

man standard (even if it is called a reasonable person standard) does not capture the experience of reasonable women (Taylor 1986).

Another area of concern to feminists is pregnancy and job leave. If women's lives had been used as the standard from the start, feminists argue, one can be sure that job leaves for pregnancy would have been standard procedure. But because men do not become pregnant and men have devised the standard, women must accept such leaves as a form of sick leave.

Many other examples could be

given, but here I want to look at education and raise some questions rarely asked. For example, instead of asking why women lag behind men in mathematics, we might ask the following: Why do men lag behind women in elementary school teaching, early childhood education, nursing, full-time parenting, and like activities? Is there something wrong with men or with schools that this state of affairs persists?

### Women's Culture as the Standard

Faced with the questions just asked, it is tempting to answer facetiously that

"these jobs just don't pay," and of course there is some truth in that. But elementary teaching often pays as well as high school teaching, and yet many more men enter high school teaching. In fact, neither teaching nor nursing pay as poorly as many occupations men enter in considerable numbers.

If we admit that pay is a significant factor, we still have to ask why work traditionally associated with women is so consistently ill paid. Why has so small a value been attached to work we all admit is important? It is hard to escape the conclusion that some men devalue work they have never done

## The National SEED Project

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**T**he National SEED (Seeking Educational Equity and Diversity) Project on Inclusive Curriculum provides K-12 teachers an opportunity to renew their teaching selves and consider what gender-inclusive and multicultural curriculums might look like. The project seeks to engage teachers in curricular and systemic change by bringing issues of race, gender, class, and ethnicity into their classrooms. In seven-day summer workshops, SEED leaders prepare to facilitate monthly three-hour seminars for other teachers during the following school year.

Since 1987, SEED has held seminars led by 198 teachers in 32 states and 7 Asian countries. To date, more than 2,500 educators have participated. Peggy McIntosh, Associate Director of the Wellesley College Center for Research on Women, and Emily Style, English teacher and Diversity Coordinator in the Madison, New Jersey, School District, have co-

directed the project since it began.

At the workshops, project leaders and consultants speak from many disciplines and reflect diverse ethnic backgrounds. Sessions immerse participants in recent scholarship on inclusive education, model teaching strategies to link content and pedagogy, and are grounded in the experiences of participants.

In 1988 I became part of a SEED community of 35 learners who teach. Looking at the textbooks of our lives was essential before imagining school climate and curriculums that would more accurately reflect our diverse world. During our first moments together as a community of scholars/learners, we read aloud our personal versions of Caribbean writer Jamaica Kincaid's "Girl," drawing upon the gendered and remembered voices from our own pasts. The first stories we told were our own. The first voices we heard were our own. Immediately we recognized the authenticity and power of our own lived experiences.

Conversations continued through-

out the week, formally and informally. We read and discussed recent scholarship reflecting the interdisciplinary nature of women's and ethnic studies. We were exposed to a growing body of scholarship that calls into question traditional content and practices in schools. Initially overwhelming, the many books, articles, films, and videos shared by the consultants ultimately brought into focus much that my own education had not included.

A particularly useful metaphor developed by Emily Style suggests that an inclusive curriculum provides students with a balance of *windows*—to frame and acknowledge the diverse experiences of others—and *mirrors*—to reflect the reality and validity of each student.<sup>1</sup> My own K-12 education excluded the experiences of women, all people of color, and people with disabilities. Before I could change my own teaching, I had to recognize how entrenched I was in replicating a past that had provided me and most of my students with few windows and mirrors.

themselves and do not wish to do.

If women had set the standard when schools were founded and curriculums designed, what might our students be studying today? Perhaps schools would be giving far more attention to family and developmental studies. It also seems likely that these studies would not be regarded as soft, easy, or merely elective. A rigorous study of infancy, childhood, adolescence, adulthood, and old age would be coupled with a generous amount of supervised practice in care of the young and elderly. The maintenance of caring relationships might be a central topic.

Seminar leaders shared materials and strategies to facilitate curricular change, including Peggy McIntosh's theoretical work on curriculum<sup>2</sup> and invisible systems of privilege.<sup>3</sup> Experienced project leaders described the various ways they approached their seminars.

When I returned to my school district, we issued an open invitation to our K-12 staff and neighboring district personnel to participate in SEED and provided \$1,000 for materials. Twenty teachers responded. Together we rediscovered and reactivated the curious learners within ourselves, giving one another the gift of time for adult conversations and ending our professional isolation.

At the monthly seminars, we expanded the perspectives we bring to our classrooms by looking more closely at the courses we teach. Risk-taking became expected behavior, and we shared how the content and processes are changing in our classrooms.

For example, at one seminar a middle school teacher revealed that the 8th grade English curriculum included no books with female protagonists. That soon changed. Another teacher with a graduate degree in English real-

An objection might be raised that these are all matters to be learned at home — not in school. But, given the dramatic changes in social conditions since the end of World War II, fewer children seem to be learning about these subjects adequately. It is questionable whether most ever learned them adequately at home. Family relationships — human relationships — are at the very heart of life, and yet they are considered peripheral to serious learning. With family life at the center of the curriculum, we could teach history, literature, and science more meaningfully than we do now.

ized that his own education had never required him to read a book by a woman and only two books by African-American men.

Also, the tradition of discussing people of color only as victims of dominant cultures contrasted sharply with our new understandings, as we read together works by Zora Neale Hurston, Michael Dorris, Ignatia Brokér, Amy Tan, James Baldwin, Alice Walker, and other authors of color.

During our discussions, some teachers recalled preservice education programs that had directed them to "select materials boys will read, because girls will read anything." The process of learning to teach inclusively includes *unlearning* as well.

I am proud to be part of a network that respects teachers and regards us as central to improving education. The project has been critical in the process of becoming the teacher I want to be. Perhaps SEED's greatest strength is bringing teachers together in conversation with one another within and across disciplines and districts. At the project's core is a fundamental belief that, given the opportunity, teachers will inspire,

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motivate, and learn with one another. Trusting the adult learners teachers are. Learning to listen to our own voices as well as others. □

<sup>1</sup>E. Style, (1988), "Curriculum as Window and Mirror." In *Listening for All Voices: Gender Balancing the School Curriculum*, pp. 6-12, (Summit, N.J.: Oak Knoll).

<sup>2</sup>P. McIntosh, (1983), *Interactive Phases of Curricular Re-Vision: A Feminist Perspective*, and (1990), *Interactive Phases of Curricular and Personal Re-Vision with Regard to Race*, (Wellesley College Center for Research on Women Working Papers No. 124 and 219, Wellesley, Mass.).

<sup>3</sup>P. McIntosh, (1988), *White Privilege and Male Privilege: A Personal Account of Coming to See Correspondences Through Work in Women's Studies*, (Wellesley College Center for Research on Women Working Paper No. 189, Wellesley, Mass.).

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