

Copyright is owned by the Author of the thesis. Permission is given for a copy to be downloaded by an individual for the purpose of research and private study only. The thesis may not be reproduced elsewhere without the permission of the Author.

WOMEN'S STUDIES - A GENERAL ESSAY AND
A NATIONAL SURVEY

A Thesis presented in fulfilment of the
requirements for the Masterate of Education
at Massey University.

Mary A. Hancock

B.Ed. Hons.

1979

10013-08

ABSTRACT

The survey provides an analysis of Women's Studies courses for adults in New Zealand 1977 - 1978. Two postal questionnaires were utilized to compile data on the courses, organisers and participants.

The preliminary questionnaire (an information sheet) established the location of a wide number of courses, and the name and address of each course organiser.

The main questionnaire, administered to the course organisers, ascertained specific data concerning the nature of Women's Studies courses, organisers and participants. From this data an overview was gained of the forty six diverse Women's Studies Courses for adults offered in New Zealand during the period 1977 - 1978. This represents all the major courses taught in New Zealand at this time. The forty six courses are offered by thirty five different organisations.

A large proportion of these groups are government bodies. Voluntary groups play only a small role in the provision of courses.

The majority of courses are informal, non-vocational courses, with only a small proportion of courses being of a formal nature (part of qualifications and/or a training programme).

Almost all of the courses are organised by women. In only two situations are men involved with women in course organisation and planning. A similar pattern emerged in course attendance where 91.2% of the participants were women and 8.8% men.

There are considerable differences in the types of courses attended by men and women. A very high proportion of men attended the formal courses, whereas a large proportion of women attended informal, non-vocationally-oriented courses.

In the area of course development, over 80% of courses have emerged since 1975.

A large proportion of the courses were established through the independent initiative of female staff members. Factors such as organizational policy and 'needs' played only a very small role.

In a tentative examination of the purposes and content of Women's Studies courses as regards their orientation to social change, a pattern emerged revealing that a high percentage of courses are based on an integration approach. Only a very small number of courses were oriented toward transformation and these had a "reform" approach.

In the classroom situation several factors emerged.

Set reading material was found in very few courses, although 50% of the courses had recommended reading of considerable variety.

A large proportion of the courses utilized lectures, seminars and tutorials. A small proportion used alternative teaching and learning approaches such as workshops and group participation programmes. The average course length was 12.5 sessions with government courses longer than voluntary organisation courses.

There are many implications arising from the data, and where applicable they are discussed in this study, and related to the issues of the status and survival of Women's Studies in New Zealand.

CONTENTS

| | <u>Page</u> |
|---|-------------|
| Contents | iv |
| List of Tables | vii |
| List of Figures | ix |
| <u>INTRODUCTORY ESSAY:</u> Knowledge and Control - A Feminist Perspective. | x |
| Preface | x |
| Part One | xi |
| Part Two | xx |
| Part Three | xxiv |
| Conclusion | xxvii |
| Bibliography | xxviii |
| <u>BACKGROUND TO THE SURVEY</u> | 1 |
| <u>METHOD</u> | 4 |
| The Preliminary Information Sheet | 4 |
| The Main Questionnaire | 5 |
| Implementation of the Postal Questionnaires | 8 |
| <u>THE FINDINGS</u> | 13 |
| Number of Courses | 13 |
| Course Types | 13 |
| Number of Organisations with Courses | 13 |
| Organisational Bodies and Course Numbers | 14 |
| Government and Voluntary Organisations | 15 |
| Funding of Organisations | 16 |
| Formal and Informal Women's Studies Courses | 17 |
| Course Organisers: Sex | 18 |
| Attendance at Women's Studies Courses | 18 |
| Female Attendance Patterns | 20 |
| Male Attendance Patterns | 22 |
| Female and Male Attendance Patterns | 25 |
| Course Establishment | 26 |
| Course Origins | 27 |
| Course Aims and Objectives | 28 |
| Pedagogy | 29 |

| | <u>Page</u> |
|--|-------------|
| Course Reading | 29 |
| Course Length | 30 |
| <u>DISCUSSION</u> | 32 |
| Course Types | 32 |
| Organisational Bodies | 32 |
| Course Funding | 33 |
| Formal and Informal Courses | 33 |
| Course Organisers | 34 |
| Attendance | 35 |
| Impetus for Course Establishment | 37 |
| Course Establishment | 38 |
| Course Origins | 38 |
| The Purpose of the Courses | 40 |
| Pedagogy | 46 |
| Course Patterns | 47 |
| Survival of Courses | 47 |
| <u>SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION</u> | 50 |
| <u>APPENDICES</u> | |
| 1 Preliminary Survey: Information Sheet | 52 |
| 2 a. Main Questionnaire: Introductory Letter | 53 |
| b. Main Questionnaire | 54 |
| 3 Preliminary Survey: Reminder | 55 |
| 4 a. Main Questionnaire: Reminder | 56 |
| b. Main Questionnaire: Letter of Thanks to Respondents | 57 |
| 5 Women's Studies Courses in New Zealand 1977-1978 | 58 |
| 6 Organisations with Women's Studies Courses | 60 |
| 7 Government and Voluntary Organisations and Course Numbers | 62 |
| 8 Source of Funds | 64 |
| 9 Formal and Informal Women's Studies Courses | 66 |
| 10 Course Organisers by Sex | 68 |
| 11 Attendance at Women's Studies Courses (by sex) | 70 |
| 12 Course Origins | 73 |

| | <u>Page</u> |
|---|-------------|
| 13 Specificity of Course Aims and Objectives | 75 |
| 14 Pedagogy | 77 |
| 15 Course Reading | 79 |
| 16 Women's Studies Courses with Set Texts | 81 |
| 17 Women's Studies Courses with Recommended Reading | 82 |
| 18 Course Length | 84 |
| 19 Women's Studies Courses: Approach to Social Change | 87 |
| <u>BIBLIOGRAPHY</u> | 89 |

LIST OF TABLES

| <u>Table</u> | | <u>Page</u> |
|--------------|--|-------------|
| 1 | Organisational Response to Preliminary Postal Information Sheet | 8 |
| 2 | Type of Response to Preliminary Information Sheet | 9 |
| 3 | Organisational Response to Main Questionnaire | 9 |
| 4 | Reasons for Non Inclusion of Courses | 11 |
| 5 | Types and Numbers of Women's Studies Courses | 13 |
| 6 | Organisational Bodies and Course Numbers | 14 |
| 7 | Government and Voluntary Organisations with Women's Studies Courses | 15 |
| 8 | Government and Voluntary Organisation Course Numbers | 15 |
| 9 | Source of Course Funding | 16 |
| 10 | Government and Voluntary Funded Organisations with Women's Studies Courses | 16 |
| 11 | Number of Organisations offering Formal or Informal Courses | 17 |
| 12 | Number of Formal and Informal Courses | 17 |
| 13 | Sex of Course Organisers | 18 |
| 14 | Course Attendance by Sex | 18 |
| 15 | Attendance at Government and Voluntary Organisation Courses | 19 |
| 16 | Formal and Informal Courses: Attendance | 19 |
| 17 | Government and Voluntary Organisation Courses: Female Attendance | 20 |
| 18 | Formal Courses: Female Attendance | 21 |
| 19 | Formal and Informal Courses: Female Attendance | 22 |
| 20 | Government and Voluntary Organisation Courses: Male Attendance | 22 |
| 21 | Male Attendance at Women's Studies Courses | 23 |
| 22 | Formal and Informal Courses: Male Attendance | 24 |
| 23 | Government and Voluntary Organisation Courses: Female and Male Attendance | 25 |
| 24 | Formal and Informal Courses: Female and Male Attendance | 25 |
| 25 | Year Course Established | 26 |
| 26 | Course Establishment since 1975 | 26 |
| 27 | Course Originating Factors | 27 |
| 28 | Specificity of Course Aims and Objectives | 28 |

TablePage

| | | |
|----|--|----|
| 29 | Specificity of Aims and Objectives and Source of Funds | 28 |
| 30 | Learning and Teaching Approaches | 29 |
| 31 | Courses with Recommended Reading | 29 |
| 32 | Women's Studies Courses: Length | 30 |
| 33 | Organisational Bodies: Course Length | 31 |
| 34 | Purposes of Women's Studies Courses | 43 |

LIST OF FIGURES

| <u>Figure</u> | | <u>Page</u> |
|---------------|---|-------------|
| 1 | Continuum of Attitudes to Social Change | 41 |
| 2 | A Conceptual Framework for Analysing Attitudes in Education to Social Change. | 43 |