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

Ensuring Equitable Participation in College Classes

Myra Sadker, David Sadker

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Frances Maher, Mary Kay Thompson Tetreault

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

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

Feminist Pedagogies

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