such settings.”

Nelda talked about differences in groups that were all female or had more females than males. She commented, “I feel like there’s a conscientious effort to be inclusive when there are more women than men in a group like

that. I don't think it's reciprocated, though. At least, not in the groups I'm in when the males outnumber the females."

Both women talked about a seeming need to keep students from "finding out" what was really going on behind the scenes. Elisa surmised,

I think students don't know anything about what is really happening. We put on our professional faces and go into the arena. We don't intend for them to know. I think we try to protect them from the "truth" about us. I don't think I want them to know how backward we can sometimes be. Maybe it's the idea of not airing dirty laundry. I want the students to benefit.

Nelda agreed, stating,

What was interesting is that we were actually supposed to be modeling behavior that we were teaching our students, so it was all sort of surreal. Here it wasn't working for us, yet we were telling the students how it would. I mean, the other woman even did a session or two on these very issues. It's almost like we didn't hear what we were preaching. Not almost. I don't think we did.

Elisa also discussed actual team teaching experiences with a male colleague and how they were often unbalanced with regard to time. She explained that initially she did not believe she was getting far less time, but commented, "When I actually looked at the situation and checked the clock a few times, I wasn't wrong. And when we would meet afterward, [the male faculty member] would inevitably say, 'Well, I thought that went well, don't you?'" Elisa felt that her experiences were not atypical for other female faculty members in such situations: "I suspect that the same sort of thing goes on in their classrooms, especially when they are the only instructor there. I would bet that if you talked to their female students, some would feel the same way [I did]." Nelda added,

I think the guys felt that the experience went well and if they knew how I really saw things, they would be surprised. . . . All in all, the guys were in charge and in the end, we all got a teaching award, so they were happy.

Both women emphasized that these experiences were likely not the intended outcomes on the part of their male colleagues. Instead, they seemed to feel that the men were unaware that they might be excluding others while in mixed gender settings. But, Elisa felt that her "'job' is not to teach some of my male colleagues how unfair they are, but I *can* let them know when they are not valuing the opinions of their female colleagues." She cited one

occasion when she and another instructor decided to share a problem with the group:

We had some genuine concerns that came from female students that we decided *must* be shared for the good of the group. When we explained our concerns, one of the men who usually took charge actually rolled his eyes while we were explaining. I ‘called him on it,’ and he backpedaled fairly quickly.

She stated,

Well, I would like to stress that I don’t like it when people complain and aren’t willing to do anything about it. So, I guess you would say that I should help own the problem, because I *am* concerned about the students.

Nelda concurred when she stated,

I admire people who do stand up for what they feel is an injustice and try to correct the situation. I had a female colleague who was such an individual and I really enjoyed working with her because of that strength.

Despite their concerns about trying to figure out where they stood with their male colleagues, these two faculty women still had moments of hope and confidence. Elisa stated emphatically, “I do believe in the ‘team’ concept, that two heads—or more—are better than one.” Nelda confided,

I *know* I have experienced success in using formal structures in group settings that can enhance the input and probably the value of each team member. But, to do these things takes time and planning and generally can’t be done from the seat of your pants.

She also said that as she participated more in team teaching experiences with male colleagues, she was finding that she “might even be getting stronger in expressing what I think and how to do things.” Both women mentioned that female students came to them for help or advice more often than they seemed to come to the males.

I can tell you that several of them [female students] said they valued both me and the other female professor because we presented a different way of looking at things and that they felt valued by us. Guess we all need to feel wanted and needed.

Indeed, the women made it quite clear that their self-esteem was rarely enhanced by team teaching and collaboration experiences with their male colleagues. Nelda said that the feeling of

. . . isolation or not being valued did take its toll. Sometimes I doubted myself. If it wasn't for [another female instructor], I would really have disliked the experience. But, often we would talk and I would feel better about whatever had happened. It just seemed that I was on the "B" team and they [male faculty members] were on the varsity.

She admitted that at one point, she had "cried on the way home," thinking, "Can I really do this?" She later explained that she sought input from another female faculty colleague: "It was her input that I sought out as far as my performance and contributions and it's what gave me some feeling of success." Nelda said that one experience "was so intensive in such a short time, it really stuck with me. It took me about two weeks to get my 'confidence' back again after that."

Traditional role expectations. A theme of traditional role expectations also emerged from the analysis. Since there are traditionally two types of role expectations, female and male, these themes will be discussed separately and then, in later analysis, together. We would be remiss, however, if we did not note that traditional roles attributed to male faculty members are attributed in such a way by female faculty members.

In support of traditional role expectations for women, Nelda stated that in a collaboration and team teaching experience,

I was assigned a clerical job to do evaluations. This meant that I created, handed out, collected and tallied the evaluations and all the comments. Very clerical, no teaching involved. Guess they assumed that clerical work is a task that a female is good at. I think this is definitely a job to be assigned to a graduate student or a secretary. Makes me wonder if they even think I can teach?

She was frustrated with herself for accepting a clerical role when all others would be taking on teaching roles. Elisa had also seen the same thing occur in one of her planning sessions for team teaching: "The other woman in that group got 'assigned' the clerical duties for the group, although she *clearly* didn't want to do it." Elisa went further to explain that

That was the culture of it. We [female faculty members] were all supposed to play certain, supporting roles and somehow feel empowered from it. It was like there was this expectation that the women faculty would 'fill in' where they were needed.

Elisa also commented that male colleagues were likely not "socialized to consider it [attributing certain roles to women]. But, women are."

Elisa also believed that acting outside traditional female roles was difficult for male colleagues to handle. Although she did not view her actions as traditional or non-traditional for the most part, she did say, "If we 'shoot from the hip' like some male colleagues I know, we get looked at like we have suddenly grown another head." She spoke of one time when she and another woman had spoken very directly, very assertively, about a problem to their male team members. Talking about one male colleague in particular, she stated,

He didn't *want* to hear what we had to say. I'm sure, to him, we were acting out of character, since most of the time we were fairly quiet, *like* we had much choice. When we attempted to make him see what was surely obvious, he seemed peeved.

Nelda also indicated her discomfort with being placed in an out-of-date role for a woman: "I can remember one time that I questioned something that a guy had done. You could have broken the silence in the room with an ice pick. Then, they just went on like it hadn't happened."

Elisa indicated that women might be more hesitant to seize control, which she said helped to explain why women wanted everyone in each group to have a voice. She talked about a time when another woman in one of her groups hardly ever spoke: "I don't think she feels like she *could* speak up legitimately there." Instead, she said that the woman told her, "I'll generally go with the flow. It's not the sort of thing that will change overnight. Or even quickly."

Elisa indicated that she was not happy to be perceived as less capable than her male colleagues were in collaborative and team teaching efforts. She said, "I mean, I have supervised quite a few people at a time, so I certainly don't shrink from leadership positions. In academe, though, it seems a bit different. It's like we're a little bit behind the times." Nelda added, "My 'take' is that they [male faculty members] comply with the department's wish that team teaching should happen and that they do it and continue to do it, just the same as they always did when they worked by themselves."

In talking about the men in these groups, however, the women seemed to almost accept that the men would take on traditional roles, sometimes even blaming themselves for the dominance the men would demonstrate. For example, Nelda expressed concern about one male colleague who seemed to intimidate students: "Doesn't he know that an unpleasant learning environment could attach negative feelings to the content? I am all for high expectations, but not at the expense of losing some students' dignity." When Elisa referred to a situation where male colleagues had become disagreeable during a planning session, she stated, "But it seems like this is where some sort of turf war starts. In many ways, I think I am a little naïve about the

whole thing. . . . Then again, maybe not, we had some strong personalities and egos present at the table.”

Nelda concurred about the strong “personalities:”

I almost would say that there was some competition among the males in this team teaching—almost an unconscious thing, with one or two of the males in such settings. And not only were they competitive, they seemed to want to win. Like to have the best evaluation score or have the most students recognize them.

Elisa described a time when a male colleague “simply took control of the event. It didn’t matter that he wasn’t prepared—and most of the time, he’s not. It’s just that he needs to be seen as in charge.” She later laughed when she said: “So, *why* am I continually surprised when it comes to team teaching and whatever we have planned to present somehow turns up with the guy having done about 80-90% of the talking?”

Nelda explained how she felt about attribution of expertise in mixed gender groups:

Now, regarding certain issues, in my group we had sort of informal roles assigned as to expertise and we have a guy who, for some reason I can’t understand, is regarded as “the man” when it comes to [a certain subject], so there is not any input on that issue. I just don’t know if this guy is truly valued for his knowledge and expertise or just because he is “one of the guys.”

Elisa worked at achieving some balance in team teaching settings: “I think I try very hard to make sure there’s some sort of balance between a male faculty member and me when we team teach, but I don’t think it’s reciprocated. Not most of the time.” She later went on to talk about trying to discuss how a team teaching experience went with another male colleague, “But generally, from what I’ve seen, my male colleagues generally end up pretty much in charge of things, so how could they *not* feel fairly good about them?”

Nelda agreed:

I would say that the guys value collaboration as long as what they believe in does not get changed too much in the process and if they don’t have to do too much of the work. The guys like closure, so *any* process that ends up in a decision, they tend to like. When they are in control of the meeting, they seem to be happy.

Discussion

In this case study, it would appear that these women faculty were still suffering from “a *climate of unexpectation* [emphasis original]” (Eisenmann, 1995) regarding the use of their talents and training and how these were valued by their male counterparts. The women spoke of feeling alienated and silenced in collaborative settings. We are reminded of Greene and Isaacs’ (1999) approach to task skills necessary for successful collaboration: voluntarism, parity among participants, mutuality in goal selection, shared responsibility for participation and decision making, shared resources, and shared accountability. Greene and Isaacs (1999) reminded us that these skills work in direct contrast to traditional consultation skills. These traditional consultation skills are the skills that were observed in the analysis. We discovered that the women’s male colleagues repeatedly took control of the session, while the women were expected to accommodate and learn. Greene and Isaacs (1999) proposed that members of the collaborative team must be open to change and open to being changed. Readily apparent from the women’s stories, members of the teams in this study were neither open to change nor to being changed.

Johnsrud and Des Jarlais (1994) explained that women often feel isolated in the academy and Sandler (1992) said that the original structure of the academy was based on male career patterns and ways of work. These women, then, experienced what was to be expected. Both Nelda and Elisa, while eager to be active contributors to the team’s work, had difficulty being heard and gaining visibility to be able to contribute to the group’s efforts. They were, according to Aisenberg and Harrington (1988) and Kelly (1993) outsiders in the arena in which they were working.

The women also voiced concerns that they were the last to understand what was going on, that they had to search hard to find out the direction in which the faculty team was headed. Both Nelda and Elisa characterized their collaboration and team teaching experiences in mixed gender groups as hard work. They were often assigned tasks or roles to play. Elisa and Nelda also voiced concern that they were delegated work, usually detailed clerical work, that the male faculty did not wish to do. Whenever they attempted to act outside of some tacitly assumed traditional role for women, they were either ignored or rebuffed. Both described occasions when the climate became “chilly” (Johnsrud & Atwater, 1993). Perhaps, they experienced what Davies-Netzley (1998) suggested, that their presence in small numbers served to underline rather than undermine the majority, or male, culture. Also, because their male colleagues were unaware that they were helping to perpetuate a climate that was not conducive to collaboration, then the men saw no reason to change.

These women did not seem to be able to take the lead, although they felt competent and voiced their willingness to do so. It was difficult for the women to gain entry into the inner circle. They did not seem to possess the socializing network necessary for advancement (Davies-Netzley, 1998) because they were still outsiders (Aisenberg & Harrington, 1988; Kelly, 1993). The men with whom they worked had no reason to believe that such a structure was not the correct one, so they did not perceive any need to alter it (Sandler, 1992).

Analysis Using Feminist Phase Theory

The phases of Feminist Phase Theory were operationally defined prior to the study and data and categorical themes were cast against the framework for further analysis.

Structure. With regard to the structure of collaboration and team teaching, the phase most aptly describing the women's experiences was Phase Two, Compensatory. In this phase, maleness is considered the standard for humanness. There is a search for women, but male thought is still the norm. We recall how the women struggled to be heard. They tried to attain some sense of shared responsibility for leadership, but they were not able to do so. For example, one of the women stated: "I guess I would say that the structure, whether it's one male and one female faculty member, or whether it's an equal balance of males and females, tends to favor the males." Thus, we must discard the notion of the women's experiences reflecting Phases Three through Five.

At times the women's experiences reflected Phase One of the framework, Male Dominant. In this phase, the male experience is seen as the experience of all people. From this phase, one could make generalities about all human beings (Tetreault, 1985). The male model is accepted as the norm (Tetreault, 1987b). They spoke of being nearly invisible. One woman claimed that she had become somewhat used to the concept of being invisible. The women, though, were not complacent with their assigned "place" within the structure, thus, we rejected the notion that Phase One best described their experiences with regard to structure of the collaboration and team teaching.

Culture. Phase Two of Feminist Phase Theory, Compensatory, best depicted the women's experiences with culture. In looking across culture in collaboration and team teaching, the women's experiences were generally discounted or devalued. One of the women said that the culture was not one in which "it was intended for women faculty to have equity." The culture, as

described by both women, was one in which they were supposed to fit into certain pre-set roles, though both women acknowledged being uncomfortable with such roles.

They clearly did not have experiences which could be cast as Phase Three, whereby the differences between the experiences of male and female faculty members would have been examined. Their efforts to overcome their under-representedness were neither recognized nor accepted. Thus, Phases Four and Five were not possibilities for describing their experiences, either. Elisa commented about team teaching planning sessions:

Well, about the culture in that team teaching setting, it seemed that the culture was already established and the other woman and I would just fill in where we could. I don't think the culture was one that was collaborative in the sense of equity regarding teaching assignments.

With regard to culture, we could not escape the notion that some of their experiences may have connoted—at times—Phase One of the framework. Nelda once remarked,

In my department, the culture is definitely the “good boy.” It's a culture that has changed very little over the past years, in spite of the fact that there are women on faculty now. I would say we women have learned that in order to survive this environment, we must take on the characteristics of the dominant culture. Which for me in my experience, has been male.

Climate. Phase Two also describes the experiences of the women with regard to the climate they found in collaboration and team teaching. In their experiences, the women referred to the climate at times as oppressive. Though their presence was noted, there was no attempt to bring them into the team as anything other than accessories. They often became frustrated through trying to become viable members of the team, which was clearly voiced throughout their experiences. Nelda referred back to one occasion when she felt nearly sick during a team teaching planning session:

I can remember back to that faculty team teaching meeting when I asked a question and there was *total* silence. I felt the chill go over me. In fact, even as I tell you the story, I feel something in the pit of my stomach.

The women also said that their male colleagues perceived that the climate of the collaboration and team teaching experiences was acceptable. They suggested that they and their male counterparts conceived of the climate in two divergent ways. The women acknowledged that each person has his or her own *Weltanschauung*, but they said that if their male

colleagues knew that women perceived the climate as oppressive and chilly, then they would have to look to themselves to change. The women said that they had provided sufficient, if not an abundance, of accommodation and support and were willing to accept only more, rather than less, opportunities for equity and leadership.

Ultimately, their experiences could not be designated as being associated with Phases Three through Five, since they were neither equal partners in the endeavors of the groups, nor were they ever sufficiently empowered to the point where they could act exclusively of their male colleagues. Since gender seemed to always be an issue for these women, then Phase Five also had to be discarded as a descriptor of their experiences.

Implications and Conclusions

The good news from this study is that there is plenty of room for improvement between male and female colleagues with regard to their collaboration and team teaching in higher education. The structure, culture, and climate of the academy *can* alter to improve women's chances for success. We can view the under-representedness of women as a problem and the academy can honestly attempt to understand women's experiences. Benign neglect is not an acceptable manner in which to treat women's potential and productivity.

However, the lack of movement towards the remaining phases of the Feminist Phase Theory framework, that denote gender awareness, has perplexing implications and realities for women's experiences. Academic women continue to be judged by a dominant, inner circle of men who limit women's inclusion. We must look at who the gatekeepers are and the power that they wield. Both men and women must ensure that their female colleagues' voices are not silenced and that female faculty members are not co-opted by their experiences in the academy. Women faculty members contribute unique perspectives and knowledge (Belenky et al., 1986) which provide a more holistic view to the human experience. Students need to see pedagogical practice as one that is balanced by the contributions and voices of both female and male faculty members.

Male faculty members' voices and experiences as well as female faculty voices and experiences in mixed gender collaboration efforts and team teaching should be analyzed, compared and contrasted. More research on the academy as a source of gender inequity should be initiated, too. By denying women faculty equal access to career development and advancement, colleges and universities must view themselves as bastions of injustice, rather than leaders of the future. They must change the emphasis from telling women how to change to fit into the institutional structure and culture to

finding ways to change the institutions to make them more hospitable to women. To effect change, however, the changes will need support from both men and women and from both faculty and administrators. We should remind ourselves that whatever discrimination exists in higher education is likely to be mirrored and expressed subtly and indirectly, inside and outside of the academy.

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