“WELL-BEHAVED WOMEN SELDOM MAKE HISTORY”- LAUREL ULRICH: THE INCLUSION OF WOMEN IN WOMEN IN WESTERN CIVILIZATION COURSES

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A Thesis

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Liberal Arts Master’s Program
Abstract

of

“WELL-BEHAVED WOMEN SELDOM MAKE HISTORY”- LAUREL ULRICH: THE INCLUSION OF WOMEN IN WOMEN IN WESTERN CIVILIZATION COURSES

by

Jennifer S. Souza

Statement of Problem

The participation of women in achieving university education is at an all-time high, but the accurate representation of women across the curriculum, in culture, and throughout time is severely lacking. However, educators play a critical role in the course content and textbook selection. The content of university courses has historically been biased in its approach, favoring the accomplishments and reporting of facts to omit women and overemphasize men. The way courses are taught can affect the interest, learning, and future involvement of students’ choice of careers. The tendency to teach about men only, as well as other cultural factors, has led to a gender gap in salary and males continuing to earn more than women even when controlled for part time workers, educational level, field of work and experience.
Purpose of Study

The purpose of this study is to analyze female representation in Women in Western Civilization courses at the university level. This study conducted a quantitative content analysis of university level Women in Western Civilization courses to assess the amount, type, and extent of gender and ethnic inclusion and forms of bias, relative to women and women’s learning styles. Since the 1970s, feminists and ally groups found courses were dominated by male, Eurocentric hegemony, which marginalized females and females’ assets in learning. In addition to the lack of inclusion, these groups were represented in biased messages even in Women in Western Civilization courses. In such Women in Western Civilization courses, women are predominately portrayed as helpless victims with no significant contributions. Negative messages in the formal curriculum, coupled with societal stereotypes, impaired females academic engagement and achievement.

______________________________, Committee Chair
Sherrie Carinci, Ed. D.

______________________________
Date
DEDICATION

This thesis is dedicated to all the women who have given time, energy, love, and even their lives in the pursuit of that basic human right – an education. From my fierce heart I dedicate this to all of you who have sat outside classroom windows listening to instruction because school was only for boys; to all of you who have forgone other dreams to pursue education; to those of you who have educated yourselves; to those of you who have become literate in secret in order to avoid punishment; and to those of you who felt you had to keep your true intelligence hidden in order to be liked; I dedicate this work to you.

I would also like to dedicate this thesis to all the people in my life who have taught me to be a contributing member of society and to use my inherent privilege to help those not privileged in our world today. First, to my spiritual guides and mentors Vena Michie and Harolyn Boulware who have embodied compassion, independence, and commitment in a society that at times treated them like outsiders and second-class citizens. Thank you for your countless hours of attention and time in showing me how to be a woman of integrity, dignity, and kindness. Harolyn’s words to ‘go on out there, baby, and tell them what you see’ have been a driving force in finishing this thesis.

And finally, I would like to dedicate this thesis to my husband, Carlos Mateus Souza. No matter how low I got, how despairing or hopeless I felt in the creative process, your spiritual embodiment centered me and provided me with a place to land
and recover from the ups and downs of life. You have made a very difficult time in our lives much easier. Thank you, *meu amor*. 

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Chapter 1

INTRODUCTION

Background

Sharee beats her roommates out of the house, gets on the bus, and is excited about college. As she waits at the bus stop, she is surrounded by people from all backgrounds, ethnicities and orientations – working poor, middle class, upper middle class, South East Asian, Native American, Latin American, Middle Eastern, Tongan, African-American, Ukrainian, Chinese and some of mixed heritage, heterosexual, homosexual, men, women – but all here in the USA. She is excited to leave behind the narrow thinking and inaccurate portrayals of women from the over-burdened and under-funded primary and secondary schools. Surely the reason her education was so White male-centered was due to lack of time and money – they just did not have time to show other perspectives. Now she is at a university – the citadel of liberal thought and forger of new ideas.

Sharee is tired of hearing about men-men-men, and is excited to learn the contributions of women in her multi-ethnic/multi-cultural society. As she looks over the syllabus downloaded before classes start and in class with her classmates in her classes, she is disappointed. From pre-history to post-modern, very few women are mentioned. And those pointed out are described as the ‘average’ woman of that time period – the ones that could not read and died in childbirth – and explained away by the professor that women were not allowed to do much, so courses have to look at
indirect reports of what women in general accomplished. Sadly, Sharee realizes it is the same thing, just a different day – men do great things and make life happen and women are passive participants and victims. Today, women make up more than half of all university students in America (Knapp, Kelly-Reid, & Ginder, 2011). It is possible, depending on the course, to never hear a significant woman mentioned all semester that has contributed to Western society.

Most universities have some courses in Women’s Studies, if not an entire department. These departments were created because women had historically been excluded from the curriculum throughout the university. In order to right this inequity, some departments created courses dedicated to women in their subject area. For example, history departments often offer a ‘Women in Western Civilization’ course. Most Women in Western Civilization courses tend to focus on the “average” woman, but other humanities classes do not focus on the “average” man. The question of the latter classes seems to be “What was life like for women in a particular year? But the question that should be asked is “How have women genuinely contributed to Western culture?”

Many universities, like George Washington University, offer a Women in Western Civilizations class, but it focuses on the day-to-day lives of women, including their social groups, puberty rituals, legal issues, and male-female relationships as recipients of life but not as agents of life. The George Washington University course, like most others, does not focus on the significant accomplishments of women. By
neglecting authentic accomplishments, true victories are kept secret or attributed to men either through misattribution or intellectual property theft. When reporting on women’s day-to-day lives, the focus often becomes women as victims and losers in the game of life, providing a one-sided view of 50% of the population. Despite decades of research unveiling sexist and racist messages found in formal education, bias in courses persists in the curriculum of American universities.

**Purpose of the Thesis**

It has been well documented that women continue to earn less than men with the same education and experience level. The earnings gap could be because women’s true accomplishments have been ignored historically (Fry, 2004). Students who actively participate learn more and are more satisfied with the educational process (Sandler, 1996). Curiously, women make up most of the student population in American universities at every level. Women’s participation in university education has increased significantly in the last 50 years. In 1970, women constituted only 9% of all U.S. college graduates (Francis, n.d.), and by 2008, this figure had grown to 58% (National Center for Education Statistics [NCES], 2008). An interesting fact is that women and men had almost equal amounts of college completion until about 1940. In the 1930s, the Great Depression left workers with little else to do other than go to college, and later in the 1940s the United States government made special financial dispensations for soldiers- almost all men- returning from World War II, thereby increasing men’s college attendance (Goldin, Katz, & Kuziemko, 2006). The GI Bill’s
de facto gender inequitable policy kept male attendance higher until the women’s movement of the 1970s.

Despite the equal or greater numbers of women in college, the curriculum, classroom style, course selection and materials continue to have a patriachal tone. There is an overall preference for males and the male perspective (Banks & Banks, 2009). The neglect of women across the curriculum of university studies is astounding and could make women less active learners. One strategy to inspire females’ interest in the university classroom is for them to see themselves reflected in the course content itself (Carinci, 2010). The goal of this thesis is to analyze courses on Women in Western Civilization for a variety of factors including inclusive course materials, the types of women studied, and methods of assessments. Many courses are available, but most focus on the everyday life of an ordinary woman. This thesis hopes to uncover ways in which gender inequity is still happening even in courses which purport to be a female-focused course.

Teaching methodologies and content that support gender unbiased courses have been shown to positively influence all learners at the university level (Banks & Banks, 2009). It is important to maximize the inclusion of scholarship on women, significant women, and women of color throughout time and across civilization at universities, when young adults are forming their career directions and life-long goals.
Statement of the Problem

The current educational content still does not honor women’s true contributions to Western Civilization in the curriculum. This author took a graduate-level philosophy course that included antiquity through the post-modern, and not one woman was mentioned the entire 15-week semester! There are consequences for a society that ignores half of its occupants that go from the personal – low self-esteem – to the public – many women making less money and having to rely on government assistance in retirement.

In the majority of courses, there is a gap in the current content knowledge offered at the university level. Like the Ouroboros of ancient Egypt, this inequity is a snake swallowing its own tail in a cycle that cannot end without an outside influence interrupting the sequence. Current professors were taught without women integrated in the curriculum. These current professors are now instructing students who are the future teachers and professors. When these students become teachers and professors, they in turn continue to omit women from the curriculum when they teach. According to Green and Bigum (1995), what is needed for a resurgence of liberal education is not a new way of justifying content, but an “engaging pedagogy, a way of talking about what paths of learning are best suited” to engaging the human capacities for the exercise of the intellect and creative processes (p. 243). One way for pedagogy and andragogy to be engaging is to be relevant to all learners in the classroom.
Methodology

This study examined the amount, type, and extent of inclusion and bias of women in Women in Western Civilization undergraduate courses. A quantitative content analysis of data was used for the assessment of syllabus bias and inclusion. The 12 sources of data collection were university-level Women in Western Civilization course syllabi obtained directly from universities in Fall 2010. The following are the 12 course syllabi for this study:

1. “Women in Modern European Societies” CSU Sacramento
2. “Women in Classical Antiquity” University Texas Austin
3. “Women in Western Civilization” King’s College
4. “Women in Ancient Cultures” Illinois Valley Community College
5. “Women in Western Civilization” University of Michigan
6. “Women in Western Civilization Ancient-Modern Ages” CSU Sacramento
7. “Women’s History and Feminist Theory” City University of New York
8. “Women Through Cultures and Centuries” Illinois Valley Community College
10. “Women in World History” Southwestern University
11. “Women in the Middle Ages” Columbia University
12. “Women in Western Civilization” George Washington University
These syllabi were collected by phoning the departments directly and requesting the syllabi be emailed to the researcher. At first, the attempt was made to procure these syllabi through email requests to professors and departmental heads, but it proved most effective to speak directly with administrative staff in the departments.

Content analysis was used to determine the presence of certain words or images within the syllabus, women studied, and authors of both primary and secondary sources. The syllabi were reviewed according to frameworks established by recognized authorities in education. The data collection sheets for this study were designed to measure gender and ethnic equity variables used in previous studies discussed in the literature review (Appendix A). The academic and professional background of the researcher also contributed to the analysis of gender and ethnic bias in the samples used for this study.

**Limitations**

One limitation of this thesis is that it focuses on Women in Western Civilization. Further attention should be paid to women’s contributions worldwide. Also, a limited number of syllabi were available for examination. This research was only able to examine syllabi that were readily available on departmental websites or easily emailed from a department’s administrative support staff. Further, this study does not include every Women in Western Civilization course statewide or nationally. Finally, this study only examines what is available in the syllabus without knowing
what professors may say in class or additional materials, discussions and techniques that may take place in the actual classroom.

**Theoretical Basis for the Study**

Many philosophers have studied education and the best way to teach so students can learn. The intrinsic value of connecting students to the curriculum, engaging their voice, and using the students’ experiences is not a new concept. These philosophers include Paulo Freire (1993), bell hooks (1994), Rudolf Steiner (1964), Nel Noddings (1984), and Carol Gilligan (1983). These philosophers and researchers provided needed criticism of educational practices that were and are not offering as much learning as possible due to biased educational experiences. In addition to the above philosophers, feminist post-modernism and adult learning theory also provide a comprehensive scope as a foundation for designing course content and procedures inclusive to all genders and learning styles.

Paulo Freire is a Brazilian philosopher who was teaching adults – mainly Afro-Brazilians – basic numeracy and literacy when he began to understand basic inequities in education and the way it related to socio-political influences. Freire (1993) distinguished two kinds of education. The first style he termed “banking” education (p. 72). Banking education demands that a teacher’s main task is to deposit information into the students who act as open receptacles of information. Rather than engaging students and seeing them as unique human beings with their own resources, experiences, and offerings to bring to the learning experience, teachers are the keepers
of information and, therefore, the wardens of power. This information is then doled out in deposits to students. The students then simply collect, attempt to memorize, and regurgitate the information deposited into them by the teacher. Freire emphasized the power differential lies in that teachers are the only person in the room valuable (or intelligent) enough to have worthwhile information. The myth that the teacher is all knowing, superior to the students, and above the students in a hierarchy reinforces that the students know nothing and are, in fact, inferior (Freire, 1993). The implicit suggestion of banking education is that the students will always be inferior. Therefore, whatever the teacher knows, regardless of how accurate the information may be, it is the only knowledge the students receive. Freire advocates that education allows the oppressed to regain their humanity and overcome their condition; however, he acknowledges that for this to take effect, the oppressed have to play a role in their own liberation. As he stated,

No pedagogy which is truly liberating can remain distant from the oppressed by treating them as unfortunates and by presenting for their emulation models from among the oppressors. The oppressed must be their own example in the struggle for their redemption. (Freire, 1993, p. 54)

Freire emphasizes and re-emphasizes that there is no such thing as a neutral education process.

The second type of education Freire (1993) discussed was “problem posing” education (p. 73). The model challenges the previous model of education by
emphasizing the value of the students’ voices in the learning process. Freire’s theory is that students and teachers both have something to teach and something to learn in the classroom. Rather than students being seen as empty vessels for a teacher to fill, “the teacher presents the material to the students for their consideration, and reconsiders his/her earlier considerations as the students express their own” (p. 81). The problem posing method effectively eliminates the teacher’s role as the sole and ultimate authority of knowledge. Students have a path to let their voices be heard. Freire’s model would “lessen the role of the patriarchal classroom where curriculum and teaching method favor competition and traditional methods of instruction” (Carinci, 2010, p. 14).

bell hooks (1994) is another philosopher who focused on adult learners and challenges patriarchy. hooks advocates that the university setting should actually encourage students and teachers to transgress the power dynamics and sees education as the practice of freedom in action. hooks (1994) made an investigation into the classroom as a seat of constraint and as a potential locus for liberation. According to hooks’ investigation, the pattern showed that the teacher has the currency of knowledge and deposits it into the students’ minds. hooks argued against the pedagogy that the routine of control and the inappropriate exercise of power often enhance this dynamic of the powerful teacher and the powerless students. Not only does this dull the enthusiasm of learners, but it also objectifies students, stripping away their humanity and turning them into an object, a receptacle for the teacher’s knowledge.
The power dynamic set-up in the patriarchal classroom, according to hooks, mostly teaches students to be obedient to authority reinforcing “those boundaries that would confine each pupil to a rote, assembly-line approach to learning” (hooks, 1994, p. 12). She advocated that the university should encourage students and teachers to transgress this unstated teaching methodology. hooks (1994) advocates for a way to make learning a relaxing and exciting atmosphere based on collective effort.

Rudolf Steiner (1964) is an educational philosopher who believes that to achieve freedom, students must lift themselves out of the group-existence of humanity. The group existence includes prejudices received from family, nation, ethnic group, and religion and all that is inherited from the past that limits creative and imaginative capacity to meet the world directly. Only when students realize the potential to be a unique individual, unconfined by pre-set judgments and ideas, can one actually be free and pursue education from a clear viewpoint. Individuals must also actively strive towards freedom to have some chance of attaining freedom. According to Steiner (1964), “we learn through all our experiences and they enrich our store of knowledge. But in order that (hu)man(s) may learn on the Earth, he/she) must be allured by, [or] involved in enjoyment” (p. 8). Steiner’s educational philosophy is student centered and leads teachers to treat the student as an intellectual equal who is in development.

Another educational theorist Carol Gilligan (1983) has conducted research on the psychological and behavioral impact of girls losing their voices. This loss of voice occurs in the classroom as well as in society as a whole. Research has shown that the
female perspective is missing in the curriculum, instruction practices, and textbooks used in schools today (AAUW, 1999; Sadker & Sadker, 1994). According to Gilligan, the practices are causing girls to become depressed and complacent and are negatively affecting their entire futures.

Nel Noddings (1984) is an educational philosopher who encourages care as a way to be of maximum service in students’ learning. Noddings believes that caring, “rooted in receptivity, relatedness, and responsiveness” is a more basic and preferable approach to ethics and education (p. 83). Nel Noddings has argued that education from the care perspective has four key components: modeling, dialogue, practice, and confirmation. She states that using these components in education makes learners more receptive to learning and allows teachers to have overall better results with their lessons.

**Feminist Post-modernism**

Fraser and Nicholson (1993) summarize the Third Wave Feminist position as the replacement of “unitary notions of ‘woman’ and ‘feminine gender identity’ with plural and complexly constructed conceptions of social identity, treating gender as one relevant strand among others, attending also to class, race, ethnicity, age and sexual orientation” (p. 429). The Third Wave perspective leads to a braided approach: an inclusive curriculum that includes all contributing strands of perspectives, to create a beautiful interwoven presentation of Western civilization that properly takes into
account more of the actuality of reality than just one – the White Western male – perspective.

**Adult Learning Theory**

Adult learning theory, or andragogy, the “art and science of helping adults learn” (Knowles, 1980, p. 43) suggests that adults have certain qualities that present specific issues for teachers to consider when considering educating adults. The qualities include the following:

1. adults should be recognized as self-directed learners
2. they have an internal motivation for learning, not an external compulsion
3. they have a reservoir of life experiences that should be drawn on in class.

Further, Malcolm Knowles (1980) went on to say there should be a “spirit of mutuality” (p. 47) in the classroom between teachers and students as joint inquirers for the best results. A hierarchical classroom, with the teacher as all-knowing master and the student as ignorant underling will not work with adults. Also, it is suggested by Knowles’ mentor, Cyril Houle (1996), that educators “should involve learners in as many aspects of their education as possible and in the creation of a climate in which they can most fruitfully learn” (pp. 29-30). The suggestion of adult learning theory is that teachers and students become partners in a beautiful dance of learning.

Progressive educational philosophers Freire (1993), hooks (1994), Steiner, Gilligan (1983), and Noddings (1984) provide extensive amounts of research, experience and advocacy for inclusive curriculum. Their suggestion that courses be
fair, useful to learners, and respectful of learners as individual human beings with valuable experiences and insight to bring to the classroom are useful for those considering university policy and overall progressive direction for institutions of higher learning. Adult learning theory and feminist post-modernism help to provide, practical applicable ways of applying the ideas and concepts of the above mentioned philosophers.

Definition of Relevant Terms

Agentic: The capacity for human beings to make choices and to impose these choices on the world (Bandura, 2001).

Connected Knowing: The goal of “Connected Knowing” is a key factor for student engagement in the classroom and the curriculum being taught (Gilligan, 1983).

Curriculum: The subjects based on content standards being taught in classrooms and schools (Curriculum, oppression, n.d.).

Gender: One’s culturally defined and perceived sex, such as male and female (Cameron & Kulick, 2003).

Gender Bias: Unfair preference for or treatment of one sex over another (Sadker & Sadker, 1994).

Gender Equity: The elimination of sex role stereotyping and sex bias from the educational process, thus providing the opportunity and environment to validate and empower individuals to make appropriate career and life choices (Owens, Smothers, & Love, 2003).
Gender Role: Shared expectations about behavior that apply to people on the basis of their socially identified sex (Eagly & Johannesen-Schmidt, 2001).

Gender Stereotype: Refers to the oversimplified or generalized characteristics of one’s gender. Often they are demeaning in nature (Cameron & Kulick, 2003).

Male Privilege: Special rights or status granted to men in a society on the basis of their sex or gender, but usually denied to women (Greenberg, 1999).

Oppression: The systematic, socially supported mistreatment and exploitation of a group or category of people by another (Curriculum, oppression, n.d.).

Perceived Ability: A student’s own alleged ability in a particular subject (DeBacker & Nelson, 1999).


Stereotype Threat: The existence of a negative stereotype about a group to which one belongs means that in situations where the stereotype is applicable, one is at risk of confirming it as a self-characterization, both to one’s self and to others who know the stereotype. When the stereotype involved demeans something as important as intellectual ability, this threat can be disruptive enough to impair intellectual performance (Steele & Aronson, 1995).

Voice: Speaking one’s feelings, thoughts, and experiences in relationships (Brown & Gilligan, 1992).
Organization of the Thesis

The remainder of this thesis is organized into five chapters, appendices, and references related to the treatment of women in Women in Western Civilization course syllabi at the university level. Chapter 2 consists of a review of relevant literature on the topic that is relevant to this project and justifies why this paradigm shift is important including the appropriateness of course content, processes, and assessments. Chapter 3 is the methodology for the study and explains the results of the content analysis. Chapter 4 presents the results and analysis of the data collected from textbook samples. Chapter 5 presents a discussion of the data, offers recommendations, and concludes the study.

Background of Researcher

Jennifer Souza attended public schools in Maryland that prepared her to compete at the university level. She graduated in 1988 and worked full-time to save for tuition. She eventually was able to afford two years at community colleges and transferred to a four-year school. She finally earned her Bachelor of Science degree in Psychology from the University of Maryland, University College in 1999. A voracious and self-directed reader from an early age, her interest in human rights began as a pre-teen when she read The Diary of Anne Frank for school. It was the first story she read that did not have a happy ending. She went on to read local hero Frederick Douglas and took to heart his insistence that education could pull a person from poverty. Reading Mother Theresa, Mary Wollstonecraft, Ghandi, Pema Chodron, Dr. Martin
Luther King, Jr., and HRH. The Dalai Lama continued to inspire her to overcome odds and help others do the same. Her career has taken her all over the USA where she has tutored illiterate adults, advocated for the rights of sexual assault victims, educated male prisoners on how to build healthy relationships with family and friends and taught ESL to newly arrived immigrants. While pursuing her MA in Liberal Arts, she stumbled into a Gender Equity course, which inspired this thesis. She hopes to continue to promote equality and justice for all, particularly focusing on people of all backgrounds living peacefully together.
Chapter 2

REVIEW OF RELEVANT LITERATURE

Introduction

The United States of America is founded on ideas of freedom, equality, and inclusiveness. Learning in higher education does not just happen, but is painstakingly planned, carefully implemented, and systematically controlled by extensive university processes. Unfortunately, most courses do not provide inclusive experiences in the classroom. One goal of a university education is to inspire an educated citizenry to take part in our participatory democracy. The relevant literature revealed that curriculum and course content are still male dominated to the detriment of most learners. Feminists and critical theorists questioned the hegemonic story imposed on students. A diverse population of students’ voices are ignored or silenced by male, Eurocentric perspectives. If mentioned at all, the lives of women and people of color are presented as peripheral to main events instigated by male leaders. Negative messages of bias impair student engagement, particularly among girls and minorities by lowering motivation and self-esteem (Ryan, Stiller, & Lynch 1994).

This literature review includes a history of the humanities, explores the need for an inclusive curriculum examining such researchers as Carol Gilligan (1983) and Nel Noddings (1984). This literature review also revealed effective inclusive class processes, inclusive assessments, inclusive resources, and how future life aspiration/empowerments are affected by education. Finally, the literature review
examined the groups that are excluded and the need for the multiverse of voices in curriculum.

**The History of the Humanities**

The humanities are the traditional path to great thinking in Western society. According to the 1965 National Foundation on the Arts and the Humanities Act,

The term 'humanities' includes, but is not limited to, the study of the following:
- language, both modern and classical; linguistics; literature; history;
- jurisprudence; philosophy; archaeology; comparative religion; ethics; the history, criticism and theory of the arts; those aspects of social sciences which have humanistic content and employ humanistic methods; and the study and application of the humanities to the human environment with particular attention to reflecting our diverse heritage, traditions, and history and to the relevance of the humanities to the current conditions of national life. (p. ix)

But it is even more than that. It is also

The best that has been said, thought, written and otherwise expressed about the human experience. How have men and women of our own and other civilizations grappled with life’s enduring questions? What is justice? What should be loved? What deserves to be defended? What is courage? What is noble? What is base? Why do civilizations flourish? Why do they decline? (Bennet, 1984, p. x)
The above quotes reveal that the humanities are the accumulated knowledge of western culture and an analysis of that accumulated knowledge.

To understand the gender inequities in U.S. universities today, it is important to take a journey into the past, thousands of years into the past. Current American universities draw a long line from Ancient Greece to today as the over-arching narrative of the formation of Western knowledge, cultural understanding, and accumulated wisdom and facts. Unfortunately, there is a patriarchal hue that eliminates, ignores, and distorts women’s contributions, thereby marginalizing women altogether in this narrative arc. As Carol Gilligan (1983) notes in her book In a Different Voice, this can affect a woman’s goals, belief in future success, and career choice. This patriarchal retelling that begins with Socrates-Plato-Aristotle and continues through Medieval, Enlightenment, and Modernism leaves out women’s contributions, significant women’s experiences. As a result, positive female role models and a true depiction of society for all learners are left out. Male allies, from the beginning of this narrative arc, have spoken out against this practice of exclusion. Plato (24 BCE) himself in the end said,

The women…are to be trained and educated exactly like the men...Can there be anything better for a state than that it should contain the best possible men and women. (Book V)
Male privilege continues to blind society as a whole to the fact that the
accomplishments by the privileged, in this case men, have taken place on the backs of
the oppressed, women.

The parallel progression of both the development of universities and the
ongoing dismissal of women shows the origins of universities and female exclusion
practices started thousands of years ago together. At the dawn of history, there are
eamples of women with basic literacy and numeracy (Barber, 1994). During Ancient
Greek and Roman times, most women were not allowed into the formal lessons of
men. In the medieval period, there were religious institutions that created Christian
cathedral schools and monastic schools run either by orders of monks, which men and
boys attended, or nuns, which women and girls attended. In 1088, the University of
Bologna in Italy was the first iteration of what is now the modern university. This
model eventually led to a modern research university most American universities
embody today. One of the principles on which a modern university rests is the
assumption that there is an important difference between learning to make a living and
learning to build the foundation for a life. For an effective foundation, courses must be
inclusive and balanced. The modern research university is generally focused on
knowledge production and the vocational ideal of career preparation (Graff, 1992).
The Need for an Inclusive Curriculum

For society as a whole to thrive, it is essential to tap into the power of all of our citizens and promote equity (Wilkinson & Pickett, 2009). An educated, empowered citizenry is essential for a functional, engaged society. Everyone should have access to the satisfaction of a task well done, duties happily rendered, and obligations squarely met. For many, the path to a satisfying life is through an educational experience that includes college and leads to a career. The long-term effects of career choice and accumulated wealth are predictable and known empirically for any worker in America. In addition, it has been well documented that women continue to earn less than men with the same education and experience level (United States Department of Labor, 2009). The earnings gap could be because women’s true accomplishments have been ignored historically (Fry, 2004). Students who actively participate learn more and are more satisfied with the educational process (Sandler, 1996). Females as well as males need to see themselves reflected in all segments of education from topics up for discussion to textbooks and course curriculum.

Carol Gilligan (1983) states that the goal of “connected knowing” is a key factor for a student’s engagement in the classroom and the curriculum being taught. If the learning in the classroom is connected and made relevant to life experiences outside the classroom, the learner has a better acquisition of the knowledge and information studied in class. Campbell, Campbell, and Dickinson (1996) write, “students seem to develop self-esteem and a sense of being socially centered when
they see their role models in books and in other educational material” (p. 227). They allude to the greater need to have inclusive education for an inclusive society. The mode of hierarchical thinking transfers to the classroom in many ways. It is seen in the interaction patterns between students and students as well as between students and teachers (Sadker & Sadker, 1994). These patterns of patriarchy, acted out every day in classrooms across the country, could have a negative impact of learners.

Gender equity as a classroom dynamic means to treat each gender with equal importance and legitimacy (AAUW, 1999). Gender stereotypes affect the learner by lack of interest, less connection to the curriculum, and lower career expectations (Sadker & Sadker, 1994). As universities and colleges in the US were established, the male student was the model for which the degrees, courses, textbooks, and curriculum was designed (Sadker & Sadker, 1994). Even the most basic aspect of college attendance, the actual name of the degrees conferred by universities are male-centric: the ‘bachelor’ in a Bachelor’s degree referring to a single man originating in medieval times, and the ‘master’ in a Masters Degree referring to a title for men of a certain class (Random House, 2007).

Carol Gilligan (1983) in her book In a Different Voice explains that male development has typically focused on separation, individuation, logic, and hierarchy. Female development, on the other hand, has emphasized attachment, relationship, connection, and communication. Many feminists, scholars, and philosophers then extrapolate from Gilligan’s work that the female outcomes of this development are
superior and linking, while the male outcomes cause oppression and subjugation. This leads readers and scholars to believe that women are suppressed only because of the domination of males in society. However, this is partial truth.

Gilligan (1983) intends to convey that both males and females pass through various hierarchical stages of development or growth. Gilligan reports that men develop through the moral hierarchy using a logic of justice and autonomy, whereas women develop through the same hierarchy but “in a different voice,” a voice of care and relationship. The four stages of female hierarchy include – “selfish, care, universal care, and integrated” (Gilligan, 1993, p. 74). Gilligan says it is not only that females think non-hierarchically, but even female non-hierarchical thinking has to develop through a process to become integrated. The four stages follow. Stage one: Egocentric, selfish thinking wherein women tend to be selfish in communal ways, while male mode tends to be selfish in agentic ways. Stage two is ethnocentric/caring. In stage two, women extend love and care to those of their race, while men extend justice to those of their race. Stage three: Universal or world-centric care. In this stage, the masculine mode extends rights/justice to all people irrespective of their race or tribe or color, while the feminine mode extends love and care to all in the universe. Stage four: integrated. This stage is the period of integrated feminism. Stage four is also the stage in which the masculine and feminine mode integrate together and a human being expresses world-centric consciousness. It is at stage that gender inequality will become a thing of the past as the male and female modes integrate together.
But culturally and developmentally human beings are not fully evolved yet. According to Gilligan (1983) an inclusive curriculum may help humanity to continue to grow and develop into a more inclusive classroom and better serve learners. Universities do not need more female values, but rather courses, syllabi, professors and administrators with inclusive ethical values. That is, human beings that have progressed through egocentric and ethnocentric consciousness into an inclusive world-centric consciousness that can be shared with students and protégés.

**Inclusive Class Processes**

The “chilly climate” termed by Hall and Sandler (1982) describes a university context that is inhospitable to female students. Any climate results from cumulative and often unintentional behaviors. The processes of pedagogy – the instructor’s language, classroom style, and ways of responding to students – convey a great deal about the climate and the way different learning styles need different approaches to acquiring knowledge. The climate in a classroom feels chilly when an instructor uses strategies that only reach one type of learner. For example, if a student is a very high scorer in interpersonal intelligence, a professor that does only lecture will have a class that is very unappealing to that learner. One way to avoid a chilly climate and include more students in the process of learning is to address class processes to the varying types of intelligences as uncovered by Howard Gardner (1983).

The theory of multiple intelligences was proposed by Howard Gardner (1983) to analyze and better describe the concept of intelligence. Gardner put forth nine types
of intelligence and different ways learners who are stronger in each intelligence might learn best. The theory's nine currently accepted intelligences are: Spatial, Linguistic, Logical-mathematical, Bodily-kinesthetic, Musical, Interpersonal, Intrapersonal, Naturalistic, and Existential. According to this theory, if a learner is highly developed in the interpersonal realm, that learner will never access their strongest educational asset throughout the course if that student is in a lecture-only class with little interaction between students and students or teachers and students. Because part of the goal of teaching is to serve the learner, it would follow that is better appeal to a greater range of learning styles and to have a maximum impact and efficaciousness.

**Inclusive Assessments**

Assessments are a set of questions or exercises evaluating skill or knowledge. (Random House, 2007) Assessments are useful for both students and professors because at the same time they both show the student if they are acquiring the information promised in the course and it allows professors to see if their lessons are getting through to students.

When examining the method of assessments, gender differences are immediately apparent. For example, women tended to believe that their answer was different from what an expert would answer on multiple-choice tests. Further, women value and process as well as incorporate others’ evaluations of their work. The tendency to absorb feedback could be because women value others’ input and the improvement it can make in their own efforts. Various bodies of research show that
women are less likely to take risks than men (Byrnes, Miller, & Schafer, 1999; Slovic, Lichtenstein, & Fischhoff, 1988). Unfortunately, an often-used assessment tool in university courses is the Scantron test, which involves a sheet of multiple questions with the answers to those questions recorded on an answer sheet that can be read by a machine. Professors use the forms because of the obvious time saving ability of a machine, rather than the professor having to grade the tests. However, because a multiple choice exam involved risk-taking and educational intuition, which female learners often believe they are deficient in, using a multiple choice assessment is revealed to be gender biased.

**Inclusive Resources**

The importance of having women reflected in university courses applies to every aspect of the course, including textbooks, authors, and other supplemental resources such as guest speakers and optional out of class activities. In one study of high school textbooks, male inclusion dominated in a mind boggling 3:1 ratio (Lyons, 2008). What counts as legitimate knowledge in universities today is actually the result of complex power relations and battles among different groups with different competing interests and identities.

Researchers have shown that legitimate knowledge does not include the experiences and forms of expressions of those who have not been in powerful position throughout history, for example, women or people of color (Apple & Christian-Smith, 1991). Therefore, the symbolic representations in the textbooks are connected to real
power relations, and these depictions might also represent differentiated social relations as natural and unquestionable (Sleeter & Grant, 1991). One researcher found that Latin/Chicana women were excluded almost entirely from textbooks as “indicated by .004% representation” (Lyons, 2008) in an analysis of textbooks.

Research has consistently shown that the style of the contemporary American classroom favors the male style of thinking and learning, and devalues the female style (Kramarae & Treichler, 1992 & Lever, 1976). The tendency to value male styles of interactions over female styles of interactions means most classroom relations are gender biased. For example, asserting self is more valued than waiting one’s turn, individual achievement is valued over collaborative group process, speaking is more encouraged than listening, asserting new ideas is preferred over synthesizing and processing classmates’ ideas, competition is stressed over collaboration, and advancing firm conclusions is held above holding tentative opinions (Kramarae & Treichler, 1992; Lever, 1976).

Changing the climate and everyday classroom behavior is difficult because, as Hall and Sandler (1982) stated, “differential treatment that may occur in the classroom and related interaction is inadvertent and often below the level of consciousness of both faculty and students” (p. 13). However, the processes substantially affect the quality of learning so it is vital to develop strategies to enhance inclusive classroom experiences.
Future Life Aspirations/Empowerment

It has been well documented that women continue to earn less than men with the same education and experience level. The earnings gap could be because women’s true accomplishments have been historically ignored and women continue to be awarded lower pay in jobs simply because of their gender (Fry, 2004). Perhaps the omission and trivialization of women’s accomplishments contributes to this pay gap. In order to feel empowered, learners must be able to take empowering actions. Students who actively participate learn more and are more satisfied with the educational process (Sandler, 1996). But if class resources, climate, processes, and discussions actually encourage non-participation, there is little hope of empowerment taking place.

There are few other choices that affect an individual more than career choice. Career efficacy beliefs play a higher role than interests, values, and abilities in career choice (Betz & Hackett, 1989). In the seminal text *Women’s Ways of Knowing*, authors Belenky, Clinchy, Goldberger, and Tarule (1997), the question of voice, listening, and silence is central to understanding women’s ways of “gaining a voice” in the public world and of women’s self-concepts, “embedded in a larger context of feminist theory about voice and silence” (p. 19). If women are silenced, they do not believe any learning is even possible in the classroom. It follows that if topics, curriculum, and course materials in the classroom are discriminatory and excluding a
majority of students, the class itself would be considered impotent and useless to those excluded individuals and groups.

The consistent marginalization of women portrays women as outside the norm and valued less in society. One analysis of sociological textbooks found that women were present in less than 5% of the total page numbers and the inclusion of women was restricted to the topics of sexuality, family life, and socialization (Hall, 1988). Research reveals that career choices are affected by gender and that “the discussion of gender and its impact on the individual does make a difference in students’ perceptions” (Carinci, 2010). It follows that professors should not be afraid of the topic of gender or shy away from this aspect of classroom discussion.

The U.S. Census Bureau (as cited in Economic Policy Institute, 2009) has made statistics on women’s and men’s earnings available for several decades. The latest results from the 2010 Census show that women make 80 cents for every dollar a man earns and this figure does not include any part-time workers. Some may rationalize that if women move into male-dominated occupations in larger numbers, the wage gap will close. However, there appears to be a gender-related wage gap in virtually every occupational category. There were only four occupational categories (for which comparison data were available) in which women earned even a little more than men: special education teachers, order clerks, electrical and electronic engineers, and miscellaneous food preparation occupations (United States Department of Labor,
It is more likely that there is a tendency to value and reward men with salaries more than women are rewarded with salaries.

One way for society as a whole to value all citizens is to have an equitable curriculum at every stage of education, including the university level, and help turn the tide of faulty thinking that women are intrinsically less valuable than men. Perhaps this could help to change the cultural norm of valuing women less than men by awarding higher salaries to men.

The repeated exclusion of females throughout the curriculum tied to lower salaries throughout women’s lifetimes may have long-term effects on life aspiration and personal empowerment. Extensive research has been done on long-term wealth versus poverty related to gender and career paths (Collins, 2009; Warren, Rowlingson, & Whyley, 2006). The problem of lower salaries is damaging women’s prospects for avoiding poverty in the short term. In addition, in the medium term, lower salaries are depriving women of a savings safety net in their working lives. A longer-term risk of lower salaries is that in the future, individual women, but not men, may increasingly need to depend on private pensions rather than Social Security income in retirement. Women are not as well prepared as men for this possible eventuality and more vulnerable throughout their lifetimes to economic instability.

Others Excluded

Numerous studies have examined resources widely used in American schools that examine the current treatment of minorities. Despite ongoing criticism dating
back to at least 1970, a significant number of published texts and course resources continue to present a principally White, Protestant, Anglo-Saxon view of America, with the experiences of minority groups largely neglected (Campbell, 2000). Further, according to a Reuters news report dating back to 2000, more than 60% of Americans believe minorities and women are not fairly represented in textbooks. In addition, African-Americans are overwhelmingly portrayed among the contemporary poor in textbooks while African-Americans are not portrayed among a particularly sympathetic group of poor people in American culture— the Great Depression era poor. In addition, African-Americans are not used to illustrate a popular social program— Social Security, but Caucasians do predominate in the images about Social Security (Clawson, 2002). It is particularly important to be conscious of what content is being taught and how various groups are being portrayed. Unchecked stereotypes, scapegoats, prejudices, and discrimination can at best cause low self-esteem in oppressed groups and at worst can lead to the ultimate expression of hatred and violence against a group of people, genocide. It has been shown that the more contact people have with those of different races and ethnic backgrounds, the more prejudice and racism are reduced (McLaren & Gaskell, 1995).

Unfortunately, women -and especially women of color- continue to be omitted from the curriculum or relegated to the back of the chapter in textbooks, or as a special outtake, rather than having their contributions and attainments reported as part of the entirety of mainstream accomplishments in society. Invariably, prominent men with
well-known accomplishments are the focus of classes. While relevant to some fields of study such as anthropology, the day-to-day lives of women are over-focused on throughout formal education while the significant achievements of individual women are glossed over or ignored completely. Non-White women are reflected even less in curriculum and textbooks, with some minority groups, like Latinas only constituting .01% of resource materials (Lyons, 2008). The lack of balanced and fair teaching materials is abysmal. Interestingly, the female advantage in college attainment is particularly apparent among Black and Hispanic women, who now respectively claim a staggering 67% and 61% of all bachelor's degrees in their racial group. Meanwhile, 57% of degrees awarded to Whites are earned by women, and 52% of undergraduate degrees awarded to Asians are awarded to women (NCES, 2010).

**The Need for the Multiverse of Voices**

Proposals for curricular change, particularly proposals advocating the inclusion of works by women and minorities, are controversial because they pose ideological as well as pedagogical challenges. However, rethinking assumptions underlying courses can improve teaching at the university level. Anytime a set of actions can be brought to be more conscious, become more intentional, and be better thought out, those delivering and receiving information – professors and students – can benefit from the resulting clarity and focus. In the university course syllabi, curriculum, and textbooks, there is enough room for all voices to be included – women, men, minorities, majorities, and all ethnic backgrounds that have genuinely contributed to the
formation of Western Civilization. Research completed by Lage and Tregilia (1996) revealed that using an overall gender-equitable approach benefitted all learners. The gender-equitable approach integrated inclusive approaches to textbook assignments, out of class readings, course content, classroom format, determination of grades through percentage distribution, and the format of assignments. Improved performance for all students—both male and female—is a result that can benefit everyone. Gender-based differences in performance can be eliminated without creating a new exclusive environment.

**Conclusion**

When universities and departments are focused on designing an inclusive curriculum the practice that marginalizes all but a tiny elite group of citizens will cease. Education fails to have a sense of significance, is seen as inadequate, and even worse appears biased when 50% of the population is excluded. Further, when the women that are included are only women of European heritage and continue to exclude people of color, education becomes even more irrelevant. When individuals from various backgrounds and viewpoints are excluded, education is perceived as immaterial to the actual learners. It is not easy to question a seemingly fixed truth. Institutes of higher education do not have to get it perfect; they just have to get it going in the right direction— one of inclusivity, respect and accuracy. A multi-focal relational scholarship with a gender balanced perspective that suffuses men’s and women’s experiences into a holistic story of Western civilization.
This literature review examined the history of the humanities, explored the need for an inclusive curriculum by investigative such researchers as Carol Gilligan (1983) and Nel Noddings (1984). The literature review examined the inclusion of non-whites and the need for all voices to be included in course content and class processes, assessments and scholarly resources. Finally, the need for a perspective that includes a view from multiple perspectives was revealed.
Chapter 3

METHODOLOGY

Introduction

This study examined how Women in Western Civilization course syllabi addressed gender and gender-equitable course assessments, structures and processes. This study examined the above points in relation to what professors are communicating to students in Women in Western Civilization courses through course syllabi. Specifically, content analysis was used to quantify and assess the presence of certain words and processes in the syllabus considered to be stereotypical in relation to female learners. This study intended to broaden the body of literature which found course curriculum excluded processes and environments that are particularly useful to female learners. The academic, cultural, and professional background of the researcher also contributed to the analysis of gender bias in the samples used for this study.

I conducted a quantitative content analysis of data pertinent to gender inclusion relative to women in university level Women in Western Civilization courses. Content analysis is useful in answering who says what, to whom, and why, to what extent and with what effect. Ole Holsti (1969) offers a broad definition of content analysis as “any technique for making inferences by objectively and systematically identifying specified characteristics of messages” (p. 10). Data collection was gathered from the following 12 syllabi: “Women in Modern European Societies” CSU Sacramento; “Women in Classical Antiquity” University of Texas at Austin; “Women in Western
Civilization” King’s College (NY); “Women in Ancient Cultures” Illinois Valley Community College; “Women in Western Civilization” University of Michigan; “Women in Western Civilization Ancient-Modern Ages” CSU Sacramento; “Women’s History and Feminist Theory” City University of New York; “Women Through Cultures and Centuries” Illinois Valley Community College; "Women of the World” Columbia University; “Women in World History” Southwestern University; “Women in the Middle Ages” Columbia University; and finally “Women in Western Civilization” George Washington University. Content analysis was the most proficient way to evaluate these syllabi.

**Research Questions**

Does gender bias persist in Women’s in Western Civilization Courses? If so, what are the forms of bias? What is the extent of listed inclusive teaching practices? Are women of color included in courses? What is the extent of women used as primary source authors?

**Research Design and Collection**

**Method of Data Collection**

Content analysis was used as an unobtrusive method of examining the recorded communications from professor to student. The researcher imposed a framework that encompasses predetermined categories. Content analysis is a methodology in the social sciences for studying the content of communication. Earl Babbie defines it as "the study of recorded human communications, such as books, websites, paintings and
laws” (2007, p. 348). According to Babbie (2007), an unobtrusive method has the advantage of not affecting the subject being studied, in this case course syllabi. This study analyzed 12 course syllabi for Women in Western Civilization courses. Content analysis is useful in answering who says what, to whom, why, to what extent and with what effect. Ole Holsti (1969) offers a broad definition of content analysis as "any technique for making inferences by objectively and systematically identifying specified characteristics of messages" (p. 47). The specific characteristics in course syllabi reveal much about what professors are communicating to students as an introduction to the course. Kimberly A. Neuendorf (2002) offers a six-part definition of content analysis:

Content analysis is a summarizing, quantitative analysis of messages that relies on the scientific method (including attention to objectivity, intersubjectivity, a priori design, reliability, validity, generalisability, replicability, and hypothesis testing) and is not limited as to the types of variables that may be measured or the context in which the messages are created or presented. (p. 10)

Content analysis, according to Babbie (2007), “is essentially a coding operation” of a conceptual framework based on predetermined categories (p. 483). The conceptual models used to assess the data of inclusion and bias in the samples, were coded and classified based on literature of gender and ethnic inclusion and bias. Crawford and Macleod (1990) and Zittleman and Sadker’s (2002) study suggested the following framework for assessing curriculum bias (Appendix A):
1. Unreality – Largely omission and misrepresentation of women & minorities in the 1960s and continued minimal treatment today (Sheet F)

2. Stereotyping – Assigning a rigid set of characteristics to all members of a group (in this case victims or ineffectual women as evidenced by the words rape, victim or prostitute) (Sheet C)

3. Out of Class Activities – Connecting learning between a learner’s real life experiences and theory in the classroom (Sheet A)

4. Biased Assessments – Exclusive use of multiple guess examinations (Sheet D)

5. Biased Class Structures – Exclusive use of lectures and lack of student-to-student interaction or personalized structures (Sheet E)

6. Imbalance & Selectivity – An illusion of equity by ignoring patriarchal influences (Sheet B) (Appendix A)

**Study Subjects**

**Course Syllabi**

Course syllabi were procured from History and Women’s Studies departments at universities across the country. I obtained these by calling the administrative assistant for each university and asked that the course syllabi be emailed to me. The samples received for analysis included the following:

1. “Women in Modern European Societies” CSU Sacramento

2. “Women in Classical Antiquity” University of Texas at Austin
3. “Women in Western Civilization” King’s College (NY)
4. “Women in Ancient Cultures” Illinois Valley Community College
5. “Women in Western Civilization” University of Michigan
6. “Women in Western Civilization Ancient-Modern Ages” CSU Sacramento
7. “Women’s History and Feminist Theory” City University of New York
8. “Women Through Cultures and Centuries” Illinois Valley Community College
10. “Women in World History” Southwestern University
11. “Women in the Middle Ages” Columbia University
12. “Women in Western Civilization” George Washington University

**Setting**

The course syllabi were assessed at a local university library. The location was accessible to materials and implements to assess and analyze the data: course syllabi for review, chairs, laptop computer and large tables to peruse the samples.

**Procedures**

The data collection sheets for this study were designed to gather data on gender inclusion and bias from syllabi procured from various universities throughout the country. Data for content analysis was collected from the syllabi course description, class texts, lists of out of class activities, weekly schedule, assessments and professor’s expectations. Each syllabi was examined thoroughly for data collection. It took
approximately three hours to peruse each syllabus. Criteria for evaluating gender and ethnic inclusion and bias were derived from frameworks used in studies noted in the previous section (Campbell et al., 1996; Gilligan, 1983; Zittleman & Sadker, 2002). Coding consisted of the amount, type, and extent of gender inclusion in the syllabi’s course description, course schedule, required and optional texts, method of grading, and assignments – both optional and required.

Female groups categorized under Ethnicities were: any European background, African, African American, Arab, Asian/Asian American, Latinas, and any Aboriginal or Native peoples. Women of color, for the purposes of this study, was used to designate traditional racial or ethnic attributes or affiliations commonly used in the literature for ethnic domains. For the purpose of brevity and not for lack of recognizing the nuances of identity, a broad stroke of categorization for Asian or Asian American females included origins from Far, Near, and South East Asia, and the Pacific Islands.

**Out of Class Activities**

In order to assess the intention of connected knowing as noted by Noddings (1984) syllabi were evaluated for out of class activities (Appendix A).

**Syllabi**

Data from the syllabi included the course description, the professor’s expectations, and explanations of assignments & assessments.
Summary

Content analysis was applied to 12 Women in Western Civilization course syllabi taught at the university level. The design for quantitative content analysis was based on established and reliable frameworks to assess gender bias. The samples came from two-year and four-year colleges and universities, both public and private, from across the United States. The limited number of syllabi available from departmental staff or university websites negated a random sampling. Quantitative content analysis of the data was derived from the written descriptions and required course readings.
Chapter 4

FINDINGS

Introduction to Quantitative Data

The goal of this study was to examine 12 course syllabi for gender inclusion and bias with particular focus on Women in Western Civilization courses. The syllabi included two from Columbia University in New York, one from the University of Texas at Austin, one from Kings College in Wilkes Barre, Pennsylvania, two from Illinois Valley Community College, one from the University of Michigan Ann Arbor, one from the City University of New York, one from George Washington University in Washington, DC and one from Southwestern University in Georgetown, Texas.

For the quantitative analysis, data was gathered from main syllabi components, which included the course description, required readings, and the weekly schedule. Data examined from the course description included mention of stereotyping words about women that have been over-inflated throughout patriarchal reporting of history including: victim, prostitute, domestic violence, and sexuality.

The course description was also examined for the study of agentic women as noted in the syllabus or the study of women’s lives in general. The required readings were examined to find the gender and ethnicity of the authors of written sources used in the course. The weekly schedule was examined to uncover evidence of connected knowing activities, Inclusive assessments as well as Inclusive classroom structures.
The imbalance and selective choices skew towards white women or women of European heritage.

Also, stereotyping was found present in course descriptions when words that stereotype women as victims and focus on sexuality. Examining the course syllabi for these words was important because the course description sets the tone for the semester, and is something students examine upon deciding to register for the course. The course syllabi were further examined to assess inclusive assessments and inclusive class structures. Finally, the course syllabi were examined for their relation to unreality. In this instance, the study scrutinized the syllabi to elucidate if an accurate portrayal of women’s genuine contributions were included.

Results and Analysis of Quantitative Data

Connected Knowing - A

The research in Chapter 2 showed that connecting learners’ lives to the topics presented in class and course materials is essential for effective teaching. Of the 12 course syllabi, only two mentioned out of course activities that assist in drawing the lines between theory and practice, between history and present day. Of the two courses mentioning out of class activities, only one was required (Table 1).
According to the results of the study, only 2% of course syllabi had assignments that connect the class learning to learner’s lives. It is apparent that syllabi do not reflect any course planning that includes the benefits that can come from connected information shared in class to the lives of learners outside of the classroom.

**Imbalance and Selectivity - B**

The shocking lack of diversity and ethnic inclusion uncovered by this study show statistics that are alarming. Of the 67 authors in the required reading lists, 87% were female and 13% were male. These statistics are an empowering ratio at first glance. However, when further examining the required reading lists listed in Women in Western Civilization course syllabi, it could be assumed that the only women to populate the Western world and make a difference in Western Civilization were of
European ancestry. The percentages for each ethnicity for all authors are: 60% are European, 3% were African, 2% were African-American, 2% were of Arab descent and 1% was Latina, and there were no authors of both Asian descent, and Aboriginal or Native peoples.

Table 2

*Authors of Required Course Readings & Textbooks by Gender and Ethnicity*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Authors of Required Course Readings &amp; Textbooks by Gender and Ethnicity</th>
<th>Aboriginal or Native Peoples</th>
<th>African</th>
<th>African-American</th>
<th>Arabic</th>
<th>Asian</th>
<th>European</th>
<th>Latina</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
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There is an obvious dominance of European women in required course content in Women in Western Civilization courses. The preponderance of males was enhanced when courses focus more on antiquity than in any other period. It is a shocking fact that European male authors outnumber all female authors from non-European backgrounds. The complete omission of Aboriginal females is glaring, as these groups included a worldwide geographical areas. The exclusion of Asian females is just as
conspicuous because the Asian ethnic category included women from the Far and Near East as well as Pacific Islanders.

**Stereotyping - C**

When reviewing course syllabi for stereotyping, the words ‘victim,’ ‘prostitute,’ ‘domestic violence,’ ‘sexuality’ and ‘virgin’ were revealed. These are specific words that stereotype women as victims and are objectifying. The prevalence of words of oppression dominated course syllabi. Of the 12 syllabi, 10 syllabi included stereotyping words. This means that 83% of courses used stereotyping words in their course syllabi (Figure 1).

![Number of Syllabi In Which Stereotyping Words Appear](image)

*Figure 1. Number of Syllabi in Which Stereotyping Words Appear.*

This is a detrimental practice as course syllabi are often the first introduction to a course a student takes delivery of, typically receiving the syllabus through electronic
means prior to the first night of class. Stereotyping words cast a tone upon the class that is disempowering and derogatory. Indeed, outside of course content that specifically addresses crime, these words do not appear typically in course syllabi. Stereotyping words are not found in Western Civilization course descriptions and mention of sexual violence or male prostitution is not included in introductory course materials. Using stereotypical words sets the space for an overlay of victimhood and disempowerment that is particular to women. The message that is conveyed is that women, and only women, have a low status in society and have mainly been victims throughout the development of culture.

**Inclusive Assessments - D**

Inclusive assessments include assessments that take into account a wide variety of learning styles and ways of communicating. The research revealed that the majority of course syllabi rely on essays and participation in order to evaluate performance. The syllabus from Columbia University’s “Women of the World” and Southwestern University’s “Women in World History” included two innovative assessments. In the Columbia University course, one assignment listed is to complete an oral history project, preferable interviewing a female family member. If a family member is not available, a female significant in the learners’ lives is permitted. This oral history project is an assessment that is not only inclusive, but applies connected knowing in a visceral way. Southwestern University’s course requires learners to participate in a ‘Women in the Global Past’ fair at the university. This assessment consists of a poster
session on women’s lives in a particular time and place. Not only must the project be historically accurate, thereby maintaining academic integrity, but the professor also encourages learners to use creativity and personal style in order to present their poster at the fair. The poster session is an interesting assessment that considers more than the memorization of facts or risk-taking behavior that is more prevalent in males, as demonstrated in the literature review (Byrnes et al., 1999).

The research elucidated the monotony and lack of a variety of assessments most professors are outlining in their course syllabi. Class participation and essays only reach two types of learners- those who are comfortable speaking in front of a large group and those who excel at writing. While both of these qualities are essential to a part of the university experience, it is an unbalanced approach to rely so heavily on these assessments.

**Inclusive Class Structures**

Inclusive class structures also show a deep preference by professors to rely on two types of structures- participatory discussion and professor-centered lectures. Every single class as outlined in their course syllabi relied on these participatory discussion and lecture. Moreover, four of the course syllabi predicted relying solely on this class structure throughout the semester. Of the remaining eight course syllabi, four relied on individual or group presentations, three used films as a multi-media component, and three included in-class writing as reflection for assessments.
Unreality - F

The last piece of data analyzed examined imbalance and selectivity. In order to uncover any gender bias in Women in Western Civilization course syllabi, the types of women that were considered in the course were closely scrutinized. What was uncovered is a strong preference towards discussing women’s social lives and everyday experiences. The idea of discussing great women or agentic women making a difference and having an impact and voice in the creation of Western Civilization seems to not have yet permeated Women in Western Civilization courses. Of the 12 syllabi perused, not one course focused solely on significant women. All of the syllabi studied the general, social lives of women. Four of the course syllabi studied both the general social life of women and great women.
Chapter 5

DISCUSSION, CONCLUSION, LIMITATIONS, RECOMMENDATIONS

Discussion

Historical significance and importance, according to Crocco and Libresco (2007), are “the events and developments that make it into history [and] are what society deems important to remember” (p. 117). Course syllabi are the first experience of a college or university course for students. Course syllabi also serve as the map for how the curriculum will be implemented throughout the semester. The messages and references students encounter upon reviewing the syllabus— their first introduction to the course— discover immediately who and what is considered of value, or not, to the professor, the university and society in general. For example, this researcher took a semester long course on Women in Western Civilization in 1990, yet not one woman other than royalty or prostitutes were mentioned the entire semester. In supplementary materials on reserve, an interview with a female author was provided, but the piece was never discussed in the class. However, extensive research has been done in the last twenty years and discoveries have progressed greatly in the more accurate development of a multicultural and inclusive story of humanity.

This researcher was excited to analyze gender and ethnic inclusion of current courses, particularly the aspects of courses that affect female learners, under the belief that many things had changed in the last 20 years. Analysis of the data revealed lack of inclusion persisted in course syllabi and in particular in the courses’ assigned readings.
Styles friendly to all learners, especially female learners, were excluded from most course syllabi. Greater numerical inclusion of the social lives of women compared to great women or agentic women was revealed. Women of color were often the excluded from course content and reading materials compared to European men and women. Class structures were shown to lack inclusive strategies and gender-equitable activities. Inclusive assessments were shown to be present in all syllabi. Finally, most course descriptions including stereotyping words that cast women as victims.

**Connected Knowing**

The results of the data revealed a pattern of bias and lack of inclusion in both gender and approaches to teaching, domains significant to Women in Western Civilization courses. Out of class activities or field trips were shown by Noddings (1984) to be effective ways of connecting the learning in the classroom to the learners’ lives. Only two courses used this practice, despite years of information showing this as useful to all learners.

**Imbalance**

The number of women from non-European ethnic backgrounds as required reading authors, was the first compilation of data to reveal a pattern of exclusion and bias. Quantitative analysis of this component’s data revealed these groups was the least represented compared to both females and males of European descent. Of the 67 authors, women of European ethnic background constituted 76% of authors, European men constituted 13% of authors. European men outnumbered all women of non-
European backgrounds. European authors together constituted 89% of authors in required readings. African female authors constituted 4% of authors, African-American females consisted of 3% of authors, Latinas were 1% of authors of required texts, and women of Arabic descent made-up 3% of required reading authors. Asian and Aboriginal/Native peoples did not have any representation in required reading sources.

In the United States of America there is a white majority and about equal parts Latino and African American minorities. This ethnic breakdown is not mirrored in the author choice for required reading. For California, which no longer has a majority ethnicity, the practice of integrating course curricular and reading materials is especially important. The message that is delivered to students of all ethnicities is that lives and experiences of non-whites are not worth remembering (Crocco & Libresco, 2007).

**Stereotyping**

Stereotyping words used in course descriptions and weekly schedules of Women in Western Civilization courses were found to be prevalent. Most courses used stereotyping words in their course syllabus amounting 83% of all syllabi. On the other hand, 17% did not use stereotyping words at all. Male-centric perspectives could not get past centuries old stereotypes created by sexism, and even women who may consider themselves feminists continue to subjugate women through language. Male, Eurocentric hegemony found in course syllabi in this study supported this view by
mentioning words such as victim, domestic violence, prostitute, and sexuality. It is supposed that these are not words typically found in college and university course descriptions for Western Civilization courses. According to an Oyserman, Brickman, and Rhodes (2007) study, strong identity or “connectedness” alone did not equate to academic achievement but had to include “believing that the in-group valued academic achievement” (p. 106). In the university setting, the in-group is the patriarchy narrative. That is, females had to overcome patriarchal curriculum and messages in order to recognize their capabilities and cultural worth and, equally important, to support each other in academic motivation and achievement.

**Inclusive Assessments**

Non-inclusive assessments methods, as described by Banks & Banks (2009), “provide greater efficacy for [all learners] at the university level” (p. 62). The obvious convenience of directly observing participation in class is appealing to professors. Assessing students by class participation also requires very little preparation before class for the professor. However, assessing by verbal communication in class is biased towards students who are risk takers, have confidence speaking in front of groups and are able to quickly synthesize ideas (Byrnes et al., 1999; Slovic et al., 1988). As a group, these have shown to be traits more abundant in males and in lower appearance in females.

The findings in this component, coupled with Stereotyping, illustrated the challenges female university students face in courses designed for learners of a certain
type and institutions and structures that value a patriarchal male dominated perspective.

Often, the “illusion of equity” (Zittleman & Sadker, 2002, p. 62) is created at universities by the inclusion of womens studies courses. Rather than providing course syllabi that reflect courses including women who overcame sexism and achieved great things, females are bombarded with negative, stereotyped language before they even enter the Women in Western Civilization course classroom. The literature on stereotype threat demonstrated the vicious cycle of hopelessness and helplessness created by societal messages affecting academic engagement and achievement (Steele & Aronson, 1997). The comparative lack of inclusion and bias in this study’s required course readings was beyond appalling, especially when scrutinizing the ethnicity of authors. It is incredible that this practice persists in colleges and universities. In order to support healthy communication and understanding across communities and uphold the values of democracy, racist and sexist ideas must cease in institutes of higher education.

**Inclusive Class Structures**

When courses are well thought out and carefully planned, multiple approaches to disseminating the intended information from a course is the best practice. Unfortunately, the majority of classes, as outlined in the reviewed course syllabi, default to professor centered lectures and large group discussion. The lack of inspiration, forethought and effort expended in class planning gives the impression of
being indolent and apathetic. The more varied the course, the more potential buy-in professors will elicit from students. Since multiple intelligences as described by Gardner (1983) occur among learners, every student in university courses would benefit from addressing multiple ways of learning and knowing. Inclusive class structures are an avenue to greater equality and fairness.

**Unreality**

Women in Western Civilization courses focus almost exclusively on the social lives of women, studying general characteristics of women’s experiences. Great women who have achieved significant gains and contributed to the development of the Western world are studied in just four of the courses, but always in conjunction with the aforementioned general life. The appalling exclusion of female change-makers and genuine contributors is inexcusable. It is difficult to imagine a standard Western Civilizations course that mentions male prostitutes, the rape of men and the limitations of men throughout history. The rationale of studying whores does not pass muster with this researcher.

**Conclusion**

Content analysis of the course syllabi for this study brought with it an understanding that the discourse on female achievement was not new. The desire to portray women as agents in the formation of Western Civilization is apparent in the fact that these classes and departments exist. Unfortunately, the patriarchal habit of stereotyping women, depicting them as ineffectual and making no genuine
contributions throughout the formation of Western civilization persists even when female professors are writing, teaching and choosing course content and text sources. The practice of bias and exclusion insults the intelligence of the university, the professor, the women studied and the students. Connected knowing was rarely used—only 2% of the time. There was imbalance in the ethnicity of women studied. It is amazing that men with a European background outnumbered women of all non-European backgrounds as primary source authors. Non-inclusive class structures prefer males and promote male participation above female participation. Inclusive assessments were not used by most courses. Great women with authentic contributions were largely ignored in favor of teaching the general lives of women.

Limitations

The limitations of this study had few samples or textbooks to get a complete analysis of Women in Western Civilization course syllabi at colleges and universities across the US. A narrow representation of courses are provided by syllabi, and this research did not uncover what was said in class, additional readings that may have been assigned throughout the semester, or the content of discussions during the semester. Another limitation is that last-minute videos, guest presentations and impromptu extra credit university assignments cannot be known. Further, universities may limit the amount of information permitted on the syllabus. Professors also may use university websites or other web-based learning systems that were not available for this research.
Recommendations

It is recommended that a course be designed that enhances the potential or possible selves of females that presupposes the high abilities and worth of about half of the world’s population. One course in this study can be considered a model for writing inclusive courses- “Women of the World” taught at Columbia University. “Women of the World” does not use stereotyping words in the syllabus, employs elements of connected knowing by assigning an oral history project, uses a variety of assessments and class structures, and draws on primary source texts from a diverse authors with a multitude of ethnic backgrounds. This course models the possibility that a curriculum that makes learners aware of the truth of women’s historical experiences and contributions in the story of the development of Western civilization is real. The unique experiences and contributions of women may be uncovered when professors are trained to write courses that are an accurate reflection of Women in Western Civilization. Women in Western Civilization courses should also be respectful of all their students. Integrity in education means addressing the racism and sexism that permeates the university course experience. Respect means teachers approach students with open minds in order to recognize their potential and wishes, as well as their critiques of courses and chosen materials. Reciprocity is part of this process. Women will find their voice in an inclusive environment and become more engaged in the learning process. Examining Western Civilization courses is recommended for the components listed in this course description would be useful to the body of
knowledge. Further, examining course syllabi to discover if women are discussed in positive ways in course descriptions, course schedules and in titles of required reading lists. Further, it is possible that men would feel uncomfortable entering in to a course where subjugated sexuality and men as perpetrators hold the over-arching focus of scholarship.

**Reflections**

It is disappointing that disparaging words and non-inclusive structures pervade Women in Western Civilization content in the course syllabi. The obnoxious habit of studying whores, victims of crime, and unfortunate women will hopefully pass soon. There is an absurdity to marginalize women’s history to a special class sufferers and non-achievers. The real story of Women in Western Civilization courses should be that despite disadvantages, women have accomplished great things. A multi-perspectival approach should be taken for all courses. The practice of including more than the European male voice is a wise practice. Keeping a very narrow focus can lead to an absurd extension of classes. for example, to learn about women of color, a student would have to take a Women of Color in Western Civilization in order to get a clear picture. One of the things that occurred to me over and over while completing this research is how most of the non-inclusive structures, assessments, and language is unintentional but very easily rectified.
APPENDIX

Data Collection Sheets A-F
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DATA COLLECTION SHEET B

Imbalance

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### DATA COLLECTION SHEET C

Stereotyping

| Course Descriptions: Specific References to Stereotyping Words of Victimization |
|---------------------------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|-------------------|------------------|
| Syllabus | Section of the Syllabus | Sexuality | Victim | Prostitute | Domestic Violence | None |
|          |                             |           |       |            |                   |      |
|          |                             |           |       |            |                   |      |
|          |                             |           |       |            |                   |      |
|          |                             |           |       |            |                   |      |
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Inclusive Assessments

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Inclusive Class Structures

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Unreality

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