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**Validating Women's Voices**  
**Five Case Studies that Extend the *Women's Ways of Knowing***  
**Framework to Women Students Over 65 Years of Age**

**Katharine Silver**

A Thesis  
in  
The Department  
of  
Education

Presented in Partial Fulfilment of the Requirements  
for the Degree of Master of Arts at  
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## ABSTRACT

### Validating Women's Voices: Five Case Studies that Extend the *Women's Ways of Knowing* Framework to Women Students Over 65 Years of Age

Katharine Silver

The premise of this study is that more needs to be known about women as learners, and that research from a female perspective is needed to explore epistemological perspectives and developmental patterns that may be associated primarily with women. There is a particular need for studies about older women students because they may be doubly stigmatized in a society that exhibits ageist as well as sexist assumptions.

The study seeks to make women's voices more audible in education by validating women's voices in three ways: first, by summarizing and contributing to the growing body of scholarship that is concerned with gender issues in education; second, by exploring a theoretical framework designed by and for women; and third, by attending to the voices of women learners themselves.

The inquiry consists of five case studies of women students aged 65 to 78 who are participants in or recent graduates of a formal educational program. Using the *Women's Ways of Knowing* framework (Belenky et al, 1986) as the organizing principle, it explores how these women view themselves as learners, how their epistemological perspectives evolve, and what meanings they give to their educational experiences.

The research explores the merits of *Women's Way's of Knowing* as a theoretical framework in the context of feminist and adult education thought, extends the theory by applying it to a data set not addressed by the original researchers, validates the voices of older women students, and provides insights that may be helpful to adult educators in designing and implementing programs that are empowering to women students of all ages.



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# **Chapter I**

## **FIELD OF INQUIRY**

### **The Problem Area**

Until recently, scholars in education have largely ignored the study of women, and have considered learning and teaching to be quite independent of gender issues (Gaskell and McLaren, 1987, p. 13). This stance of gender neutrality conceals the androcentric nature of the discipline, and the hidden biases that may result in women feeling alienated in educational environments that regard the male as the norm and the female as "other" (Martin, 1982). Much of the research on psychological and epistemological development has been carried out on male research subjects and the results extrapolated to women (for example, Piaget, 1932; Perry, 1970; Kohlberg, 1981, 1983).

Comparatively little research has explored whether there are particular epistemological perspectives and developmental patterns associated primarily with women. The result is a lack of awareness of the particular assets, liabilities and frustrations that may be found more commonly in women than in men. Eichler and Lapointe contend that, although the eventual aim is for "an effectively integrated vision," there is a need for much more work from a female perspective to counter the androcentrism of our academic disciplines

(1985, p. 19). They stress that one-sex studies that involve only women are legitimate and justifiable in order "to compensate for the many gaps in knowledge, errors and omissions which characterize the social sciences and the humanities" (1985, p. 21). There is a particular need for studies about older women learners because they may be doubly stigmatized in a society that exhibits ageist as well as sexist assumptions (Hall and Sandler, 1982, p. 12).

### **Purpose of the Study**

The overall purpose of the study is to validate women's voices in three ways: first, by summarizing and contributing to the growing body of scholarship that is concerned with gender issues in education; second, by exploring a theoretical framework designed by and for women; and third, by attending to the voices of women learners themselves.

### **Theoretical Framework of Research**

*Women's Ways of Knowing: The Development of Self, Voice, and Mind* (Belenky et al., 1986) builds on William Perry's (1970) male-based model of epistemological development. After carrying out 135 case studies of women from varying ages and backgrounds, the authors group women's learning

perspectives into five major epistemological categories: Silence; Received Knowledge; Subjective Knowledge; Procedural Knowledge, and Constructed Knowledge (p. 15). Belenky and her colleagues also build on Carol Gilligan's influential work on psychological development that identifies a "different voice" associated mostly (although not exclusively) with women. The theme of "voice"—equating voicelessness with powerlessness, and equating the gaining of a "voice" with achieving individuality and control over one's life—links the work of Gilligan and Belenky et al. *Women's Ways of Knowing* is relatively new, but it is already being widely cited, and it may turn out to be as influential in expanding the understanding of women's epistemological development as Gilligan's work has been in contributing to the understanding of women's moral and psychological development.

### **Research Questions**

By applying the *Women's Ways of Knowing* theoretical framework to women 65 and over who are participants in or recent graduates of a formal educational program, this study explores how women see themselves as learners, how their epistemological perspectives evolve, and what meanings they give to their educational experiences in the ongoing framework of their lives.



## **Objectives of the Research**

The objectives of the research are:

1. to explore the merits of the *Women's Ways of Knowing* theoretical framework and to learn more about how to refine the Interview Schedule and the coding criteria;
2. to enrich the theory by extending it to a data set not covered by the original researchers;
3. to validate the voices of older women learners, and, consequently, to provide positive role models of older women to younger women;
4. and to provide insight into women's epistemological perspectives that can serve to guide adult educators in designing and implementing programs that are empowering to women of all ages.

## Chapter II

# LITERATURE REVIEW

### INTRODUCTION

This chapter reviews the new scholarship on women and education, the links between feminist and adult education theories, and describes the *Women's Ways of Knowing* theory.

The new scholarship on women explores epistemology from women's perspectives, ponders women's educational needs and aspirations, and proposes reforms in both theory and practice. The new scholarship on women is interdisciplinary, and is too vast to be covered comprehensively; therefore the literature has been selected to be representative of various feminist perspectives, and includes the works of the pioneers of the 60s and 70s as well as the later scholars who have built on their insights. This scholarship is well known and widely accepted in feminist academic circles, but is relatively unknown in the larger academic community. This body of literature provides the critical perspective that informs the *Women's Ways of Knowing* theory. Its underlying assumptions, rationale for methodology and goals for educational reform are grounded in feminist scholarship and should be seen in this context.

There are some intriguing similarities between feminists' recommendations and those of some adult education theorists. Although *Women's Ways of Knowing* emanates from feminist scholarship, it can also be seen as an adult education theory. Its recommendations have much in common with, for example, Paulo Freire's (1970) ideas on liberatory education and Malcolm Knowles' (1980) conceptualization of andragogy.

The five epistemological perspectives identified by Belenky, Clinchy, Goldberger, and Tarule in *Women's Ways of Knowing: The Development of Self, Voice, and Mind*, the characteristics associated with each perspective, and the common themes that cut across these perspectives are described. Critiques of their work and a report on the authors' subsequent research conclude this literature review.

## THE NEW SCHOLARSHIP ON WOMEN

Presumably, educators and feminists\* share the same goal—they both aim to validate learners and to enhance human potential. But in the past twenty years, feminist teachers and scholars have challenged the structure, the curriculum, the pedagogical practices, and the underlying assumptions of traditional academic institutions. Believing they must start “from the ground up,” they have developed theoretical frameworks as a basis for their analysis of the present situation and their recommendations for redefining education.

### Theoretical Frameworks

Feminist frameworks are systems of ideas and conceptualizations that feminists can use in explaining, justifying, and guiding their actions. A theoretical framework is essential for a thorough understanding of the present situation and the underlying social forces that preserve the status quo (Bunch, 1983, p.249). Without this understanding, women may direct their energies in the wrong direction and make no progress, no matter how much they struggle (Jaggar & Rothenberg, 1978, p. xvi).

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\*There are many definitions of “feminist.” Commonly accepted definitions include “a person who demonstrates a commitment to improving women’s position in society,” (Jaggar & Rothenberg, 1978, p.xii.) and one who thinks that gender is fundamental to the way people interact with each other in both public and private life (Gaskell and McLaren, 1987, pp. 5-6).

Feminist theory is still emerging, and there is no single theoretical framework that is regarded as the "canon." But most would agree with Bunch's contention that feminism is a world view or *gestalt*, not just a laundry list of "women's issues." Bunch, who has written extensively on women's education, contends that a theoretical model for change must contain four inter-related parts: (1) a description of what exists; (2) an analysis of *why* that reality exists; (3) a vision of what *should* exist, and (4) a strategy for change (1983, pp. 250-53). Jaggar & Rothenberg conclude that feminist theorizing should concentrate on improving current institutions that limit women's choices rather than getting mired in abstract speculations about the ultimate nature of liberation. They caution, "We do not find it useful to view each feminist theory as setting up a blueprint for the position of women in some future utopia . . . instead it is a continual process" (1978, p. xvi).

Responding to the oft-heard criticism that feminist theory is not objective and represents a skewing of reality, feminists counter that, "No theory is totally 'objective' since it reflects the interests, values, and assumptions of those who created it" (Bunch, 1983, p. 249). In our society, it is the traditional androcentrism that results in a skewed sense of reality. This androcentrism has many facets; it is in part the mistaking of *male* perspectives for *human* perspectives, and it is frequently unconscious (Ruth, 1980, pp. 6-7).

## Contemporary Perspectives on Women and Education

What do women want from education? There is no one answer to this question. Most feminists believe that education has the potential to improve women's lives, but they differ greatly in their analysis of the problems, their goals and their recommendations for change. Three main perspectives have emerged in the past twenty years: liberal feminism, socialist feminism, and radical feminism. Perreault (1984) has done an excellent summary of their basic tenets.

*Liberal feminism.* For liberal feminists, "the goal is equality of educational *opportunity* as opposed to equality of *result or outcome*" (Perreault, 1984, p. 285). They ask that women be allowed to compete for positions in public and professional life without being hindered by sex discrimination, and they see education as the way for women to gain skills and credentials necessary for career success. Their arguments for the education of women are based heavily on social utility and freedom of choice for individuals. Liberal feminists' criticisms center on the omission of women in the curriculum, sex-role stereotyping and sex bias in classroom interactions. Their recommendations for change address these criticisms. They do not seriously question the fundamental pedagogy, values and structures, and do not challenge social inequity *per se*, but ask that it not be based on factors such as sex or race (Perreault, pp. 285ff). Most

affirmative action studies and reports by status of women committees share this perspective; for example, the 1970 Report of the Royal Commission on the Status of Women in Canada.

***Socialist feminism.*** Socialist (or left) feminists focus on economic and class issues. They do not want equality *with* but liberation *from* capitalistic/patriarchal structures. They reject the liberal feminist idea that equality will be achieved by simply assimilating women into the present institutions. Socialist feminists attribute women's subordination to both the capitalistic/corporate/bureaucratic society with its institutionalized roles of dominance and to "the patriarchy."\* Their rationale for educating women is to prepare them as change agents, and they frequently place gender issues in the "larger" context of transforming class society (Perreault, pp. 285ff). They criticize the ways in which the curriculum and pedagogy support the status quo. They are sympathetic to Freire's (1970) critique of the "banking model" of education (in which the teacher is considered to be the depository of knowledge from whom students make "withdrawals" in much the same way as customers withdraw money from a bank); like Freire, they prefer a "midwife model" of education that is more student-centered and includes student experiences as a basis for learning through problem-solving (Perreault, p. 285ff).

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\* Socialist feminist Heidi Hartman (1979) defines "patriarchy" as "a set of social relations which has a material base and in which there are hierarchical relations between men, and solidarity among them, which enable them to control women" (cited by Perreault, p. 305).

Sociologists Wolpe (1978), MacDonald (1980), and Apple (1984) all proceed from a Marxist-feminist perspective that takes as a "given" that sex and class divisions are interwoven, as are the divisions of patriarchy and capitalism. In their materialist analyses, they address the links between gender relations in the education system and the occupational structures of capitalist societies and assess the implications for social change. But they have little to say about the androcentric construction of knowledge. They do not address the questions of how (or whether) women would construct knowledge differently if they were empowered to do so, or what types of curricula, teaching methods, symbols and classroom interactions they would devise. Dorothy Smith (1975), on the other hand, is a socialist feminist who does critique the ideological structures of knowledge in much the same way as radical feminists.

*Radical feminism.* Radical feminists share the left feminist goal of transforming society through education, but they focus on "the patriarchy"\* rather than both capitalism and patriarchy. Radical feminists (like socialist feminists) criticize the presumed neutrality and objectivity of accepted knowledge and scholarship. They point out that the traditional methodological and conceptual tools disallow women's experience as valid

---

\*A typical radical feminist definition of "patriarchy" is: "a worldview which assumes females inferior and males superior; the multiple ways in which that worldview is institutionalized; and the characteristic ways of viewing and relating to the world, most frequently associated with stereotypic masculinity; e.g., rational, agentic, inexpressive" (Perreault, p.305).



data and prevent women from being able to perceive and name their own experiences. They include lived experience, intuition and imagination as legitimate sources of knowledge. They recommend interdisciplinary perspectives and methods as ways to reduce the fragmentations of traditional compartmentalized scholarship (Perreault, p. 286ff). Much of the newer scholarship on women emerges from this perspective (Martin, 1981, 1982, 1984, 1985; Noddings, 1986; Spender, 1980, 1981, 1985; Schuster & Van Dyne, 1985; Culley and Portuges, 1985; and Treichler et al., 1985).

Of course, the above is a schematic description that ignores the contradictions, combinations and sub-strands of thought that occur within a fluid, changing movement. In short, liberal feminists want women to have a bigger piece of the pie, while socialist and radical feminists want to change the whole recipe! Because feminists embrace this multiplicity of perspectives, they have no single answer to the question: What is a good education for women?

### **Conflicting Models of Education for Women**

The dilemma of education for women in the twentieth century is that the "ideal" has alternated between two extremes:

1. the idea that women need a separate special education to suit them for traditional female roles; and

2. the idea that women should have exactly the same education as men (Howe, 1984).

The first model recognizes that women are different from men, but assumes that to be different is to be subordinate. The second assumes that women are equal to and the same as men, but it negates the real differences and obscures the reality of women's lives by ignoring female experience and cultural production (Elliott, 1985, p. 48).

The first model fashions an education specifically for women. Its student-centered curriculum with its emphasis on personal integrity and community responsibility encourages women to grow, to gain self respect, and to fit the social roles available to them. But lacking a feminist perspective, this education serves to perpetuate women's subordination in society by limiting them to traditional roles (Elliott, p. 48). Longino has observed that the single-sex classroom is an excellent place in which to disabuse women students of the idea that their reasoning skills are inadequate or inferior to those of men. "Here, they come to have respect for themselves and one another as thinkers that I have seldom seen in mixed-sex classrooms" (1985, p. 190).

The second model encourages women to "think like a man" and "act like a man." Longino calls this a *remedial* model, where women's differences from men are minimized and those that remain are seen as impediments to be shed by women in their search for *remedial masculinity*. This is

embodied in the "men's curriculum" found even in prestigious women's colleges (p. 195).

Howe (1982, 1984) has pointed out the contradictions and limitations inherent in both these models and has joined other scholars in searching for an alternative that challenges male hegemony. Elliott concludes that an education for diversity *and* equality is the challenge facing institutions (p.49), and Martin has caused consternation among philosophers of education by insisting that the whole philosophy of liberal education needs a thorough re-examination if it is to serve the needs of both men and women students (1982, pp. 146-148).

### **Is Coeducation an Equal Education?**

In contemporary Canadian society, the second model is the prevalent one. Most women attend coeducational institutions, and have equal access to these institutions. Therefore, it is generally assumed they are receiving an equal education.

Feminists warn this is misleading because the impact of male control of educational policy is pervasive, ranging from setting standards and determining what constitutes excellence, to decreeing which content is valued and which is not (Spender, 1981a). In reality, "the content of education itself validates men even as it invalidates women" (Rich, 1979a, p.238). The

disciplines themselves are androcentric, and women are perceived as peripheral to men, as "the objects rather than the originators of inquiry" (Rich, 1979b, p.135). Similarly, Martin claims that education discriminates against women students because the "ideal" educated person is initiated into a male cognitive perspective:

the intellectual disciplines into which a person is initiated to become an educated person *exclude* women and their works, *construct* the female to the male image of her, and *deny* the truly feminine qualities she does possess (1981, p. 101).

Citing an extensive longitudinal study of student development by Astin (1977), Hall and Sandler (1982) conclude that women's experiences may differ considerably from those of men even when they attend the same institutions, share the same classrooms, and work with the same advisors:

even though men and women are presumably exposed to common liberal arts curriculum and other educational programs during the undergraduate years, it would seem that these programs serve more to preserve, rather than to reduce, stereotypic differences between men and women in behavior, personality, aspirations and achievement.

Hall and Sandler identify a wide range of overt and subtle faculty behaviors that can create a "chilly classroom climate." For example, when teachers indicate, even subtly, that women's career aspirations are not as important as men's, and when they either single out or ignore women because of their sex, women's self confidence about their abilities is undermined and their development hindered (1982, p. 2). A "chilly classroom climate" can impede women's development by: discouraging classroom

participation; preventing students from seeking help outside of class; causing students to drop certain classes or to switch majors; and dampening career aspirations (p. 3).

Kirschner et al. studied gender issues at a small coeducational liberal arts college, and their results contradicted the confirmed wisdom that the college was providing an equal education for women and men with its single curriculum. They found that women were getting a different education from men both in and outside the classroom, in course and program selection, extra-curricular activities and in leadership participation (1985, pp. 30-47).

When women enter mainstream institutions, little or no attention is paid to whether they have preferred learning styles. Melamed & Devine addressed the question of women and learning style through an exploratory gender study of Kolb's Learning Style Inventory, and their results indicated a difference in preferred learning styles among women and men. Women scored higher at the concrete, and men higher at the abstract, end of the continuum. They concluded that "since more women than men seem to prefer a learning style which is concrete, connected, and experience-based, we need to better understand the consequences for women (and other minority groups) in educational settings where abstract conceptual learning styles are so highly rewarded" (1986, pp. 14-15).

Bunch notes that "many women have difficulty both in systematically pursuing thoughts and in believing that what they think makes a difference"

(1983, p. 256). She ascribes this difficulty to the general belief that what women think is not important, and therefore they are not encouraged to think systematically and analytically. Also, women's fear of theory can be accounted for by the way it is presented as abstract and esoteric rather than as something with practical consequences for one's life (p. 256).

### **Themes of "Voice" and "Silencing"**

The themes of women's "voice" and the "silencing" of women's voices in coeducational institutions appear throughout the literature. The recurrence of these themes epitomizes women's difficulties in finding their own voice, articulating it, and having it validated. Gilligan's influential work has inspired educational theorists to extrapolate her theory of psychological development to the epistemological development of women. Gilligan identified "two ways of speaking about moral problems, two modes of describing the relationship between the self and other" (1982, p. 1) The "different voice" she describes in her book *In A Different Voice* is associated more commonly, but not exclusively, with women. She stresses that the relationship is not absolute, and she makes no claim that the difference is biologically determined. She emphasizes that this voice is identified not by gender but by theme (1982, p. 2; 1986, p. 327). Gilligan thinks the way

people talk is important because it encodes the way they see themselves and the world, and influences the way they act:

Among the most pressing items on the agenda for research on adult development is the need to delineate *in women's own terms* the experience of their adult life. . . . My research suggests that men and women may speak different languages that they assume are the same, using similar words to encode disparate experiences of self and social relationships. Because these languages share an overlapping moral vocabulary, they contain a propensity for systematic mistranslation, creating misunderstandings which impede communication and limit the potential for cooperation and care in relationships (1982, p.173).

Women are at a disadvantage in college and university settings because the valued patterns of speech are more often found in men than in women speakers; e.g., highly assertive speech, impersonal and abstract styles often incorporating the generic "he"), and competitive "devil's advocate" exchanges. These are equated with intelligence and authority. Some women feel uncomfortable in adopting this "masculine" way of talking. Equally important, women's own verbal and nonverbal communication may incorporate features—hesitation, questioning intonation, a deferential politeness—that are devalued in the traditionally masculine academic context (Hall and Sandler, 1982, p. 9; Mackie, 1983, pp. 223-24; Ayim, 1987, pp. 418-30; Richardson, 1988 pp. 16-34). In fact, it is often taken for granted by both faculty and students that men will usually dominate discussion in college classrooms and that women students are less likely to speak up in coeducational than in single-sex settings (Hall and Sandler,

1982, p. 7). Adrienne Rich eloquently describes this theme of voice as it appears in the classroom:

Listen to the voices of the women and the voices of the men; observe the space men allow themselves, physically and verbally, the male assumption that people will listen, even when the majority of the group is female. Look at the faces of the silent, and of those who speak. Listen to a woman groping for language in which to express what is on her mind, sensing that the terms of academic discourse are not her language, trying to cut down her thought to the dimension of a discourse not intended for her (1979a, pp. 243-44).

But surely, with all the raised consciousness, the directives, the status of women commissions, committees and ombudspersons, this dynamic is a relic of the past? It seems not. In a recent study, a female student and male professor collaboratively analyzed the process of "silencing" as it occurred in a 1985 graduate seminar that was designed to explore the relationship between language and power. They report that, in spite of the professor's sensitivity to gender and his overt attempts to intervene, the male and female interactions and dominance relations were similar to those described above (Lewis and Simon, 1986, pp. 457-72).

"Voice" and "silence" are not the only metaphors that express women's sense of alienation in academia. There are also metaphors that relate to "cold vs. warmth" and "outsiders vs. insiders." Hall and Sandler report that the college climate, both inside and outside the classroom, is a "chilly" one for women (1982, 1984). Sandler updates her previous "emotional temperature-taking" in *The Campus Climate Revisited: Chilly for Women*



*Faculty, Administrators, and Graduate Students.* She concludes the warming trend, if any, is proceeding with glacial slowness. Women still find the campus a less supportive environment than their male colleagues do because of a lack of awareness, knowledge, and interest in their concerns (1986, p. 17). (See Richardson, 1988, for an up-to-date sociological perspective on the dynamics of sex and gender in the classroom.) In *Women of Academe: Outsiders in the Sacred Grove*, an in-depth study of more than 60 women who aspire to work as professionals in academia, the interviewees describe their feelings of alienation and their experiences of professional marginalization, exclusion from the centers of authority, and lack of validation (Aisenberg & Harrington, 1988).

Conversely, positive articles in the popular press sometimes give the impression that women's problems are solved. An "upbeat" feature article on women engineering students at Ecole Polytechnique in Montreal, "The New Engineers: They don't talk feminism—they live it" (*Gazette*, September 29, 1990) minimized the alienating effects of sexist comments from male students. Two female students responded to this article, ("Women engineers still handicapped," *Gazette*, October 7, 1990). They criticized the article for perpetuating the myth that women can "go it alone," and that increasing numbers will solve the problems, rather than addressing the difficulties women face. In this "good news story," women's perceived need to "fit in" by not asserting themselves as women and their refusal to confront blatant

sexism because of their fear of alienating male students is not seen as a problem.

Does it matter if women's authentic voices are not heard and are not validated? Indeed it does matter, because it deprives women of "the essential basis for developing among ourselves the discourse out of which symbolic structures, concepts, images, and knowledge might develop which would be adequate to our experiences" (Smith, 1975, p. 366). Castillo claims that "to be fully conscious, a woman needs to be able to formulate her thoughts in words" (1973, p. 55). She says that most women do not even realize how little they express their true selves; "they talk in slogans and adopt man's principles without his flexibility. . . . Curiously, the more educated they are the less they seem to be aware of this fact" (pp. 55-56). Martin perceives that when women's voices are missing, everyone loses because:

When women have no place in educational thought, policy suffers, the society's devaluation of women's lives, works and experience is reinforced, and also the field of educational thought itself is diminished (1984, p.344).

### **Redefining Education to Validate Women's Voices**

Is coeducation *per se* inadequate for or harmful to women? Are females intrinsically different than males? Should women be educated in the

“caring” and men in the “rational” virtues? Is an education of the intellect a harmful one for women?

While the earlier scholarship raised these questions and pointed out the limitations of traditional education and the possible harmful effects on women, the later scholarship articulates new visions of what a redefined education could be (Langland and Gove, 1983; Code et al., 1988; Forman et al. 1990).

The new research suggests that the goal of teaching women to “think like a man” so as to compete successfully in a “man’s world” is an inadequate one. Longino would replace this “remedial” model with a more inclusive model that would empower women by teaching them not only how to overcome dependency and lack of competitiveness, but to value their sense of responsibility and concern for others and their cooperative qualities (1985, pp. 189-96). Rich has persistently sought alternatives to an education that trains women to “think like a man”:

To think like a woman in a man’s world means thinking critically, refusing to accept the given, making connections between facts and ideas which men have left unconnected. It means remembering that every mind resides in a body; remaining accountable to female bodies in which we live; constantly retesting given hypotheses against lived experience (1979b, p. 245).

Rich does not believe in pampering women students. She takes women students seriously, has faith in their abilities, and believes in setting high standards:

We can refuse to accept passive, obedient learning and insist upon critical thinking. We can become harder on our women students, giving them the kinds of "cultural prodding" that men receive, but on different terms and in a different style. . . . We need to keep our standards very high, not to accept a woman's preconceived sense of her limitations; we need to be hard to please, while supportive of risk-taking, because self-respect comes only when exacting standards have been met (1979b, p. 244).

An alternative to contemporary education is one that offers women and men equal access to the same curriculum, and at the same time ensures that the curriculum is not limited to male-defined values and concerns (Kirschner et al., 1985). Martin proposes a *gender-sensitive* ideal; that is, one that takes sex or gender into account when it makes a difference and ignores it when it does not. She rejects the supposedly egalitarian *gender-neutral* model which is presently the norm, because of the sexism inherent in the larger society:

In a society in which traits are genderized and socialization according to sex is commonplace, an educational philosophy that tries to ignore gender in the name of equality is self-defeating. Implicitly reinforcing the very stereotypes and unequal practices it claims to abhor, it makes invisible the very problems it should be addressing (1985, p. 195).

Martin proposes the following as essential first steps in transforming education:

1. Examine the "hidden curriculum" of schooling to expose hidden assumptions that result in denigration of women's tasks, traits, and social roles.

2. Integrate feminist scholarship into all levels of schooling and into informal educational settings.
3. Build an "ethics of care" and a valuation of nurturing capacities into the curriculum so they become overarching goals in the same way as the goals of rationality and autonomy are at the present time.

Martin sees these three steps, not as endpoints, but merely as *prerequisites* in transforming education, and she readily admits that she has not worked out the details of how these would be brought about in the classroom. If carried out, they would result in radical changes in teaching, learning, school structures and perhaps even in a transformation of our ideas on what it is to be "masculine" or "feminine" (Martin, 1985, pp. 196-98).

Philosopher Nel Noddings argues for an educational ethics based on caring and connectedness to others. She describes it as a "feminine" view, not in the sense that it is limited to women, but "feminine" in the classical sense—meaning rooted in receptivity, relatedness and responsiveness" (1984, p. 2). She is not implying that "logic" is unimportant or alien to women, but she envisions an alternative to the present philosophy of education as "one that begins with the moral attitude or longing for goodness and not with moral reasoning" (p. 2). An education that promotes an "ethics of caring" would value both affective and cognitive learning. This education would be for boys as well as girls, so the "nurturing" virtues would no longer be consigned solely to females, but would be an overarching goal for everyone

(pp. 171ff). Although Noddings claims her proposals are merely "illustrative" and an "invitation to dialogue," (p. 200), she goes further than Martin in working out details of far-reaching changes in educational structures, curriculum, and pedagogy.

### **Implications for Men**

Far from embodying a "reverse chauvinism," feminists are concerned with validating men as well as women. Eichler defines feminism as a form of humanism in that feminism seeks to grant dignity to both women and men:

A sexist humanist is not a humanist at all—it is a contradiction in terms. A sexist man cannot be a humanist, since to the degree that we deny the humanity of our fellow beings we lose that part of humanity ourselves. . . . (1980, p. 144).

Feminist scholars are concerned that an education that disempowers women is detrimental to men as well. Martin thinks the present education "is inadequate for men as well as women, and that its inadequacy for men is intimately connected to the injustice it does women" (1981, p. 97); therefore, education must change radically if boys and girls are to achieve their potential (1985, pp. 196-97). Similarly, in Rich's visualization of a "woman-centered" university, "a by-product of such a shift in priorities will mean an increase in intellectual challenges for those men who will come to realize how the man-centered culture has limited their development" (1979b, p. 128).

In the same vein, Hall and Sandler conclude that an education that denigrates women either subtly or overtly may hamper men's ability to relate to women as equals in the larger world of work and family (1982, p. 2).

### **Feminist Pedagogy and Curriculum Transformation**

The efforts of feminists to transform pedagogy and curriculum have led to a debate about whether the new scholarship on women should be a separate discipline or should be integrated into the "malestream"\* disciplines (Bowles and Klein, 1983; Bunch and Pollack, 1983). The "separatists" argue that cooperative, contextual and interdisciplinary feminist scholarship can only arise and flourish in supportive Women's Studies enclaves where a like-minded community of committed scholars is not preoccupied with fighting male structures. "Integrationists," on the other hand, argue that feminist scholarship must develop alongside, enter into, and transform the disciplines; otherwise, Women's Studies will be marginalized and most students will continue in "Men's Studies." Most agree that the ultimate goal is not to continue with two versions of knowledge, male and female, but to develop a new synthesis that is richer for incorporating both male and female perspectives (Spanier et al., 1984; Treichler et al., 1985; Gaskell and McLaren, 1987). But much more work from a female

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\*A term coined by Mary O'Brien (1981, p. 232).

perspective will be needed in order to counter the androcentrism of our academic traditions, before "an effectively integrated vision" is achieved (Eichler and Lapointe, 1985, p.19).

### **What Does a Feminist Pedagogy Look Like?**

Feminist pedagogy is characterized by an innovative and spontaneous approach. In a feminist classroom, one is apt to find group projects, small-group discussions, student-directed study, credit for social change activities or for life experience, learning contracts or self-grading, diaries, and journals. There is an acceptance, even encouragement, of the personal/affective element in learning, and a warm relationship among persons in the class is fostered. "Feminist teachers are no longer at pains to maintain the manly aura of distance," and they often seek alternatives to the traditional student/teacher dichotomy (Ruth, 1980, p. 15). (For an elaboration of feminist pedagogy, see Schniedewind, 1983, pp. 261-71; and Maher, 1985, pp. 29-48.)

### **Curriculum Transformation**

The explosion of scholarship on women in the past two decades has led to a serious re-examination of the curriculum by faculty and administrators



in almost every discipline. The earlier critique that concentrated on identifying sexist, racist, and class biases has evolved into efforts to transform the curriculum by incorporating interdisciplinary and multicultural perspectives. We can begin to identify how feminist insights have introduced research questions that interact with classroom practice to bring about curriculum change (Schuster and Van Dyne, 1985, pp. 5-13).

### **Charting the Change Process**

Schuster and Van Dyne's excellent overview of the evolution of curriculum change highlights the major characteristics of a six-stage change process, from the pre-1960s curriculum to a future transformed "balanced" curriculum. This conceptualization illustrates how a particular set of epistemological questions and assumptions affects the pedagogical methodology used and the eventual educational outcome (See Figure 1). Typically, teachers move through this sequence of stages, trying a variety of strategies that correspond roughly to these six stages. But it is important to note that the stages themselves have fluid boundaries, and teachers do not necessarily follow them in a strictly linear progression. Schuster and Van Dyne concede that the "transformed" curriculum is an "ideal" and will take time to realize (p. 26).

STAGES	QUESTIONS	INCENTIVES	MEANS	OUTCOME
1. Invisible women	Who are the truly great thinkers/actors in history?	Maintaining "standards of excellence"	Back to basics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Pre-1960s exclusionary core curriculum</li> <li>• Student as "vessel"</li> </ul>
2. Search for missing women	Who are the great women, the female Shakespeares, Napoleons, Darwins?	Affirmative action/compensatory	Add to existing data within conventional paradigms	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• "Exceptional" women on male syllabus</li> <li>• Student's needs recognized</li> </ul>
3. Women as disadvantaged, subordinate group	Why are there so few women leaders? Why are women's roles devalued?	Anger/Social justice	Protest existing paradigms but within perspective of dominant group	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• "Images of women" courses</li> <li>• "Women in politics"</li> <li>• Women's Studies begins</li> <li>• Links with ethnic, cross-cultural studies</li> <li>• Women-focused courses</li> <li>• Interdisciplinary courses</li> <li>• Student values own experience</li> </ul>
4. Women studied on own terms	What was/is women's experience? What are differences among women? (attention to race, class, cultural difference)	Intellectual	Outside existing paradigms: develop insider's perspective	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Beginnings of integration</li> <li>• Theory courses</li> <li>• Student collaborates in learning</li> </ul>
5. Women as challenge to disciplines	How valid are current definitions of historical periods, greatness, norms for behavior? How must our questions change to account for women's experience, diversity, difference?	Epistemology	Testing the paradigms Gender as category of analysis	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reconceptualized, inclusive core</li> <li>• Transformed introductory courses</li> <li>• Empowering of student</li> </ul>
6. Transformed, "balanced" curriculum	How can women's and men's experience be understood together? How do class and race intersect with gender?	Inclusive vision of human experience based on difference and diversity, not sameness and generalization	Transform the paradigms	

Figure 1. Stages of Curriculum Change

Reprinted from "Stages of Curriculum Transformation" by Marilyn R. Schuster and Susan R. Van Dyne. In *Women's Place in the Academy*, 1985, p. 16.

Can you start from *Go* and land on *Boardwalk* without *Going to Jail*?

Schuster and Van Dyne caution that you cannot bypass stages:

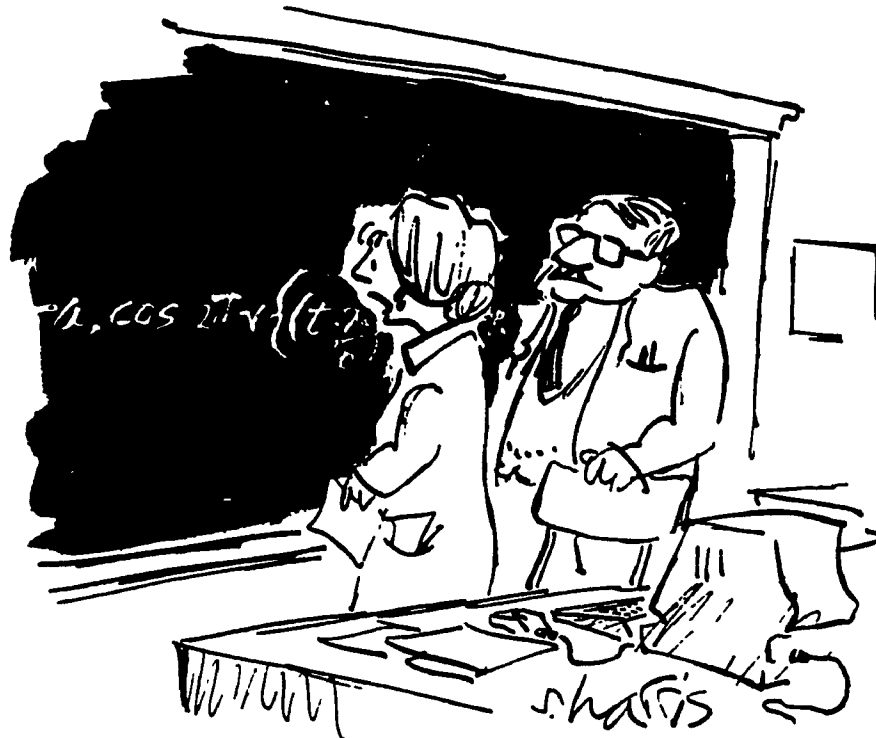
It would be a mistake of monumental proportions to believe that we can do without or bypass women-focussed study in the name of the greater good of the transformed or "gender-balanced" curriculum (p. 27).

They say the vital work of stage four, studying women in their own terms, is essential because it generates the transformative questions that stimulate the change process and provide data for alternative paradigms (p. 27).

### **How Influential is the New Scholarship on Women?**

Some feminists declare that the explosion of new scholarship on women has changed the face of academic work, and others fear it has been largely ignored. (For a range of assessments, see Spender, 1981; Langland and Gove, 1983; DuBois et al., 1985.)

One indicator of its acceptance is the amount of attention the ideas receive in the scholarly journals. Ridicule is an effective way to trivialize unorthodox ideas that may be threatening to the status quo. So when *Physics Today* prints a rather ambiguous cartoon that ridicules women's approach to the scientific method, one can either denounce it as sexist and unenlightened, or marvel that feminist methodologies are sufficiently acknowledged (and feared?) to be given precious page space! (See Figure 2). Actually, some women wrote letters to the editor denouncing the cartoon



"IT'S AN EXCELLENT PROOF, BUT IT LACKS WARMTH AND FEELING."

Figure 2.

Reprinted from *Physics Today*, April 1990.

as sexist (December, 1990). The cartoonist responds that "my wife did not consider it objectionable "\*

A survey of fifty leading journals provides some concrete data on the degree to which the new scholarship on women has infiltrated the disciplines. DuBois et al. surveyed a sample of ten leading American journals in each of the five fields of anthropology, education, history, literature, and philosophy. They found a small but definite rise in the amount of research published on gender issues between 1966 and 1980. Figure 3 shows the number of articles printed. Figure 4 is really a better indicator because it shows the percentage of articles devoted to gender issues (1985, pp. 173-174).

While the general trend in all of the disciplines surveyed is toward increasing receptivity, there is a considerable variation among the disciplines. In education, there is a striking increase in the *number* of articles, but the *percentage* of articles is less encouraging. Furthermore, the figures are misleading because of the tendency of *educational psychology* journals to run research on women; most *other* educational journals either ignore women's concerns entirely or run a special issue on the topic without publishing follow-up research. DuBois et al. say:

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\*Personal correspondence.

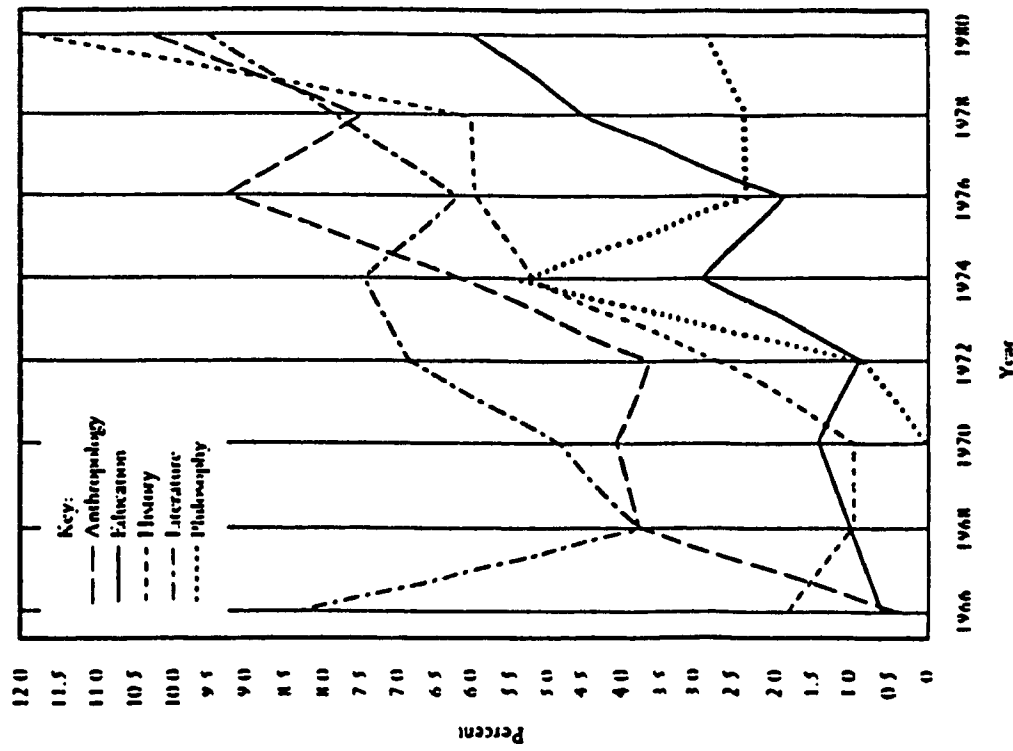


Figure 4. Percentage of Articles on Gender Issues in Journals of Various Disciplines

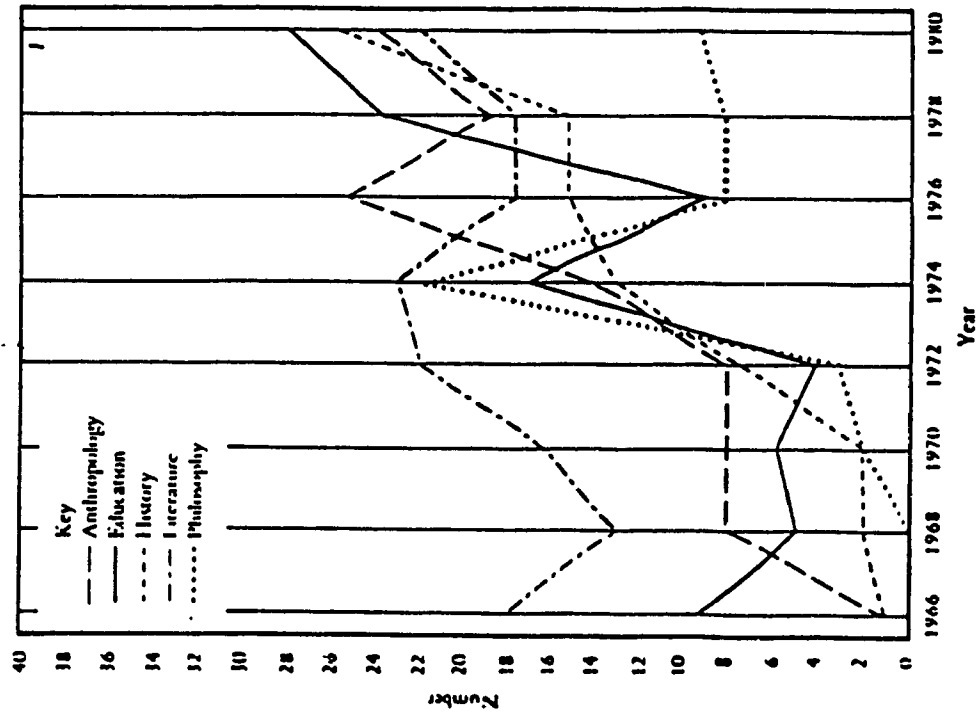


Figure 3. Number of Articles on Gender Issues in Journals of Various Disciplines

Reprinted from *Feminist Scholarship: Kindling in the Groves of Academe*. Dubois et al., 1985, pp. 173-174.

the disciplinary journals in education are more ambivalent toward research on women and women's issues than those of the other disciplines we surveyed. This ambivalence translates into token special issues, not into sustained consideration (p. 176).

In Canada, Gaskell and McLaren document a corresponding lack of attention to gender issues in education, relative to other fields. They cite the Social Sciences Federation of Canada's 1986 report on sexism; it indicates that education is less likely than other fields to show concern about the place and role of women in professional and scientific activity. Significantly, the prestigious *Canadian Journal of Education* has published fewer articles on women over the past five years than the leading Canadian journals in such related fields as history, sociology and psychology (Gaskell and McLaren, 1987, p. 14).

An analysis of *published* research, of course, does not tell the whole story. It does not indicate how much work is submitted and rejected, or how much work is not even submitted to mainstream publications because of the belief that it will be rejected. The "gatekeepers" who make decisions on who gets published play an active role in shaping a discipline, and they can effectively inhibit research that challenges mainstream orthodoxies (Spender, 1981b, pp. 186ff).

## **RELATIONSHIP OF THE NEW SCHOLARSHIP ON WOMEN TO ADULT EDUCATION THEORIES**

While a detailed examination of the similarities and differences between feminist and adult education theories is outside the scope of this literature review, the subject is a complex and fascinating one. There tend to be two separate "discourse communities" working in isolation from one another, despite common concerns. Like feminists, adult educators have historically played important roles in movements for social justice and reform (Miles, 1990, p. 249); like feminists, they seek new relationships between learners and teachers, and new methodologies and curricula that will empower learners to take more control over their own lives (Boud and Griffin, 1987). Feminist theory has been enriched by Freire's (1970) "liberatory" education for adults, with its emphasis on "conscientization" of learners (comparable to feminist "consciousness-raising"), and Freire's conceptualization of the "midwife" vs. the "banking" model of education.

### **Adult Education and Andragogy**

Although there is no universally accepted definition of the term "adult education," Darkenwald and Merriam make the distinction that *preparatory schooling* prepares people for life whereas *adult education* helps people to



live more successfully (1982, p. 9). As yet, there is no single conceptual framework agreed upon by all adult educators, but there is much effort going into developing a coherent body of theory on which to build practice. Knowles popularized the concept of *andragogy*, which he originally defined as the art and science of helping adults learn (as opposed to *pedagogy*, the art and science of teaching children). He later came to see these as complementary models and “probably most useful when seen not as dichotomous but rather as two ends of a spectrum” (1980, p. 43). Knowles’ basic concepts of andragogy are that: (1) adults desire and work towards self-directedness as they mature; (2) experiential learning techniques are powerful; (3) programs should be sequenced according to learners’ readiness to learn and be organized around “life applications” categories; and (4) adults wish to apply newly acquired knowledge immediately (pp. 43-44).

Adult educators speak of “facilitating adult learning” rather than “teaching students.” Brookfield, building on Knowles’ conceptualization, identifies six central principles of effective practice in facilitating learning as: voluntary participation, mutual respect, collaborative spirit, praxis, critical reflection and self-direction (1987, pp. viii-ix). The assumptions, objectives, and learning strategies of andragogy have much in common with feminist pedagogies outlined earlier in this chapter—the difference is, they do not contain a gender analysis.

## **Mezirow's *Perspective Transformation***

Mezirow's theory of *perspective transformation* was inductively derived from a national study of women participating in college re-entry programs. After extensive interviews with women, he theorized that the existential challenges of adulthood result in people altering their ideas about themselves and their world. Mezirow defines "perspective transformation" as:

the emancipatory process of becoming critically aware of how and why the structure of psycho-cultural assumptions has come to constrain the way we see ourselves and our relationships, reconstituting this structure to permit a more inclusive and discriminating integration of experience and acting upon these new understandings (1981, p. 6).

Mezirow thinks adults have a natural tendency to move toward new perspectives which appear to be more inclusive, discriminating and integrative of experience in order to make sense out of discordant experiences (p. 7). He concludes that:

if adult education is to be understood as an organized effort to facilitate learning in the adult years, it has no alternative but to address the distinctive learning needs of adults pertaining to perspective transformation (p. 13).

Mezirow's "perspective transformations" are remarkably similar to the "learning perspectives" in *Women's Ways of Knowing*. His study was with women, (and the results extrapolated to men, for a change!). He reports that women's perceptions change when they start questioning stereotypical

women's roles, but he does not make a specific gender analysis or question whether "perspective transformation" might take a different form in men.

### **Adult Education as Emancipatory Education for Women**

Historically, adult education has concerned itself with inequality, but has largely confined itself to class inequalities; only in the past decade has it begun to address gender issues. The relationship between adult education/training and women is complex, and feminists have only begun to explore its implications (Gaskell and MacLaren, 1987, p. 306). Thompson sees potential in adult education as liberatory for women because of its relative freedom from academic restraints, its rhetoric about flexibility, personal growth, and non-hierarchical structures, and emphasis on linking knowledge to action. These ideologies make a good "fit" with the women's movement, and can serve as models for feminist studies (1983, pp. 114-20). Warren concludes regretfully that gender inequities in Canadian society that had seemed to be remediable through educational programs have remained relatively intractable. She contends that adult education researchers should re-examine current research models and the epistemological assumptions of these models if we are to increase understanding of the effects of gender, class, and race upon educational programming (1987, p. 39), because:

Until we can make systemic changes for women, based on new knowledge pertaining to the real educational and learning needs of women, as practitioners and educators we are but perpetuating inequity for successive cadres of female clients (p. 40).

In her recent essay, "Women's Challenge to Adult Education," Angela Miles demonstrates how the field can be enriched by an analysis of gender relations. Her excellent bibliography is an indication of the extent of the links between feminist and adult education theory and practice (1990, pp. 247-75).

**WOMEN'S WAYS OF KNOWING: THE DEVELOPMENT  
OF SELF, VOICE, AND MIND**

**Introduction**

*Women's Ways of Knowing: The Development of Self, Voice, and Mind* (1986) was written collaboratively by Mary Field Belenky, Blythe McVicker Clinchy, Nancy Rule Goldberger and Jill Mattuck Tarule, four psychologists who specialize in the study of intellectual, ethical and psychological development in adults and adolescents.\* They describe five different epistemological perspectives from which women view the world, the ways in which women's self-concepts and ways of knowing are intertwined, how families and schools both promote and hinder women's development, and they make suggestions for change.

In stating that the purpose of their study was to identify "the ways of knowing that women have cultivated and learned to value, ways we have come to believe are powerful but have been neglected and denigrated by the dominant ethical ethos of our time" (p. ix), they clearly align themselves with those who want to reshape education to make women's voices more audible. They situate their work "in a larger context of feminist theory about voice

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\*For the sake of brevity, the authorship is frequently referred to as "Belenky et al." This is especially regrettable in a feminist collaborative effort, and apologies are due to Clinchy, Goldberger and Tarule.

and silence" (p. 19),\* and they suggest that their special contribution to the discourse is their intensive case study work, which "put[s] flesh and bones on theory by tracking in individual lives the ideological perspectives laid out by others" (p. 19).

### **Background of *Women's Ways of Knowing* Study**

The impetus for the study was the authors' concern that current education is not empowering to women. They began the project in the late 1970s because they observed that women often feel alienated in academic settings, doubt their intellectual competence, and have difficulty expressing themselves in public and being listened to (p. 4). The study incorporates ideas from Miller (1976), Ruddick (1977), Chodorow (1978), and Noddings (1984). It builds explicitly on Gilligan's (1982) work on psychological development that identifies a "different voice"—associated mostly, although not exclusively, with women. The theme of "voice"—equating voicelessness with powerlessness, and the gaining of a "voice" with achieving individuality and control over one's life—links the work of Gilligan and Belenky et al.

Their theoretical framework owes much to William Perry's influential model of cognitive development. In *Forms of Intellectual and Ethical Development in the College Years* (1970), Perry and his colleagues analyze

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\*Their bibliography includes many of the authors mentioned in this literature review.

the epistemological development of Harvard students as they move through their undergraduate years. Perry's hierarchical developmental model consists of nine epistemological *positions* that students typically adopt. In Position 1, *dualism*, students see the world and the field of knowledge in polarized terms of "we-right-good" vs. "other-wrong-bad." They are passive learners, who expect teachers to "spoonfeed" them and provide the "right" answers. As they progress through their college years, they move through positions of *multiplicity* and *relativism* where they learn to accommodate diversity of opinion and uncertainty about the nature of "truth" and "real facts." Hopefully, by graduation they arrive at the position of *commitment in relativism*, at which point they affirm their identity by making personal commitments, while realizing that absolute certainty is impossible. As Perry puts it: "The student experiences the affirmation of identity among multiple responsibilities and realizes Commitment as an ongoing, unfolding activity through which he expresses his [sic] life style" (pp. 9-10).

Although a few women were included in Perry's original study, only the interviews with men were used in illustrating his development scheme. Subsequent analysis found that women conformed to the patterns of male students. Belenky et al. point out that although this shows what women might have in common with men, it ignores themes that might be more prominent among women. They state that their aim is to fill that gap by developing a woman-centered version: "Our work focuses on what else

women might have to say about the development of their minds and on alternative routes that are sketchy or missing in Perry's version" (1986, p. 9).

### **Methodology**

The study undertaken by Belenky et al. took the form of in-depth, tape-recorded interviews that lasted from two to five hours. The researchers proceeded inductively, stating that, "we wanted to hear what the women had to say in their own terms rather than test our own preconceived hypotheses" (p. 11). They interviewed 135 women of widely varying ages and backgrounds, drawn from nine different colleges and schools (institutions that differed markedly from one another in philosophy, prestige, clientele and locale), and from social service agencies that cater to clients seeking information about parenting and other social roles (pp. 12-13). Like Perry, they asked open-ended questions concerning self-image, relationships, education, decision-making, personal growth and catalysts for change (p. 11).



## Theoretical Framework

Belenky's and her colleagues' analysis of the interviews resulted in the conceptualization of a "grounded theory" that identifies the following five different epistemological *perspectives*:

1. **Silence**, a position in which women experience themselves as mindless and voiceless;
2. **Received knowledge**, in which they see themselves as capable of receiving and reproducing, but not creating knowledge;
3. **Subjective knowledge**, in which they perceive knowledge and truth as being personal, subjectively known or intuited;
4. **Procedural knowledge**, in which they apply "objective" procedures for obtaining knowledge; and
5. **Constructed knowledge**, in which they view all knowledge as contextual, experience themselves as creators of knowledge, and value both subjective and objective strategies for knowing (p. 15).

No doubt anticipating cavils and criticisms, Belenky et al. take pains to acknowledge that: (1) these five ways of knowing are not necessarily fixed, exhaustive or universal categories; (2) that they are abstract or "pure" categories that oversimplify a woman's thought processes; and (3) that similar patterns can be found in men's thinking (p. 15). Their work was for the most part limited to one interview with each woman; therefore, they had

to rely on women's retrospective accounts of growth. They concede that they have not adequately addressed the important questions of why and when women shift from one perspective to another (p. 15).

While their "perspectives" have much in common with Perry's "positions," (they also resemble adult education theorist Mezirow's (1981) "perspective transformation," but no reference is made to his work), Perry's is an unabashedly hierarchical developmental scheme that anticipates *commitment in relativism* as the desired outcome of four years of a Harvard education. But Belenky et al. point out that when the interview subjects have diverse ages, backgrounds and circumstances, "universal developmental pathways are far less obvious" (p. 15). They have eschewed the developmental terms *positions* and *stages* in favour of the egalitarian *perspectives*, stating that, "We leave it to future work to determine whether these perspectives have any stagelike qualities" (p. 15).

### **Reactions to *Women's Ways of Knowing***

*Women's Ways of Knowing* has attracted a good deal of attention, both inside and outside of academia. The authors are constantly being sought out to speak about their work, and many educational conferences, workshops, and seminars have either concentrated specifically on an examination of the theory and its pedagogical potential or have included it as part of their

agenda.\* For example, it has been discussed in Women's Studies courses at Concordia and Carleton universities, the Education program at McGill, and the English literature program at Central Missouri State University. Most dramatically, Ursuline College in Ohio, whose student body consists largely of women returning to school after years of being away from education, has redesigned its humanities program to incorporate the pedagogical recommendations of *Women's Ways of Knowing*.†

Critics contend that, in spite of the authors' disclaimers, *Women's Ways of Knowing* really is a developmental model, and a rather traditional one to boot. They say it is harmful to women because it is divisive, and denigrates women by identifying almost one half of the women interviewed as being only at the midway point in a developmental sequence; it underestimates the power of intuition; and artificially separates thinking and feeling (Stone, 1987). Some claim it ignores the women's movement and the changes Women's Studies courses have made in education (Hoffman, 1986); others think the analysis relies too much on intrapsychic material and lacks a broad political and social analysis (Mednick, 1989, Maroney, 1990). On the other hand, positive reviewers praise the research methodology as soundly based on existing frameworks while remaining congruent with feminist

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\*For example, a public lecture and seminar led by Mary Belenky at Concordia University, May 16 and 17, 1989; panel discussions on gender that focussed on *Women's Ways of Knowing* at the Canadian Association for Adult Education conference in 1988, and at the Society for Teaching and Learning in Higher Education in 1990.

†Personal communication from the Director of the Ursuline Studies Program.

theory, and judge that it may shape new approaches to women's education (O'Neill, 1987). It has also been acclaimed as "the sleeper of the decade," and described as the "Our Minds, Ourselves" that women have been waiting for (analogous to the widely read self-help book *Our Bodies, Ourselves*) (Robb, 1986).

### **Belenky's Response**

Mary Belenky addressed the question of how and whether *Women's Ways of Knowing* is a "stage" model, at a workshop where she was the guest speaker.\* She explained that she and her colleagues could not make developmental claims because, unlike Perry who interviewed year after year, "Ours was a lousy set of questions for development. . . . We listened to life stories and had respect for them as historians, but we only asked developmental questions willynilly." She told the group that the whole discussion of "stages" had given the colleagues the most stress of any topic and had even brought them to tears. She does not believe in Perry's unidirectional assumptions, and thinks that women will inevitably move back and forth across levels, rather than staying always on one track. She stated categorically that, "The notion that it is always onward and upward is bizarre . . . obviously there is regression and fluctuation across levels."

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\*At Concordia University, May 16 and 17, 1989.

Belenky, admitting she is the most developmentalist of her colleagues, says she is perturbed when people say, "Each of these ways is valid." She insists we must look at the social context: in ancient cultures *Received Knowledge* would be a valuable ultimate learning stage, but in our society with its constant social change, the perspectives of *Silence* and *Received Knowledge* result in powerlessness and alienation.

Belenky also spoke of her new research project that will provide good longitudinal developmental data. Called *Listening Partners*, it is an intervention program designed to help "silent" women to "gain a voice." Over sixty socially isolated poor rural Vermont mothers with minimal educations are taking part over a two-year period. Belenky anticipates that those who remain in the program will gain half a stage over those in the control group. She will look at the links between the mothers' epistemological development and their philosophy and practice of mothering, and expects to see congruence in their growth in self-image and their ideas on childrearing.\*

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\*For details on *Listening Partners*, see "Women's Ways of Knowing: A Theory and an Intervention," by Blythe Clinchy and Mary Belenky (1988).

## SUMMARY

It is important to situate *Women's Ways of Knowing* in the context of feminist theory and to consider it as but one thread in the skein of the feminist critique of traditional education. By describing the ways of knowing that women have cultivated and learned to value and the obstacles that women must overcome in developing their minds, Belenky et al. have added to our understanding of women as knowers. The authors base their epistemological theory on 135 case studies; that is a considerable number, but is it enough? Would other groups of women fit so neatly into the five learning perspectives? Does the authors' interview schedule really elicit useful information about how women learn?

Rather than extrapolating their findings too quickly to women in general, it would seem prudent to carry out more research to ascertain whether other groups of women do indeed "fit" the theory, before assessing its implications for teaching and learning. Consequently, my research consists of carrying out additional case studies in order to explore further the relevance of the *Women's Ways of Knowing* epistemological perspectives.

## Chapter III

# THE STUDY

### Introduction

This chapter covers the purpose and focus of my study, the research design used and justification for its choice, sample selection, instrumentation, researcher experience, researcher-respondent relationship, ethical considerations, and procedures for analyzing the data.

#### *Purpose and Focus of Study*

Belenky et al. acknowledge that their work builds on the theoretical frameworks developed by others, but they suggest that their special contribution to the discourse is their intensive case study work that “put[s] flesh and bones on theory by tracking in individual lives the ideological perspectives laid out by others” (1986, p. 19). Similarly, the purpose of *my* study is to “flesh out” *their* work by carrying out additional case studies using their theoretical framework and methodology. Whereas Belenky and her colleagues proceeded inductively—beginning with a collection of data and building theoretical categories and propositions from relationships discovered among the data, I proceeded deductively, hoping to find data that amplify, refine, contradict or verify their theory (Merriam, 1988, pp. 57-58). This

verificative research explores their propositions, and seeks evidence that their findings usefully apply to other data sets (Goetz and LeCompte, 1984, p.4).

The study focusses on older women ("older" in this instance means "*even older than I am!*") who are either participating in, or have recently completed a formal educational program. I limited the study to include only those who are involved in formal study because the research is concerned with epistemological development and many of the interview questions probe recent educational experiences. The women range in age from 65 to 78. I selected this age group because: (1) this is an age group not covered by Belenky et al.; (2) it is an age group that is becoming increasingly important to adult educators as a source of clientele because of the "greying" of the population; (3) it has the potential to provide positive role models of older women; and (4) there is a good researcher-subject "fit," because I am old enough to empathize with the life experiences of women in this age group.

Because of the time-consuming nature of the methodology, my sample was necessarily small. I interviewed seven women from varied educational backgrounds, and wrote up five. Of the five case studies written up, one woman is in a literacy program, one has just completed CEGEP, one is in her final year of an undergraduate degree program, and two have recently completed Bachelor's degrees. Three of the subjects in the original sample were in the CEGEP program at Collège Marie-Victorin. I kept only one of these in the final sample; I dropped the other two because their impressions



of the institution were all very similar and, although their life stories were insightful and interesting in themselves, they did not add anything new to an understanding of the *Women's Ways of Knowing* theory.

### ***Making the Case for the Case Study***

The goal of the case study is to understand a particular case in its idiosyncrasy and complexity. The paradigm has a concept of unity and totality—it seeks an in-depth understanding of phenomena within prescribed borders or limits. The flexibility of the method allows for the surfacing of the unexpected and its integration into the data results, rather than rejection, which tends to happen when anomalous findings occur in quantitative research (Merriam, 1988, pp. 5-16). It is a congenial methodology for feminists because woman-centered research is concerned with phenomena “which cannot readily be abstracted, even conceptually, from the complex, rich and varied world of human experience—phenomena which clearly cannot be simulated in laboratory experiments” (Parlee, cited by Vickers, 1982, p. 35). Because the case study seeks totality and embraces complexity, it avoids the decontextualization that occurs with methodologies that isolate variables by removing them from their individual and social contexts.

Brenner contends that the in-depth interview is the preferred methodology for an examination of human actions in all their richness because the direct communication between researcher and respondent enhances the

subtleties of mutual understanding between the two parties (1985, p. 3). Similarly, Reinharz notes that the life history interview encourages people to impose their own meanings on their own experiences; this gives people a “mouthpiece” and alters the one-sided view of experiences afforded by outsiders (1979, p. 41). She notes also that this reflexive stance exploits self-awareness as a source of insight and discovery (p. 241).

A case study contributes more to naturalistic generalization than to scientific generalization. Naturalistic generalization is a “way of knowing” based on experience—unlike scientific generalization, which relies on induction and experimentation (Stake, 1988, p. 260). Because women’s lived experiences have often been overlooked in traditional scholarship, the case study can be valuable in providing a collaborative methodology that illuminates women’s experiences.

## **Research Design**

### ***Research Procedures***

Like Belenky et al., my research is based primarily on a single, in-depth interview with each subject. However, I did talk to each woman on the telephone both before and after the main interview. The preliminary call gave us an opportunity to become acquainted with each other and to discuss the purpose of the research and the topics we would cover. At the same time, I

asked for permission to tape record the interview, and this was granted unequivocally in every case.

The interviewee selected the site that was most congenial to her; the interview was done in her home or school or in my home. The tape-recorded portion of the interview ran about two hours, and extra time was spent talking leisurely and off-the-record both before and after the recorded portion. This time period seemed adequate; any longer would have led to repetition (and exhaustion of both the topics and the participants!). I made arrangements for a follow-up telephone call, usually about a week after the main interview. Generally, this follow-up interview did not yield much further data; its purpose was to empower the respondent by giving her the opportunity to add to or modify her statements, to ask me questions, and to give me her reactions to the interview process itself. It also gave me the opportunity to thank her for taking part in the research.

The interviews were completed over a period of three months. This seemed a satisfactory time-frame, because it gave me time to reflect on the responses of each respondent, yet the interviews were close enough together that I retained a sense of continuity. I kept a personal journal in which I noted my own reactions to the interviews; these comments served as useful reminders when I was evaluating the data.

### ***Sample Selection***

I located the subjects through networking with friends and colleagues. I wanted to interview women with a variety of educational backgrounds, so, apart from age, that was the only criterion I used in selecting subjects from a number of candidates that were proposed to me. I had no difficulty finding volunteers at the CEGEP and university levels, but I did have difficulty finding a candidate from a literacy program, and I could not locate anyone in a high school program. This is primarily because there are very few older women who take advantage of these educational programs; secondarily, because women in literacy programs are reluctant to be interviewed as they are self-conscious about their lack of verbal and literacy skills. They often wish to protect their privacy: for example, I know of one literacy student whose husband thinks she has been attending an aerobics class for the past year!

Locating interview subjects through personal contacts was an effective method in that it provided a good entrée that made it easy to establish rapport quickly with the subject, because I had been personally recommended by the intermediary as "an o.k. person." It also had the advantage of giving me some advance knowledge of the person to be interviewed. The disadvantage of this selection mechanism is that these subjects may not be typical of older women students in general. For example, the staff at Collège Marie-Victorin recommended several women to me. I assume these are the "best case scenarios;" presumably they would recommend women whom they knew to be

articulate, thoughtful, and academically successful. This would explain why no women in my sample are disenchanting or intimidated learners typifying *Women's Ways of Knowing* "lower" learning perspectives.

### ***Instrumentation***

For the main interview I used the most recent *Women's Ways of Knowing* Interview Schedule, obtained from co-author Blythe Clinchy. This is a flexible instrument with open-ended questions that probe the respondents' epistemological and moral perspectives (see Appendix B). But before launching into the formal instrument, I asked each woman general questions about her background and development. These were informal, unwritten questions, and I followed where the woman led me. This established rapport, gave the woman time to get "warmed up" and become accustomed to thinking and talking about herself, and gave me a context in which to understand her answers to the rather abstract questions in the Interview Schedule. If the respondent covered a topic in the earlier part of the interview that appeared in the formal instrument, I might not address it as fully in this section, but sometimes I did. Although this led to some repetition, it served as a check on the data, by determining whether there was a consistency in the answers or whether new thought emerged. I did not ask every part of every question, but responded to the individual in terms of her interest in pursuing a particular topic. However, I did feel constrained to follow the Interview Schedule fairly meticulously, even

when tempted to explore other avenues, because one purpose of the research is to explore the efficacy of the instrument in data collecting. I often probed the initial answers, asking for examples, amplifications or reasons for answers.

### ***Researcher Experience***

As a radio broadcast-journalist for the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation, I have many years of experience in doing in-depth interviews for radio public affairs documentaries. In that role, I did background research, devised the interview questions, carried out the interview, edited it, wrote continuity and aired the material myself. This experience was invaluable because the procedures are similar to those used in doing ethnographic research. Therefore, I have the facility and confidence that come with experience. Nevertheless, I still approach each interview with both anticipation, because I genuinely like to hear people talk authentically and at length about themselves—and also with trepidation, because each one is a unique and unpredictable interaction between two people. I am always aware that it is an imperfect method of data collection, and I agree with Brenner that “intensive interviewing, as *any* method (in particular the survey interview and the laboratory experiment), in all likelihood will fall short of the ideal of accurate data collection” (1985, p. 161). The big difference between broadcast-journalism and ethnographic research is that the latter takes the process farther by relating observations to a larger body of abstract or theoretical

material, with the goal of generating new generalizations, concepts and propositions (Reece and Siegal, 1986, p. 74). I must admit I am a little uncomfortable in this role, because the first rule of reputable broadcast-journalism is: "Never separate the answer from the question"—obviously, this is to avoid reporting answers out of context.

### ***Researcher-Subject Relationship***

The literature contains conflicting models of researcher-subject relationships, and is rife with concern about interviewer bias. Traditionalists stress that interviewer bias must be avoided at all costs, and they direct the interviewer to assume a non-directive, neutral, yet supportive, stance, and refrain from interjecting his or her own views (Brenner, 1985, p. 157; Howe, 1979, p. 32). But this view is challenged by those who believe that a completely detached observer is a chimera because an interview is an idiosyncratic interaction between two human beings (Goetz and LeCompte, 1984, p. 57); they contend that both participants contribute to a "joint construction of meaning" through their interaction (Mishler, 1986, p. 52). I am inclined to agree with the latter position, and with the observation that "reactivity is not the dreaded mark of researcher incompetence but the likely consequence of living in the social world" (Reinharz, 1979, p. 320).

Taylor and Bogdan advise researchers to create an atmosphere that is relaxed, where the flow of the conversation is largely, though not exclusively

one-sided, and to refrain from making negative judgements. They suggest that:

since informants are expected to open up completely there has to be some exchange in terms of what interviewers say about themselves. It is probably unwise for interviewers to hold back their feelings completely (1984, p. 101).

The search for the "happy medium" is articulated succinctly by Oakley: "The motif of successful interviewing is to 'be friendly, but not too friendly' " (1981, p. 33). She makes a strong case that the difficulties entailed in trying to strike a balance between the warmth required for generating rapport and the detachment necessary to see the interviewee as an object under surveillance are underestimated in the methodology textbooks (pp. 33-36). Mishler notes that in the mainstream social science paradigm the central structuring feature of the interview is a striking asymmetry of power in the researcher-subject relationship. He recommends restructuring the relationship to shift the balance of power in ways that empower the subject. One way to redress the asymmetry of power inherent in the traditional approach to interviewing is by conceptualizing the participants as "research collaborators." He considers this desirable, not only from an ethical point of view, but because interviewing practices that empower respondents tend to produce rich narrative accounts (1986, p. 117-23). I find these arguments persuasive, and they have informed my methodology of interviewing and my conceptualization of the researcher-subject relationship.



## ***Confidentiality***

While empowerment of respondents is an important ethical issue, so also is the related issue of confidentiality. The right to confidentiality of respondents is a shibboleth in the social sciences, and there is an assumption among many researchers that this guarantee of anonymity is more likely to produce candid responses (Mishler, p. 123). But Mishler argues that anthropologists have a different conception of their own and their respondents' roles. Within this perspective, "identification is a way through which members of the culture retain control over, that is, continue to 'own,' their ways of 'naming the world' " (p. 124). Mishler proposes that in some situations respondents should have the "right" to have their views represented as belonging to them, if they so wish. Furthermore, in some situations the assurance of confidentiality does not appear to be in the interests of informants because it parallels and reinforces the decontextualizing effect of the standard interview and the asymmetry of power. Through routine assurance of confidentiality, interviewees are told they will be treated as part of an anonymous mass. Their answers will not be connected to them; they will not be held personally responsible for what they say, nor will they be credited as individuals for what they say and think. Consequently, they are deprived of their own voices (pp. 124-25).

I find this a compelling argument; therefore, I gave my respondents the opportunity to have their contribution acknowledged, *if they so wished*. I asked

each one if she wished to remain anonymous or whether she would like to have her full name acknowledged in the research results. Usually, she asked me what I thought. I pointed out that one purpose of the research is to validate women's voices, to give women an opportunity to tell their own stories and have them attended to by others. I told her that, in my opinion, it is empowering for women to articulate their own positions and to take responsibility for them. It is more of a collaborative research effort when both participants take responsibility and credit for their words, rather than adhering to the lopsided model of the "named" researcher and the anonymous respondent. But I assured each one that the choice was up to her, and I cautioned her that if she thought she would speak more openly if she withheld her name, then I would prefer that she did so. We discussed the issue before the interview, at which point I suggested that she not make up her mind finally until *after* the interview. Of the five case studies I have written up, four of the women preferred to have their names acknowledged; only Rita, the woman in the literacy program, preferred anonymity.

## **Analysis of the Interviews**

Analyzing the data was the most time-consuming part of the research process and in many ways the most difficult. It involved transcribing the interviews, devising a coding instrument, matching the interview data with the coding categories, and interpreting the results.

### ***Transcribing the Interviews***

The first step in data analysis was transcribing all seven interviews verbatim. This was time-consuming because the transcripts ran to as many as seventy pages each. I felt it was important that I do all the transcribing myself because I was the one who could best catch the meanings that were not fully expressed but were left dangling in unfinished, garbled, or overlapping sentences. Transcribing also served to familiarize me with the data and allowed me to catch the nuances of meaning revealed in voice inflection and emphasis. Renewing my acquaintance with the respondent, through spending so much time listening to her voice and typing her words, was time well spent because it clarified a picture of the respondent in my mind, which in turn helped in my contextual analysis of the interview. Fortunately, this was a good experience for me, because all the women I interviewed were articulate, thoughtful, and inspiring.

### ***Identifying Criteria for Coding Categories***

Because Belenky and her colleagues were generating "grounded theory", they had to develop their own coding categories; their data led them to conceptualize five different epistemological perspectives from which women know and view the world. My study, on the other hand, explores whether these five perspectives are identifiable and useful when applied to other case studies; i.e., whether they "fit" the respondents in my study and whether they "work" in providing useful information. Here I am referring to Glaser and Strauss's (1967) argument that key criteria in evaluating theories are whether they "fit" and "work":

By "fit" we mean that the categories must be readily (not forcibly) applicable to and indicated by the data under study; by "work" we mean that they must be meaningfully relevant to and able to explain the behavior under study (cited by Taylor and Bogdan, 1984, p. 126).

A detailed knowledge of which characteristics best represent the various epistemological perspectives is necessary before one can analyze the fit between the data and the five coding categories. The difficulty is that there is no detailed "checklist" provided by Belenky et al. that would cover the gamut of responses one encounters in a semi-structured interview. I consulted the *Women's Ways of Knowing* Coding Manual sent to me by Mary Belenky (see Appendix C). This contains some guidelines, but it is more illustrative than conceptual, and does not provide sufficient detail to do a comprehensive analysis of the interview data. I also consulted a rather daunting 71-page

coding manual that identifies and illustrates seventeen different epistemological combinations of the *Women's Ways of Knowing* developmental scheme (Weinstock, 1989). While both these documents were helpful, they were not sufficient, so I devised my own coding instrument based on criteria excerpted from the book itself.

In the book, *Women's Ways of Knowing*, the authors devote a separate chapter to describing each of the five learning perspectives. Each chapter develops the inter-related themes of self-concept, view of knowledge, attitude toward authority, connection with others, and moral imperatives. It integrates salient quotes from the data into the criteria for that perspective (see my Summary Chart, Figure 5). Therefore, the characteristics that represent these various perspectives are embedded in the narrative, and it is difficult for the coder to know *exactly* which characteristics represent each perspective, especially as there is some overlap between perspectives. Therefore, I had to literally "take apart" each chapter to identify the key characteristics that best represented the various themes discussed in each learning perspective. These are the characteristics I looked for when coding my data. This coding instrument was sufficiently detailed that I could make a comprehensive analysis of where and how my respondents fit the theory (see Appendix D). I acknowledge that this can only be an imperfect representation of the authors' thought and no doubt others would do it differently.

**CHART OF THE CHARACTERISTICS OF THE FIVE WIK PERSPECTIVES**

	<b>SELF- CONCEPT</b>	<b>VIEW OF KNOWLEDGE</b>	<b>ATTITUDE TOWARD AUTHORITY</b>	<b>CONNECTION WITH OTHERS</b>	<b>MORAL IMPERATIVES</b>
<b>PERSPECTIVES:</b>					
<b>SILENCE</b>	Selfless and Voiceless	Inaccessible  Dualistic	External, Powerful, All-knowing, Mysterious, Punitive, Arbitrary	Little or None	External
<b>RECEIVED KNOWLEDGE</b>	Derived from Others	One Right Answer, Absolute, Factual, Interprets Literally	External, Infallible,  Security Blanket	Shapes Perceptions to Match Others'	To be a "Good Girl"
<b>SUBJECTIVE KNOWLEDGE</b>	Values own Voice	"I just know"  Gut Feeling  Experiential	All Authority Internal	Involved  Spontaneous	Quest for Self
<b>PROCEDURAL KNOWLEDGE:</b>	Reasoned Reflection	Impersonal, Rational, Systematic	Respectful of External Authority	Individual- istic, Adversarial	Abstract Principles
<b>Separate Knowing</b>		Multiple Interpretations	Values Expertise	"Doubting Game"	
<b>PROCEDURAL KNOWLEDGE:</b>	Receptive Rationality	Personal and Impersonal	Collaborates with Authority	Empathetic	Care for Others
<b>Connected Knowing</b>				"Believing Game"	
<b>CONSTRUCTED KNOWLEDGE</b>	Integrates Thinking and Feeling	Socially Constructed  Creates Knowledge	Intuition, Reason, and Outside Ex- perts all Authoritative	Collaboration  Intimacy, "Believing Game"	Care for Others, Contextual  Commitment to Action

Prepared by Kathy Silver.

Figure 5.

### ***Applying the Coding Categories***

Before coding each case study, I read the entire transcript carefully to get an overall impression of the woman's thought. Next I did a line-by-line contextual analysis matching salient quotes to the characteristics outlined in the coding sheets. I paid particular attention to the tenses used, noting whether the woman was describing current approaches or referring to former positions that she no longer adheres to. If the position was clearly behind her, then I would not record it as being indicative of her present learning perspective. When I had finished coding, the number of "ticks" showed which perspective or perspectives were most indicative of her current ways of knowing. Then I went quickly over the coding sheets, marking asterisks beside characteristics which "jumped out" at me. This subjective and impressionistic method of analysis served as a check on the data and gave weight to features that might have got lost or minimized in the numerical assessment. Finally, I reread the transcript to see if the coding made sense to me and to check for distortions or omissions. When I was satisfied, I wrote a short summary that indicated the perspective or perspectives that best typified the woman.

### ***Difficulties in Analyzing Data***

I must admit that at times I experienced considerable frustration and perplexity when trying to fit idiosyncratic responses into discrete coding categories. These notes to myself indicate how I felt:

How many ticks per sentence? Or if one sentence indicates more than one quality?

When you read the whole interview, zip, no problem: Constructed Knower. But when you look at little bits, you lose that. The more you start interpreting single phrases or words, the murkier it gets.

How can I avoid my biases (whatever they are!) from influencing my interpretations?

Overlap in criteria. Should I tick it off in Connected or Constructed? Or both?

I didn't tell her that her wonderful frank answers would wind up on a hierarchical scale. Is that collaborative research?

Highly subjective here. I can see where I could get into endless wrangles with others (or myself) over interpretation.

I was constantly wary of misinterpreting the data by looking too literally at a single phrase or sentence rather than interpreting it in a broader context. I took care to "read forward and look back" so as to avoid decontextualizing a woman's thought.

However, in spite of these cavils, I eventually found at least a partial fit, and sometimes a very good fit, emerging between the respondent and the coding category. Once the data analysis was complete, I wrote up the case studies in a way that summarizes the woman's thought in the context of her own life, using the *Women's Ways of Knowing* framework as the organizing principle.



## Chapter IV

# VOICES OF THE LEARNERS

### INTRODUCTION

In this chapter we attend to the voices of the learners as they tell their own stories of epistemological and moral development. In the following case studies, five women tell their stories: Joan, 65, a university graduate in Applied Social Science; Doris, 78, in her last year in a B.A. program; Mary, 72, with a B.A. (*summa cum laude*) in Classics and Art History; Rita, 69, currently attending a literacy program; and Eileen, 66, a recent graduate of a CEGEP program.

Each case study contains three sections: (1) an introduction that supplies background information about the subject and the interview context; (2) the main section that focusses on the learner's responses to the interview questions and interprets them with reference to the *Women's Ways of Knowing* perspectives; and (3) a conclusion indicating the perspective or perspectives that best exemplify the woman's thought.

In writing up the interviews, I had, of course, to select concepts and quotations from a large body of data. I wrote up the case studies only after I had coded them and found the perspective or perspectives most indicative of the subject's present thought. I organized the material to illustrate the

various interconnected themes identified by the *Women's Ways of Knowing* theory; i.e., self-concept, and attitudes towards knowledge, authority, morality, and interpersonal relationships. The organization of the case study is primarily designed to give a picture of the woman in the context of her life, and secondarily to illustrate how she fits (or does not fit) the *Women's Ways of Knowing* scheme. This is different from the organizing principle of the book *Women's Ways of Knowing*. In the book a separate chapter is devoted to each of the epistemological perspectives identified by the authors, and their theory is supported by salient quotes from the women interviewed. That organization does not allow discrepant data to surface; therefore, the reader has no opportunity to assess the complexities and ambiguities that can arise in coding the data. Consequently, my study is different from that of Belenky et al. Whereas they use quotations from their subjects to "flesh out" and support their theory, I try to portray a "flesh-and-blood" woman in all her complexity, using the *Women's Ways of Knowing* perspectives as the theoretical framework. In other words, these are "portraits of the learners" rather than "portraits of the perspectives."

## **JOAN: A CONNECTED/CONSTRUCTED KNOWER**

### **Introduction**

*No problem!* That's what I thought when I interviewed Joan Monette; I wondered why Belenky and her colleagues found their "wise old women" too difficult to code and dropped them from their sample (see Appendix A). Joan was my first interview, and I had no preconceptions as to how, or whether, she would "fit" the theory. But even as I listened to her, I could hear her responses sliding neatly into my coding categories. When I coded them later, I was not surprised to find a good fit. Joan answered my questions openly and fully. She spoke quietly and reflectively, but she was often animated, and she laughed a lot. She sometimes paused to consider her answers, but she was not stumped by the questions, and she appeared to be comfortable with her answers.

Joan grew up in Montreal, and has spent most of her life in Quebec. She is 65, has been married 45 years, and has six children, four biological and two adopted. She is a committed Roman Catholic, and active in church groups, especially the Christian Family Movement. She was largely convent-educated, and after high school she did clerical work until her first child was

born. At 59, she enrolled part time in Concordia's Family Life Education program in the Applied Social Science (APSS) department, then went into the degree program. She graduated six years later, and immediately started searching for a new program of studies.

## The Interview

### *Attitude Towards Knowledge: "Voice of Integration"*

Joan exemplifies the Constructed Knower because of her "voice of integration." Rather than relying on only one way of knowing, she acknowledges reason *and* intuition *and* the expertise of others as powerful learning resources. How she integrates them depends on the context:

When I'm still looking at myself as a student, I try to listen very hard to what the professor is saying, but I really feel that I have to get into reading on my own and sorting things out and then making questions. Then I'll really read. I'll say, "You know, Joan, you're not understanding what the teacher has to say, so you better read so you can understand more."

She is very open to the expertise of others, but this does not mean she listens passively to what professors tell her. If she has difficulty understanding, that goads her to use her mind to find out more:

All of a sudden the light will dawn. Like in this course on Death and Dying. I liked the professor, he was very good, working with terminally ill people, and I found a

lot of controversy in that learning because I wasn't catching on to what he wanted. I made comments and I knew darn well by his response that wasn't what he was looking for. . . . He was really looking for us to be critical of how doctors treat terminally ill people. Maybe I'm inclined to be a goody-goody type, you know? Here I was thinking of doctors as authority figures, maybe I haven't been exposed enough.

I found that an excellent course and I questioned a lot and I also got a lot of different students to give me comments . . . it made me look at things in a new way.

You're in a class to learn what the professor wants to teach you, then you take it into yourself and you feel what you have to give to it, then you analyze it and say what you feel the professor's saying and then what you've gotten out of it, you bring your opinion and his together to some kind of a conclusion.

Joan relies on using her mind to think things through carefully before making a decision, but she also values her intuition:

I have strong gut feelings about things, but I don't stand on them completely. People say, "things are relative to others," but I think at a certain point there is a fine line you can choose from when searching for the truth. And I think it is a search. I'm not going to accept the truth as truth.

Because of her "voice of integration," she sees reasoning, intuition, and the expertise of others as intertwined:

I rely on both reasoning and gut feelings. I guess what I'm saying is that they are part of one and the same. And when I need to learn some more, I like to just listen. So they're all helpful.

### ***Attitude Towards Authority***

A Constructed Knower questions conventional knowledge and assumptions of experts, and takes responsibility for evaluating authorities. When Joan thinks of "authorities," she thinks of the Church. Even as a child, she rebelled against Church doctrine, but felt powerless to do much about it. "I knew I couldn't say too much," she laughs, "because I'd be thrown out the door or something."

She married a Protestant when she was 20, and from then on she became more assertive:

From the time Leo and I got married, the Church wasn't going to tell us what to do. We were going to do it our own way, and I let them know. I went to different meetings, and I wasn't afraid to say how I felt, and I know the priests weren't always too happy. Then I decided to join a nondenominational group and study, because, gee, I wasn't meeting these people.

She is still active in Church groups, and she still questions authorities, because she does not accept that there is only one answer that is right or true:

Oh, there's more than one answer, and I'm discovering that when I'm in church groups. When I see a votive leader all of a sudden make a comment that puts down what a group member has said, I fume inside. I may not say anything right at that moment because it wouldn't be the right time. I might have in the past, and that's maybe childish at times, but now I wouldn't. I'd think about it.

An example of it happened a couple of weeks ago. I felt very badly, and there are some people I'm going to talk to about it. . . . A woman was talking about her experiences, she had a gift for speaking, it just flowed, and all of a sudden this leader says to her, "We're not talking about that at this moment." She was being so much herself, and I feel when a person is giving from her heart and her soul, she's special and she should be made to feel comfortable. I'm not a judge, who am I to . . .? I'm not God, I'm just another soul finding my way in life, like she is. Maybe when I enquire more into the leading of these groups, I'll learn he has a right to say it, but I've never seen it done before.

As a Constructed Knower, Joan is looking at all points of view. She is even considering the possibility that the leader was correct, although her gut feeling tells her otherwise. She is thinking strategically, and will gather more information before taking action designed to influence the course of events.

### *Learning Through Lived Experience*

Joan has a high tolerance for ambiguity, and is reconciled to the fact that she will never have all the answers. But it was not always thus:

Once upon a time, I really thought I had the answers, that my children would be this way and that way. I had all this background information, and I was just going to spew it out, and things were just going to fall into place.

Raising six children was a humbling experience at times, but one that gave her new insights into herself and others. When they already had four

children of their own, she and her husband decided to adopt a boy to keep their six-year-old son company. She recalls this as the most powerful learning experience of her whole life:

Oh, that was learning! I decided, I was the one who initiated the adoption. Leo said whatever I wanted was o.k. He's very pleasing and helpful, he didn't object, so we decided to adopt this little boy.

When we got him, he was two and a half years old. He was a very capable little boy, he was doing things I was still doing for our six-year-old. I found at first I had to work at loving him. That was very difficult. That was when I realized what a biological mother's love is. I learned to love my son as a person; he wasn't *mine*, and this little guy could do so much on his own.

And it was the greatest learning because I was able to detach myself a little more from my own children and accept them as people, not as my possessions. And then when he was four, we adopted another one. Of course, my mother thought I was nuts!

### ***University Education and Perspective Change***

When Joan came to Concordia at age 59, she was at the Silence/Received positions as a student (although not in other areas of her life). She found classes difficult, and had little confidence in her abilities as a learner:

It took me a while to really understand what was expected of me in the classroom. I had to not only be in the classroom, I would have to meet with the professor to understand what was expected of me and to sort things



out. I'd often come away feeling as if I had to try very hard to sort things out in my own head at first.

Maybe I wasn't comfortable in the classroom after being away from school for so long. It took me a while to be able to share and say how I felt about what was expected of me and ask somebody for help in the classroom, like, interrelating with other students. I thought of myself as a person who had to work very, very hard.

Why would Joan be so diffident, after so many years of active living in which she had learned and accomplished many things? She traces it back to her childhood and her unhappiness with the strict convent school discipline and its rigid expectations:

The professors, I was putting them on a pedestal because they had all the answers. That's what I felt at first, maybe because of my background—that's the way it was in school. The teachers were there to give you information, and if you tried to give back what the teachers expected of you. Their expectations were very high. If you didn't give them what they wanted, then there was a putdown that I found very hard to deal with.

As a child she had been inquisitive and was always asking questions—until an aunt discouraged her:

I remember one time she told me to stop asking questions. I never forgot that, and that is something I would never do to someone who is asking questions because I know what it did to me. It blocked me. It stopped me from asking questions. I'm a very sensitive person, very attuned, and I became, maybe a very pleasing person, not to rock the boat. I can go right back to that point. That really inhibited my growth and held me back.

The Applied Social Science program dramatically changed her self-perceptions as a learner and her attitude towards professors as authority figures:

We were on a par with the professors, calling them by their first names. I think that when professors are approachable like that and show respect for students' views, I feel comfortable with my own decisions because I'm more open to learning.

One professor, in particular, helped her to gain her own voice:

She was so accepting and she made me feel special. I felt very comfortable, and I was aware of the fact that she knew a lot.

And the time that she gave to me as a student, even in correcting papers, the feedback we got, she had a way of elevating students. She'd say, "Yeah, Joan, that's it!" . . . then she'd go on, and she'd try to bring out what wasn't being brought out when she felt it necessary.

If you wanted to give her more, she gave you time, she'd negotiate with you. Then she would give you more time, then give you more comments, pulling out of you what she wanted you to do. And I felt that was so helpful to me, because I was doing extra work, and I found it really good learning.

As she became more comfortable in the APSS program, Joan became more inclined to listen to and learn from other students as well as from professors:

I can remember being at a group experience, and one person said I was sitting on things, that I wasn't involved enough in the group. And I agreed. Maybe I wasn't speaking up because . . . maybe I was looking for this perfect answer, and I'll never have it. . . . Maybe this is one of my drawbacks in a learning experience? So, for me, those were worthwhile comments.

She credits the APSS program with expanding her repertoire of coping skills and learning strategies. Previously, when she had had personal problems, she would not consider seeking help from a counsellor or therapist. But in her course on Principles of Guidance and Counselling, the professor (who was also a counsellor) recommended that anyone who wanted to be a counsellor should sit in the seat of the client.

So I said, o.k., that's it, and I asked her for counselling. I found it very difficult at times, I didn't know where to start. At that time I had problems with the three boys who were still at home. She confronted me, and said exactly what she thought. . . . She said I was very righteous at times. That was a growth experience.

She changed the way I saw myself. I realized that I had to look at alternative ways of solving problems. I think, as a mother, you may come across as very righteous, and that's where I was coming from. And that's when I started to look at things differently and get in touch with *me*, that I didn't want to be a "mother," I wanted to be Joan also.

The counselling made me see that I had been neglecting me, I was all, like, one-sided. So, I think from the counselling and the courses at Concordia, I began to look at myself as Joan, that I have things to offer, that I have to be more open to learning, I have to be able to become more involved in different group situations in the classroom and accept that I have strengths and weaknesses.

Joan is very much a Connected Knower; she tries to get inside other people's heads, to see how and why ideas make sense to them. She honed these abilities in her courses; the APSS program focuses on developing interpersonal skills:

You learn to have empathy, to get the feel of that person at that moment. I'm really using myself as an instrument. Like, I'm just that—an instrument with the skills of being able to listen.

### *Coping With Change*

Joan now acts as a Connected Knower when she has disagreements with her family or friends:

I think what I do more of, I listen to what the other person has to say, and you know, I say to myself "There is another way of looking at things and why don't I take a little bit of that into consideration in order to learn more about myself and try to do things differently and learn new behaviors?"

But changes in Joan's self-concept and view of knowledge can be upsetting to family members. Her older sister resented her changing, and Joan has put a lot of effort into working out a new *modus vivendi*:

Because she said it wasn't me, she liked the old me. We've overcome it now and we're better friends, but for a while she was very threatened by my going back to school. She kept saying, "What are you going back to school for?"

I think she was trying to hold me back because I made her feel uncomfortable with herself. . . There are moments when she's

miserable and she tells me about it—I listen to her and I know what she's going through. I know that she admires me—I sort of admire myself for what I'm doing—so maybe I'm making little comments that are making her miserable.

Joan is committed to listening to others at the same time as she expresses her own voice. Her family is very important to her, and she does not let disagreements interfere with her caring and connection:

My son-in-law gets very angry with me, because he says when he first met me that I seemed to have all the answers. Now he says, "There you go again! . . . Oh, you're accepting even that now, eh Joan?"

I love him so much, he's really great, because he's still open, and I tell him what I feel about what he's saying. We're still friends, we leave and I give him a big hug and a kiss, I feel really good about that, it's great that we can learn from one another.

Joan is a Constructed Knower who has confidence that she can make good decisions based on what she knows at the time, even though she does not have all the answers—and never will:

Nothing ever gets settled. Things are resolved to a certain extent, and I thank God they're not completely resolved.

## Conclusion

Joan was a delight to interview. She was empathetic, concerned with understanding my needs and contributing something useful. I felt good about the interview questions and my interaction with her. She said she was nervous ahead of time about the interview, but she agreed to do it because it would be helpful to me and another new learning experience for her. In other words, she *acted* like a Connected/Constructed Knower.

## DORIS: A SUBJECTIVE KNOWER

### Introduction

*No problem? Now I see the problem!* Even while I was interviewing Doris Burns, I anticipated that her responses were not going to fit neatly into one "perspective," and the complexities of coding came home to me. Doris was generous with her time and cooperative in quickly fitting the interview into her busy schedule, but it was with an air of *noblesse oblige* rather than of interest in the interview for the sake of her own learning. She was impatient with some of the questions, and did not like being pressed to elaborate on her answers. Sometimes I felt like I was "badgering the witness!" She was articulate and emphatic in her answers for the most part, although occasionally she would pause and become reflective if the question piqued her interest.

Doris is 78 years old. She is a dynamic, strong woman who loves a challenge and lives an active life. She runs Concordia's Elderhostel program, and is completing her B.A. in English and Art History at Concordia. She was born and brought up a Roman Catholic in London, England, and educated in a small convent in London. She worked as a secretary in Fleet Street for several years, before coming to Montreal in 1934. She has lived

here ever since, marrying, working, studying, and raising two adopted children. Her husband died when she was 57.

## **The Interview**

### ***Attitude Towards Knowledge: "Voice of Integration"***

Doris demonstrates an intriguing blend of Subjective and Constructed knowing. She insists that her intuition is her most powerful way of knowing and always has been, but she does not deny the importance of reason and the expertise of others:

I can count on my gut, that's number one. I'm very clear. Listening to others, no, that's not enough. I use my mind, but I don't sift and carefully think things through.

I like to listen to people who really know about something, but, basically, they're only telling me their opinion. It has to go further than that if I'm to learn.

When I have a problem to solve, I use my mind. True. The problem has to be solved. I'm rather inclined to solve problems like that! (claps hands). Whoosh! From the gut feeling. It comes in, and says that's the way this should work. And I'm often surprised that it doesn't work that way. It sometimes doesn't, you know. It would have been better, perhaps, to have thought things out more carefully. But I'm not a person to sit and think things through carefully before making a decision.

I let things sort of settle in my mind. Let's say, I'm working on a paper right now which I have to hand in a week from now. Well, I'm collecting my material and it's in my mind, and I know which way I'm going. I'm not



thinking it out carefully, it's just there. It'll solve itself, you know. It'll come.

A lot of people spend a lot of time saying, "If I did this, this would happen, and if I did that, it would be better." What a waste of time! I can do this quickly, I have very quick reactions to things.

***Strong Subjective Knower: "It was just meant to be"***

Subjective Knowers value their intuitive reactions, and for them truth is something experienced—felt, rather than thought out. Doris typifies this perspective when she sees herself as a conduit through which truth emerges rather than as an active agent in the process. Doris describes how "fate" intervened when she visited Canada in 1934, intending only a short visit, "I came for six weeks and I stayed forever!" On a whim, she applied for a job at a Montreal newspaper, but did not expect to get one because it was the depths of the depression and job openings were practically nonexistent. She got the first job she applied for, and stayed and stayed, "because sometimes fate takes over and you don't really have any choice."

In spite of considerable prodding from me, Doris would not entertain the notion that there might be a "rational" explanation for why she got the job:

*Q.: If you say it was just fate, what's your hunch why it worked that way?*

*A.: Because it was just meant to be.*

Q.: *Is that a subjective, a gut feeling that it was just meant to be?*

A.: Absolutely!

Q.: *Did you have any particular edge? No ifs, ands, or buts?*

A.: No ifs, ands, or buts!

Doris was hired as secretary to a senior newspaper executive whose previous secretary had just left unexpectedly. He quizzed Doris about the experience she had acquired working on English newspapers, and this experience evidently carried a lot of weight with him. So much so that he even kept her on after she was married, at a time when it was *verboten* to keep on married women:

Because he was a real snob! He liked the idea that his secretary had worked for *The Daily Express* and *The Daily Mail* and had worked under Lord Beaverbrook—he wasn't going to let me go!

Even though Doris recognizes that her *qualifications* impressed her employer, she refuses to see this as the explanation for why she got the job, and prefers to ascribe it to "fate."

### ***The Paperweight Lady***

After her husband died, Doris went back to work and eventually into business for herself, buying and selling glass paperweights. She'd been collecting paperweights as a hobby since 1932, and she recognized there wa

a demand for them. She was the only one in Canada doing it, and she did it for six years, travelling from coast to coast and to Europe to buy the paperweights. This experience helped her to gain a unique voice:

It was very *ego building*. I was the "paperweight lady," I was the expert, and I'm still the expert. I gave lectures, and wrote a book. It was very exciting, very ego building.

But it got too strenuous, all that travelling, because I'm pushing up there, I'm already in my 70s.

Then the price of paperweights went up so much that I could not start off young people collecting them because it was too expensive. And so I said to myself, "I'm not going to do this, just to sell paperweights for \$35." I mean, the cheapest paperweight I would have on the table was \$50, and some of them would go up to three thousand. So I quit. There were a lot of tears shed. A lot of people were very upset, and I was upset too.

But I could see the writing on the wall. It meant lowering the standards, and I had no intentions of doing that. My reputation was built on integrity, on what I said, on what I sold, what I showed, denying the bad, praising the good.

In making this difficult decision, Doris articulates a blend of thinking and feeling that signals a Constructed Knower. Also, her reluctance to sell overpriced, shoddy goods, and her concern for young aficionados who could not afford to buy the coveted paperweights indicate the moral commitment of the Constructed Knower.

## ***Religion and Faith as Authorities***

Doris was brought up in a strict Roman Catholic home, and learned very early not to question or disagree with Church teachings, "Whatever the priest said, went." This learning was reinforced in the convent school she attended. Even so, she thought, many times, "That doesn't make sense!" She was a Subjective Knower with her own ideas, but was silenced by authorities. She learned discretion at an early age, a pragmatic approach that preserved her connection with others while leaving her mind free to make her own evaluation of authorities.

Religion is still a big part of Doris's life, but now she makes a distinction between "The Church" and her "faith." Her concern for moral and spiritual values and her view of knowledge as socially constructed are indicative of a Constructed Knower:

I go to the Roman Catholic church. I could just as well go to the Methodist or the Anglican church or any other. But *my religion, my faith* is between God and me.

The Church is a man-made thing. Read the Bible, it's full of man-made, idiotic rules they've put in, like eating fish on Friday. The Church doesn't approve of abortion, it doesn't approve of birth control. I don't agree with that. I think that's entirely a personal matter, and I've always felt that way. I don't accept what they tell me as gospel.

But there's another truth. . . . I have great faith in the Supreme Being. I don't think one can live without . . . I believe in the Commandments—love your neighbour as yourself; thou shalt not steal—the simple, basic things.

The trimmings the Church has put around it, that's fine. I love the trimmings, they're great fun, that's all.

### ***Maintaining Connections with Family and Friends***

Doris is a Subjective/Connected/Constructed Knower in her personal relationships. She does not believe in "sweeping things under the rug," but in talking out disagreements with her family. They do not quarrel and she cannot explain why, except to say that courtesy helps keep them on an even keel:

I wouldn't be rude to anybody, I just wouldn't! If I didn't like what they were doing, I would remove myself from the situation. It's so easy to be polite. Not that you can tread on me. Don't push me too far, no, no! But there are ways of handling things over the years that I learned. I don't ever remember quarreling or fighting.

She never quarrels with her sister, but she admits that, in spite of her best efforts, she still does not understand her.

I've tried all my life (laughs regretfully) and it's hopeless. So I live with it. At my age, I can relax and say, so what. I accept whatever goes on in my personal life, which I must say, is pretty level (knocks on wood and laughs). It's just the way we are.

She says she doesn't have disagreements with friends or family, because she listens to what they say, and does not try to persuade them to her way of thinking:

I don't *demand* that you think that way, I've never *demand*ed it, even with my children. I would *expect* them to behave in a certain way because that's the way they were brought up. But if my daughter says something I don't agree with, I don't say, "I don't know what you're talking about!" I say, "Maybe you're right, I never thought about it like that." You know, get around it that way. But I'd never say, "This is it, believe what I say!" No, you never get anywhere that way.

It is difficult to assess whether Doris acts as a Subjective Knower (you think your way and I'll think mine), or whether she has the Constructed Knower's desire to get inside another person's thought.

### ***Consensus with Colleagues***

Doris takes the same ameliorative approach to her colleagues at work. When a disagreement arises, she says, "Well, that's fine, David, you're entitled to think that, but *I* don't think so, I think it's this way." By not pressing her points too insistently and remaining friends, she acts as a Connected Knower. At the same time, as a Constructed Knower, she commits herself to influencing the outcome of events:

With the situation I was discussing this morning, I consider it serious. I wrote out a whole paper and talked about it. I told the man, I don't want you to give me any replies now, this is too serious. Let me know what you think about this and that later.

And I know perfectly well that my influence is going to be that strong because I didn't make an issue of it. I just said, "This is the way I feel and if you go into the situation, we're going to get into a lot of trouble, and we won't

know how to cope." Now I know that's going to sink in, and it is going to change the outcome. Because that's the way I always face problems. My influence is strong on people: people have told me, "I can remember when you said such-and-such."

### ***Why Does A Septuagenarian Go to University?***

At age 72, after abandoning her paperweight business, Doris read that Concordia was giving classes to senior citizens for only \$6.00. She thought, "Well, why not? The price is right, what do I have to lose?" She attributes this to "fate" in much the same way she describes getting her first job in Canada 50 years earlier. She denies that her decision to enrol was a reasoned one:

*Q.: Yes, but Doris, you could have said I'm going to stay home for the rest of my life. But you chose to come to Concordia.*

*A.: (emphatically) I didn't choose, I didn't choose. I was thrown into it.*

*Q.: You weren't dragged here, kicking and screaming. Cheap courses were dangled before you and*

*A.: Another challenge! I was challenged but I didn't choose*

*Q.: You took the challenge. That was your choice.*

*A.: (reflectively) That's a moot point. It's very difficult for me to understand that. It's really quite interesting, that philosophy.*

Doris started university by taking a course in Women's Studies on a non-credit basis:

I was frightened, because I had no real education. So I thought, I'll take a course in Women's Studies, I've lived through all this, at least I'll be on safe ground. It was wonderful. The professor was marvelous. I asked her if I could write the exams and the papers, just to get her comments, to see if I'd learned anything. On the final paper, she said, "What are you doing in a non-credit course? Get into a degree program." So right into the program I went!

It was not that she was frightened of keeping up with the young students. Far from it. "Oh pooh, we can compete with the 20-year-olds, that not the problem, Geez!" But she was afraid she could not produce good papers:

That upset me. So I took three composition courses and graduated with A plusses. That gave me the confidence to turn in papers. And that set me on my merry way.

So, although Doris *talks* like a Subjective Knower, it is clearly more complicated than that. She does not rely solely on her gut feelings to succeed in university, but *acts* as a Procedural Knower in valuing the encouragement and expertise of others and investing in learning skills and strategies.

### ***Making New Knowledge***

There are other contradictions. While Doris says the teacher should be "the boss," should determine the course content, and assign specific essay



topics rather than allowing students to choose their own, she sometimes sidesteps these strictures herself:

I did that for one of my Shakespeare courses. I wanted to write a paper on the fact that Othello was a homosexual (laughs), and I did it too. It took me an awful lot of research, but I did it. And the professor nearly killed himself laughing.

I wrote an ordinary one at the same time. I said, "Here's two papers, one you can mark and one you can throw in the garbage." I did very well, I came out with a B plus.

By tapping her subjective feelings, she went beyond conventional interpretations of the text and created new knowledge:

Because when you've got a real "nut" like that, you can see the subtleties in it. . . . Of course, what you're really doing is slanting the play to your way of thinking . . . but I still feel that Othello and Iago had a homosexual relationship, to me there's no question.

She concedes that she really learned more from writing the paper in which she acted as a Constructed Knower than from the more conventional paper. Even so, she still thinks that, "For young students, say in their thirties or forties or younger, it's really dangerous for them to pick their own topics."

Doris credits university with broadening her view of knowledge:

I find my approach to life and to problems is much broader than it was. And I always considered myself a broad-minded person, but now that I'm educated I find that I'm

much broader in my approach to anything. Once upon a time I only looked at things from two angles. Now, I look at them from nine, six, ten angles.

She now has the Constructed Knower's perception that there is no one answer that is really right or true:

Oh good God, no! There are *no* true answers to anything! It depends on factors like the time of day, whether it's raining, whether you've had breakfast. Because no man is an island. Everything you do, everything you say, affects everyone else. It even depends on the time of day the question comes up. If it comes up in the late afternoon when you're in a bad temper because you're tired, you react totally differently than if it had come up in the morning. So there are no true answers. Believe me!

### ***"What Is To Be, Will Be"***

When Doris reflects on her whole life, she concludes that her most powerful learning experience was the recognition that, "what is to be, will be":

Major things have happened in my life with no thought on my part. And that was a learning experience for me, because it taught me not to "buck the rut," just to go along with it. That made it much easier for me to cope with anything that came along.

A prime example of this is how she came to adopt a child. Her husband wanted a family, but the years went by and there were no pregnancies. One day he said, "I think we should adopt a child." Doris

didn't really want to stay home and raise children, she preferred to continue working, but she agreed to enquire into how one goes about adopting a child. So she called her gynecologist for an appointment.

That was a *Wednesday*. The nurse said, "Is it urgent?" I said, "No, any time, whatever." So she gave me an appointment several weeks away. On *Thursday*, the very next day, she called me to say there was a cancellation the next day and would I like to come in? I said, sure, fine. It didn't make any difference to me, I was just going to ask him a question.

On *Friday* I told the gynecologist I would like to know how to go about adopting a child. He said, "What? Do you mean it?" I said, "Well, yes, is it terrible?" He said, "It's absolutely fantastic! I've just come from seeing a little girl who's fifteen years old and is going to have a baby and the baby's up for adoption. Do you want it?"

*Wednesday, Thursday, Friday*. There was no reason for the nurse to have called *me* about the cancellation, she knew I wasn't in a hurry, she didn't have a clue what I wanted. So, don't tell me that wasn't planned, eh! The baby was born a few months later, we got her when she was 11 days old.

Why didn't I have children? Because God wanted me to have Margaret, wanted me to have Larry. You see? It had nothing to do with me. Because I *had* to adopt those children and bring them up, that's all there was to it!

Doris is very much the Subjective Knower in her embracing of the mysterious and magical. Far from feeling buffeted by external, impersonal, perhaps malevolent, forces, she allies herself with them. She is sanguine about the frequent intervention of fate in her life, and she says she does not wish for more control over her life or decision making.

## ***Aging and Changes in Ways of Knowing***

Looking back over her life, Doris thinks she has been consistent in her ways of knowing. However, she does concede that age has led to a change in outlook. Now, she concentrates more on *living* than on *thinking*.

When you've lived a long time and seen so many things happen, you tend not to worry about things, therefore, you're not thinking about them. For instance, the separation of Quebec that everyone's ranting and raving about doesn't concern me at my age. They're not going to separate while I'm alive, so why should I think about it? And my children, if they want to think about it, let them do that. I think age has a lot to do with how you approach subjects that require thought.

You become more aware of the *temporarity* [sic] of life. When you get to my age, death is in your mind. You know, and if you don't you're pretty stupid, that you die tomorrow, people will be upset, but life will go on.

## **Conclusion**

Clearly, Doris is not a "pure" Subjective Knower, but one who uses her "whoosh!" feelings in the service of Constructed Knowing. Subjective Knowers have difficulty in explaining how they know what they know; this way of knowing has not been codified in our society in the same way as step-by-step Procedural Knowing. I have presented long excerpts and some complete bits of dialogue to illustrate as fully as possible how Doris interprets her world. It is important to look at the quotations in the context

of her overall views and the life she has lived. Taken out of context, small bits of dialogue in which Doris insists that "fate" makes her choices, could lead one to conclude she is a Silent Knower with no control over her thought processes or her destiny. Obviously, this is not so, when you take into account all her responses and the complexities of her thought.

## MARY: A PROCEDURAL KNOWER — PRIMARILY

### Introduction

Mary Pollock is 72 years old. She has lived virtually all her life in her family home in St. Lambert. She has never married and lives alone, but she has a sister who lives nearby. After high school, she took a business course; it was the depths of the depression, and it took her a year to get a stenographic job. She joined the Bank of Montreal and worked in various downtown Montreal branches until she retired at age 65. Then she took a B.A. in Classics and Art History at McGill, graduating *summa cum laude* in 1988. Since then, she has been very active in volunteer work and self-directed learning.

Mary's schedule is so crowded that the only time she could see me was on a Sunday afternoon. I went to her house, and she welcomed me warmly and made me feel at home. She was cooperative and patient in answering my questions, but was nonplussed by some of them and concerned that her answers were not what I wanted.

## The Interview

### ***Attitude Towards Knowledge: Lacks "Voice of Integration"***

Mary acknowledges the expertise of others and her own analytic and reasoning processes as powerful ways of knowing, but she is remarkable in her inability to articulate a subjective voice. Although she has some characteristics of a Constructed Knower, it is this emphasis on rationality at the expense of intuition that indicates a Procedural Knower.

Mary listens to the expertise of others, but she relies on her own analytical powers to solve problems:

No, listening is not enough. I like to do the research myself by reading about it. I really think I try to analyze a problem. I don't think I place too much on listening to people, even if I think the people really know about it. I may make hasty decisions, but when I *know* it's a problem, I will try to analyze the problem, and look at it from all sides.

She was uncomfortable and unsure of herself when I asked about her gut feelings, and she could not think of a single example when she knew intuitively what to do. Presumably, it is this lack of faith in her own intuitive powers that leads her to say, "I think that I don't have a great deal of self-confidence or assurance to think *I know what's right.*"

Mary demonstrates characteristics of both the Separate and Connected Procedural Knower. She is self-critical and strives for objectivity—both characteristics of the Separate Knower:

I think it is important to be objective and unbiased about things, but it's idealistic. I agree that's the ideal we should strive for, but whether I achieve it or not, I don't know. I would like to think I try to do it.

Nevertheless, she has the Connected Knower's desire to look at questions from the other person's point of view:

Again, I think that's too idealistic for me. I know that's what I *should* do, but whether I do it or not, I doubt it. I think it's a hard thing to do.

Some of the concepts in the interview schedule were quite foreign to Mary, and though I assured her there were no right and wrong answers to these questions, she was rather distressed with her own inability to answer them:

*Q.: How would you describe yourself as a thinker?*

A.: (pause) I've never thought about it.

*Q.: Do you think you have changed over the years as a thinker?*

A.: I don't think I've ever gone into lofty thoughts of any kind. (pause) I just can't answer that. I can't analyze that. I'm sorry. So I can't think about changes.

### ***Attitude to Authorities***

Mary joined the bank as a stenographer for \$2.00 a day in 1936 at a time when jobs were "scarce as hen's teeth." Twenty-one years later, she had "made it" to assistant to the manager at a downtown Montreal branch, an



unprecedented position for a woman at the time. (See *Gazette* article "Steno Makes Banking History," Appendix E.) She had several more promotions during the remainder of her career, and she accepted mandatory retirement at age 65 graciously but regretfully.

When Mary thinks of "authorities," she thinks about bank managers. She regards them as benevolent authorities who have mentored her and provided her most powerful learning experiences, and she always speaks of them in glowing terms. Her respect for knowledgeable experts, and her acceptance of authorities' standards and evaluations are characteristics of the Separate Procedural Knower:

There was one particular manager I worked for, he was very tough on me for the first six months, but, oh, I learned so much from him, and he was a great influence on my life!

He took pains to teach me. People have been very important in my life and that's why I loved my work at the bank, it was the customers, the people. And he would take me into his office, and talk about the customers as they came in, giving me "a peg to hang them on" so I could remember.

He was an exceptional manager, and he told us, which was true, that he would stand up for us if a customer complained in our presence, "But, afterwards, I'll give you hell!"

Another thing he taught us was: when you've made a mistake, go right away and admit it. And that takes the wind right out of somebody's sails. And I thought that was wonderful advice! Oh, he was just great! (nostalgically).

She is very much the Connected Knower in that her personal sense of authority is linked to the power of the group and its agreed-on ways of

knowing. Therefore, she consistently tries to avoid or minimize disagreements with authorities:

Being my age and my generation, I'm not much of a fighter, I mostly tried to fall into line.

The first time they came and took away all the cheques and deposits, took them away overnight and processed them instead of us processing them in the branch, I think the new team that came in to do it looked at me and thought, "Well, there's an old dame, I'll have trouble with her." But by the time they left, they said, "Would you consider coming and travelling with us?" So I felt that was a compliment! (laughs).

I went along with their suggestions, you see. I really think I have been able to accept change reasonably well.

Far from feeling resentment at having to train a succession of young men who were given positions above her, she feels she has been very lucky to be "in the right place at the right time":

I worked at the branch at Sherbrooke and Drummond for nearly 25 years, and that is where I got the appointment as Assistant to the Manager. They didn't move women around very much in those days. I trained a whole lot of men, and very nice young men, and some of them are still my friends.

One day this man came in, and like everybody else he was turned right over to me to start him. He was a very fine man. One day he had done something which I didn't quite agree with, and he looked at me, and he said, "Mary, you don't have to choose your words with me; you just say whatever you want!" I thought that was really wonderful, you know! And that man was even higher graded than my own manager! I didn't think I could just say, "I don't think you did that right!" (laughs) But he was great.

So I feel I've been extremely fortunate in life. For some reason I must have been at the right place at the right time. I ran into a lot of these people who were extremely good to me.

She thinks times have changed for others, but her own reluctance to disagree with authorities has not:

No, I don't think so. I think it was too ingrained. And I don't think at my age I could change. Even these little jobs I'm doing now, if I felt very strongly about something, I don't think I would say anything about it, if I disagreed.

I'm very adaptable. I had to be. I just feel in my day, we had to be.

For the young people now it's different. They're probably quite right. They have strong opinions and they're allowed to voice them. We really weren't, you see. If you wanted a job, you went along with it.

When Mary started university at age 66, she thought of teachers as authorities who were always right:

But I don't think that any more. Because that was one of my biggest disillusionments. I had always thought professors were *perfect* (laughs), then I found they weren't!

But I really can't relate to a class where the students had a lot to offer. I felt that most of the classes I was in, the professor was in charge. I was in some seminar classes, but I didn't really feel that the students were running them.

She is adamant that the professor should be "the boss," rather than a facilitator among equals; should set the standards and determine the

assignments. Clearly, she prefers the banking model to the midwife model of education (not surprising, given her lifelong devotion to banking!).

### ***Maintaining Connections With Others***

Mary is a Connected Knower who maintains connections to others by responding to them on their own terms, trying to understand rather than judge. Rather than confronting sexist discrimination in the male-dominated world of banking, she protected her precarious position by keeping a low profile:

When they opened the new head office, they had a reception for *all* the appointed officers in the city of Montreal *except me!* The only woman—they didn't know what to do with me, so they solved it very neatly, they didn't ask me! A woman wouldn't put up with that now, but in those days I just thought, "Well, if they don't want me, I'm not going." I was all alone, you see, there was nothing I could do.

Mary's most striking characteristic is her identification with the authority of the group and the self-esteem she gets from being recognized as a member of the group. She reminisces fondly:

I enjoyed my work at the main office very much, and I stayed there until I was 65. And the day I left the bank, both the chairman of the board and the bank president came to the main office to say goodbye to me. I was not summoned to their office, *they came to me*, which I thought was very gracious.

One day I was in a bookstore, and I was all ready to say to the proprietor, "You don't know me, I'm . . ." and he said, "Of

course I know you, you're Mary Pollock." Another time I went to a series of lectures sponsored by Alcan and one of the men in charge had been a customer of mine, and I went to introduce myself to him, and he said, "Miss Pollock." I couldn't believe it!

And when I was at a bank luncheon, sitting with other pensioners, a young man joined our table and asked me where I worked. And then he said, "You're not *the* Mary Pollock I've heard about all these years?" (laughs). So, I couldn't believe it, you know!

### ***Listening to Voices of Others***

There is some overlap between characteristics of the Received Knower and the Procedural Knower. A Received Knower silences her own voice to hear others, and sees herself through others' eyes. At times Mary's difficulties with self-reflection seem to indicate a Received Knower. When asked whether she tends to take a contrary position to what others say, she replies:

You know, I find it very hard to analyze myself. I would say, no, I don't see the contrary [to another's position], but speak to somebody else, they might say, yes, she does, you know.

She was very concerned about answering my questions adequately, and she reiterated, "You must tell me if what I say isn't any good, be sure to let me know." It is hard to tell whether this preoccupation with the "right" answer is the Received Knower's imperative to live up to the expectations of others or the Connected Knower's attempt to get into another's frame of reference even when alien.

### ***Emergence of Constructed Knowing***

Mary's respect for authorities and her acceptance of "the rules of the game" during her 45-year career in banking indicate a Procedural Knower. But looked at in the context of the times, these were Procedural strategies *for a man*, but she charted her own course in a way that moved beyond the established frameworks of a banking career *for a woman*. Because she speaks without rancor, it is easy to miss the difficulties she must have faced and the autonomous decisions she must have made, in stepping outside the bounds of traditional "women's work" while still displaying accepted feminine behavior:

I took my bank exams for the Institute of Canadian Bankers, and some of the men would say to me, "What are you doing that for? Where do you think that's going to get you?" I just said, "Well, it will make my work a little more interesting." So, now I'm a fellow of the Institute of Canadian Bankers (proudly).

She made a satisfactory career for herself, moving doggedly and persistently upwards in spite of the odds. This included asking for a *demotion* from junior management back to the typing pool in order to get ahead.

It took me a whole year to get a transfer arranged, and I had to write a letter to the executive of the bank saying I voluntarily gave up my management appointment. I took a downward transfer back to clerical, because I felt that if I did not change from Sherbrooke & Drummond I would probably spend the rest of my life there.

Within two years I got a management appointment at a higher grade. I was as surprised as anyone else!

Having identified so much with her career as a banker, Mary naturally did not want to retire. "I found it a *terrific adjustment* from leading a very busy life to suddenly—there you are, sitting at home, and nobody's counting on you." So, charting a new course for herself, she enrolled at McGill and completed a Bachelor's degree in Classics and Art History in five years, graduating *summa cum laude*. Then she wondered what to do next:

People said to me, "You'll be going on to do a Master's." But from what I understand about a Master's, you do a lot on your own, whereas I like the stimulation of being with the students.

So, in spite of her statements that she cannot analyze herself, it seems to me that she does show self-understanding and a rejection of conventional thinking in declining to pursue the traditional educational route with its emphasis on a linear intellectual pursuit. Instead, she chose a blend of activities indicative of the Constructed Knower's need to balance creative, intellectual, social, and practical interests. She has maintained connections with people, balancing the needs of herself and others. For a while, she put her volunteer activities "on hold" to look after her ailing sister. She works as a volunteer in the university library because, "When I was an undergraduate, I felt the reference people had gone out of their way to help me. So I am just delighted to be able to return a little bit of that." She speaks enthusiastically of her work with the Canadian Centre for Architecture, "I was there for the opening and it was a lot of fun and I've enjoyed meeting those people."

And she exudes the Constructed Knower's passion for learning:

I'm interested in learning just about anything that comes along. The other day I went to a lecture that was supposed to be on the culture of Islam, and it turned out to be on the Arabic language and calligraphy. And I went right down to the library and got a couple of books on Islam, because I think we should all know a bit more about it. . . . So I couldn't say I concentrate on any one thing, but I read a lot, I read more for relaxation now. But anything I take a fancy to, I'll read a bit about it. I got a list from the *New York Times* of what freshmen at Columbia University were supposed to read. So I went to the library and worked my way through an awful lot of books on the list. And that was great!

You can see why the dust collects. That table over there, I have one pile for the Canadian Centre, one pile for the libraries, one pile for other things, and I'm afraid to let things get too far ahead of me, the piles are so high!

### ***Reaction to the Interview***

In the followup interview, Mary expressed concern over how she might sound to others. This could be interpreted as the insecurity of the Received Knower or the empathy of the Connected Knower:

I'm afraid I sounded too goody-goody. I am aware of my faults. But it sounds like I was emphasizing the good things. That doesn't sit too well with some people.

I asked her if the interview had affected her thinking in any way:

Yes, it did draw to my attention how I think and how and when I speak up. A friend had been to an Alliance Quebec meeting and she told me some of the ideas expressed there.



I started right in saying that I didn't agree with them—instead of just going along with it.

I associate with a lot of people who are French-speaking. I admire the way they try to learn English and try to practice it. Some of the ideas from Alliance Quebec . . . for example, if you go to a French institution like Charles LeMoynes you should refuse to speak French. That goes against the grain.

I think everybody's entitled to their opinion. But the interview has made me more conscious about my opinions and about when I should voice them.

This response to the interview seems to me to indicate a capacity for self-reflection and an openness to change characteristic of a Constructed Knower.

### Conclusion

Although the majority of Mary's responses indicate a Procedural Knower, there are signs of both Received and Constructed Knowing. It is important to interpret her responses with a sensitivity to the historical context of systemic discrimination and sex-role stereotyping of women.

Throughout the interview, Mary *acted* like a Connected Knower in trying (wo)manfully to understand my frame of reference. When she talked in her own terms about her life story, she spoke fluently and self-confidently and with evident satisfaction in her achievements. In sharp contrast, she was hesitant and sometimes "stumped" when confronted with the abstract

questions of the *Women's Ways of Knowing* interview schedule. The intent of the interview schedule is to give women the stimulus to respond in their own terms. But questions like, "How do you see yourself as a learner?" do not provide a good match with Mary's thought processes. If I had *only* asked her the questions on the interview schedule, I would have had a truncated and misleading version of the complexity of Mary's thought.

## **RITA: A CODING CONUNDRUM**

### **Introduction**

Rita is 69 years old, and says she does not feel any older than when she was young, because, she says, "age is more or less a state of mind." She was born a French Roman Catholic and grew up in rural New Brunswick, the oldest of six children. She had very little formal education, and came to Montreal to find work when she was 18, unable to speak or read English. She met her husband in Montreal and has remained here ever since. They have no children. She is largely self-educated, but she has been attending a literacy program two mornings a week for the past two years.

Rita is the only woman in this sample who requested confidentiality, because she thinks of herself as "a private person" with very little to tell others about herself. She did not wish me to know where she lived, so I interviewed her at the school where she attends literacy classes. She was self-deprecatory about her ability to answer the questions because of her lack of education, and she did have difficulty understanding some of the more abstract questions. Nevertheless, for the most part, she answered quickly, and at the end of the interview she was surprised that she had talked so much and so long!

## **The Interview**

### ***Attitude Towards Knowledge: “Voice of Integration”***

Rita listens to acknowledged experts, to her own gut feelings and to her own reasoning powers. This integration of the voices is the characteristic that differentiates Constructed Knowing from the other perspectives:

When I need to learn I listen to the people who really know about it. It is a very good way to learn. You put all your attention to what they say, and if it's something you think you did not understand, it's good to ask a question.

I can count on my gut to tell me the truth sometimes, yes . . . the way you feel about another person, almost like you know what that person is going to do or say before she or he knows it—a sixth sense, sort of. But you can't depend on that every day; otherwise, we wouldn't need any schooling (laughs).

When I have a problem to solve, I like to think things through carefully. I solve my own problems in my mind every day.

Rita's appreciation of context and her canny assessment of the appropriateness of the various modes of knowing indicate a Constructed Knower:

Listening to others is more for small things, trivial, everyday things—you ask your neighbour how she makes good cookies, you listen to people, if they have something to say that you're interested in. You learn from another person, it doesn't need to be in school.

I can sort out for myself the small decisions that matter to me a lot in my everyday life. But for big decisions, say having to do with money, I ask my husband his opinion, because

he is educated. And if it's something he can't give me an answer, we go to a lawyer or something like that. Experts if necessary!

The gut feeling is good if it doesn't cost you any money (laughs).  
But I go to somebody who really knows, if it's going to cost me money!

### *Attitude Towards Learning*

Rita walked five miles each way to attend a one-room French school in rural New Brunswick where the boys sat on one side and the girls on the other. Her schooling was intermittent; the roads were often closed in winter, and in other seasons the students were needed to help out on the farms. The teaching left a lot to be desired, and most of the students did not master reading and writing:

It was mostly religious from Roman Catholic books. The prayers were very important, first in the morning and then before recess, after recess, always prayers. We only learned a few words a day, farmer oriented, to prepare the children to earn their living in a farming community.

Rita, the oldest of six children, picked up a love of learning from her mother, who had been a school teacher, educated by the nuns. Her mother sent away for French newspapers, library books, and store catalogues, and taught her children in the evenings by the light of the kerosene lamp and the fire in the fireplace:

She always wanted us to learn something, and she used to have crayons and games and drawings. We did a lot of drawing . . . I thought of learning with the hands more than anything else, more than with the head . . . the words were there to help us to form things with the hands, not so much for deep thinking like you would do in higher education.

### ***Words Central to Learning***

The Silent Knower perceives words as weapons to be used against one, but the Received Knower views them as central to learning. Rita loves words. She is constantly expanding her vocabulary, rolling the words around on her tongue, trying them out in conversation. Sometimes her pronunciation or her choice of words is a bit “off,” but she takes the risks, and she makes them her own. Rita’s veneration for words as tools for empowerment is characteristic of Received and Procedural Knowers. She has learned about herself and the world by teaching herself to read English newspapers:

I tried to educate myself by reading English newspapers. Teaching myself, I didn’t have the proper procedure, so I taught myself more or less wrongly, so now it’s very difficult for me to undo that. I spell wrongly.

We didn’t know English at home, so when I came here I started to buy English newspapers and I taught myself to read. I do understand how to read, I love books. I read at least two newspapers a day, sometimes more on the weekends! My husband receives six newspapers a day at home—newspapers all over the house!

Although she is an avid TV watcher, there is nothing of the “couch potato” in her use of TV as a learning resource. It is hard to know whether her proactive approach to TV indicates the Received Knower’s perception of listening as a demanding and active process or the Constructed Knower’s self-directed learning:

I’m not watching with my head blank. No, no, I’m thinking of what’s going on. I take down notes, and then during the commercial I elaborate on those points while it is fresh in my mind. Later on, I look it up to see how I understood it from what I have on paper and from what I remember, take the two together to inform myself of what I have heard and seen.

I like to use my hands to learn—even studying, I have to use my hands, to write, to copy. I have notes all over the place.

Rita has attended a Literacy Program for the past two years. It has evidently empowered her by helping her to develop verbal skills that have moved her towards Connected/Constructed Knowing:

You’re more open with friends because you can use more words in conversation and you understand them better when they speak. Prior to that, you mostly listen and not talk so much yourself because you feel inadequate for a good conversation. The more words you know, it gives you the courage to converse more rather than staying aside.

### ***Commitment to Action***

Rita’s life demonstrates the Constructed Knower’s commitment to action. She has taken autonomous actions that have required both risk-taking and

pragmatic decision-making. When she was only 18, she came to Montreal to make her own way, unable to read and write:

I tried being a switchboard operator at Bell Telephone, but they were only paying \$8 a week. I needed \$5 for my own room because I was not going to live in a slum, and that didn't give me enough money for food. Same with Eaton's, they only paid \$12 a week.

I used to go to Kresge's and stand at the counter, because if you sat you had to pay more. So I stood, I could buy a hotdog for five cents, a beverage for five cents. But I couldn't live on hamburgers and toast, so I had to go back to restaurant service.

I started waitressing at Murray's because they had the best training, and they never called you a "waitress," they called you a "hostess." I liked that, they were more high class. Then I worked my way up to the Berkeley Hotel, at that time it was for the French high-class people, very grand, then at Drury's, a real English place, a grand old place, very exclusive.

She had planned to go all over Canada and the United States, but she met her husband, and he wanted to stay here. She worked all her life; first, to put her husband through university, "because it was the man who needed the education, not the woman," and later because, "I didn't want to sit in an apartment, I wanted to be out with people and earn money at the same time."

Although she embodied the Constructed Knower's passion for learning, she had neither the time, money, nor opportunity to take formal education. Then, at age 67, she read in the *Montreal Gazette* about the literacy program



offered for a minimal fee by the Protestant School Board of Greater Montreal. She applied, for the first time, to a formal program. Registering was the hardest part; she felt shy and ignorant, "very small." But she committed herself to action and took the risk:

I told myself, "Why should you feel worried, embarrassed with those people? They've been to school all their life, they don't know anything much. They've had all those years in school, and they're still in the same class with me." I've never been to school, I learned at home—maybe it was good, because in some families they don't have a book in the house.

### *Attitude Towards Authority*

Rita was brought up to defer to authorities: her father, two sets of grandparents, school teachers, and priests, because "they are the people above you through their own education." But even as a child, she sometimes had different ideas from her elders:

Some things I didn't believe, but I kept my mouth shut and did what I wanted. If I could. Because when I was young, you did not rebel, it was not allowed. But I kept my ideas in my own mind until I was old enough to do something about it.

You don't have to do exactly what they want you to. You go for a walk in the woods, they say go this way, you go that way. To hell with them, you don't have to tell them, you don't have to lie, you keep your mouth shut.

I did not like the Roman Catholic Church. No. I have nothing against the religion, but when they were telling me something I should do and it was against my own principles, I went my own way, and I did not tell them

because I did not want to be *smashed*. Because what I have in my own head here, nobody takes that away.

Obviously, even though the young Rita *appeared* to be a Silent/Received Knower because she lacked the tools to publicly challenge authorities, she was already incorporating the Subjective Knower's shift to respecting her own internal authority.

As an adult, she spent her hard-earned dollars on a business course. She evaluates it critically:

They didn't teach well, they just wanted to make their money. They had everybody sitting at a typewriter. I couldn't type, I couldn't even spell! It was just robbing the people, we weren't literate. How can you type when you can't spell the words, eh? And shorthand, what can you do when you can't read it and write it down? I just stayed one month to get my \$5 worth. One teacher said, "You're doing all right," but there was no sense to it, it was jumble, jumble, jumble.

She does not assume that "the authorities" must know what they're doing and that *she* must be stupid and to blame for failing. Rather, her considered assessment of the authorities' motives and teaching methods indicates a characteristic of the Constructed Knower: taking responsibility for evaluating authorities. It is difficult to know how rigorously one should define this criterion. Does it mean that she should have confronted them and demanded her money back? Would that have been reasonable, bearing in mind the times and her lack of social power?

Her present strategies for dealing with disagreements with authorities indicate the flexibility and attention to context of the Constructed Knower:

If I don't have nothing to gain, there's no point in wasting my breath and getting tired and all fussed over things that don't pay me. Not only money, but in the human sense of the word, that leaves something in my mind to remember. If it's worthwhile for me to disagree, if I have something to gain from it, then I'll get into a fight. But if I feel there's nothing for me, I'm just polite or don't bother.

### *Evaluating Authorities in the Literacy Program*

Rita has high praise for the teachers in the program. If one did not know her criticisms of her previous educators, one might suspect this was the uncritical acceptance of the Received Knower. But we know she does take responsibility for evaluating authorities; consequently, when she says "the teachers are all good, there are no bad teachers, they are very, very helpful," I interpret it as the Procedural Knower's respect for authority and the Constructed Knower's considered evaluation. She has the Procedural Knower's high valuation of formal instruction, and she chafes when other students waste precious classroom time. She thinks that at this level of education the teacher should be in charge:

They are there to teach, that's their job. I don't mean like being nasty or throwing their weight around. But they have to be stern to keep the discipline. Imagine, they have students from age 14 to 30 or so, at that age if they are people with very little education they are inclined to make

fun in the class. The teacher has to put her foot down to make them listen and not interfere with the students who want to learn all the time.

Rita speaks of one teacher who has been especially helpful in empowering students:

That's Ruth, oh yeah. She always has time for everyone. She says she learns a lot from us. She always respected her students, that's why we respected her, I suppose. She had a way of making students feel good about themselves and taking the shyness away from her students. The way she spoke to us we were not so shy after, we could speak to her more openly and not be afraid to be rebuffed.

### *Maintaining Connections with Others*

Rita rejects the devil's-advocate, adversarial approach in her relations with others that is associated with the Separate Procedural Knower:

Often it's a waste of time, arguing about small things. I would not make the arguments just for the sake of the argument.

If they have a good debate and I'm learning something from it, then I'll listen for a while. But, if I think, for myself, the debate is empty, that I'm not going to salvage anything for myself, then it's not worthwhile listening to it. Why should I listen to the same story fifty times, you've heard it once, you don't need it any more . . . there's debates that give you that feeling.

She is more inclined to take the empathetic approach of the Connected/Constructed Knower:

You can give the other one the benefit of the doubt. If it's something like you don't kill that's one thing, but for everyday, no, you can't say you're wrong or you're right. Let them express their point of view and then you think about it.

If I have a different opinion than a friend, I don't want to hurt myself, I don't want to hurt my friend, so if it doesn't cost me anything and it pleases her, I agree with her. But if it's something that's important to her—later on, in a few weeks or so when the person's humor is better, then you can phrase it slightly differently and the person will agree with you perhaps—or semi-agree. You come to a conclusion where you're both right.

### *Attitude Towards Knowledge: Rejects Dualism*

As a child, Rita had hoped that one day she'd be able to figure the world out, but as she grew older she realized that "the real world doesn't work that way." Now she thinks she will never have all the answers:

No, no. No one will ever have the answers. The only thing I'm afraid of is that the ones who are supposed to have the answers are going to blow the Earth up, today it's global, you're not in a little corner any more. And they think they do have the answers, each one in his own head thinks he has the answers, thinks he is right, even if he destroys the whole world. You cannot change people's minds, and it's very difficult for the heads of the countries to come to a proper conclusion.

This sounds like the Constructed Knower's tolerance of ambiguity and contradiction, especially coupled to her belief that there is no one right answer to questions:

Often, there's more than one, especially in small things, sure. It's often not a case of plain black and white, you know. There's always rights and wrongs, some are more wrong and some are less wrong. It depends.

### ***Most Powerful Learning Experiences***

Rita says she has had powerful learning experiences every day since she was two years old. Asked what will stay with her from the Literacy Program, she replies, "Everything will stay with me—I don't lose things, oh no, I appreciate." Adapting to change is the most important thing she has learned:

I adapt to different conditions, because I learned even as a small child you have to adapt to the climate. You have to adapt every day, this decision today, and tomorrow a bigger decision. To me, adapting is normal. I do not let myself get regimented, I make adjustments every day.

And compromise. There are situations where you have to compromise, you're not alone on this planet. But those are things I do automatically, I don't think about it. So it's difficult for me to explain.

It's like, be prepared for anything, and if nothing happens, good. If anything crucial happens, then you're prepared for it, or you think you are. Expect the best, and prepare for the worst!

But *how much* does Rita adapt and compromise? It is difficult to know whether this indicates the Received and Subjective Knower's lack of public voice and tools for persuading others or the Constructed Knower's more empowered balancing of needs of the self and others.

## Conclusion

Rita exemplifies the intertwining of self, voice, and mind posited by Belenky et al.; her increasing verbal skills are powerful tools that enhance her self-concept and her understanding of and participation in the world in which she lives. Many of her responses seem to be those of a Constructed Knower, but because some characteristics of Constructed Knowing can also be found in other positions, it can be difficult to know where to place them. *Women's Ways of Knowing* criteria for a Constructed Knower are phrased in terms like, "all knowledge is understood to be constructed by the knower herself"; and "the knower moves beyond established frameworks, makes new connections and makes new knowledge." Rita would not understand this concept, but in spite of that, it is possible that much of the time she is acting as a Constructed Knower without being aware of it. Is higher education necessary before one can be considered a Constructed Knower? Perhaps we should be asking, *in what ways or in what circumstances* is a person a particular kind of knower, instead of making an empirical assessment of responses in trying to match a woman with a particular learning perspective?

## EILEEN: AS SEEN BY THREE CODERS

### Introduction

I enlisted two colleagues\* to act as additional coders of this interview, to provide a check on the validity of my coding. They are both full-time teachers at the English Adult Education Center of Collège Marie-Victorin. They are conversant with the *Women's Ways of Knowing* theory, have attended a workshop with Mary Belenky and have met with her privately to discuss the implications for teaching. They are enthusiastic about the theory, and would like to carry out further research on how its insights might be applied to their student population, which is largely composed of women returning to school after years away from study. I interviewed three students from this school; they chose to code Eileen because neither of them knew her.

Eileen Anderson is 66 years old. She was raised a Roman Catholic and went to Catholic schools, mostly taught by nuns. A lifelong Montrealer, she married and raised four children here. After being widowed for two years, she enrolled in Social Science for Seniors, a three-year CEGEP diploma program specially designed for people over fifty, to enable them to study topics of interest with their peers. Since graduating with her D.E.C., Eileen has been

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\*My thanks to Susan McCabe and Vae Hershey.



active in the Alumnae of the Collège as well as simultaneously auditing courses at Concordia University. During our interview, Eileen was warm and accommodating, and tried to answer the questions helpfully.

### **My Coding of the Interview**

#### ***Integrating the Voices***

Eileen is a Constructed Knower in her appreciation of the merits of listening to the expertise of others as well as to her own intuition and reasoning powers:

When I want to learn something new I go to whatever source material is available. It might be to books or to an experienced person, depending on what it was I was trying to find out. . . . I do like to get the opinion of someone who knows a lot about the subject.

When I have a problem to solve, I like to mull things over quite a bit before I take any action. I look at the pros and cons.

I consider myself to be intuitive. So when I try to understand something, I use my intuitions and feelings—I think it's important.

I tend to go with my own opinions. Everybody is guided, bombarded daily with outside influences, but I tend to take my own judgment.

I tend to go more on my own instincts. They've proven pretty good. But in some areas, I go on my own judgment.

### ***Attitude Towards Authorities***

When Eileen looks back at her childhood, she remembers the Church as the authority that dominated her life. Even at a young age, she was inclined to rebel against Church rules that did not make sense to her:

You should do this, you shouldn't do that. There were so many rules. Everything was to be taken on belief, on trust. They didn't influence me. I obeyed, I did what I had to do. But I wasn't taken in, I guess.

I rebelled, I guess. The nuns would make us promise we wouldn't wear short sleeves and ankle socks in summer—a ten-year-old should not expose her bare arms! I remember being in church praying the teachers wouldn't be there because I had ankle socks on!

I was around six, and about to go to my first confession. I was sitting there thinking, "What can I tell him? What did I do wrong?" And I was literally making up things to tell the priest. And I thought, well I must have sassed my grandmother back somewhere along the line, I can tell him that!

Her inward rebellion marks her shift to Subjective Knowing, a position where she started redefining her relationship to authorities but lacked the social power to articulate her thoughts in public. She did not think of herself as a rebellious person, and her public persona was that of the "good girl" who abides by the Received Knower's moral imperative to live up to the expectations of others.

Nevertheless, while she was still a vulnerable and socially isolated teenager, she did take a stand against what she considered unreasonable

authority; a decision that had serious practical consequences for her. Eileen had no relatives here, so she was staying temporarily with a friend until she could find a job and get settled. The friend's mother was taking part in a church procession that wound around the city, kneeling in front of different churches. She insisted that Eileen take part in the procession. Eileen refused. The woman said, "People know me, I'm in that church." Eileen did not see why she should go because she was not a member of that church. The woman decreed, "If you don't, you can pack your things and leave." So she left! And the woman held onto most of her clothes until Eileen could find the money to pay her the board money she unilaterally decided Eileen owed her. In this instance, Eileen acted as a Constructed Knower who questioned conventional knowledge, took responsibility for evaluating authorities, had faith in her own perceptions, and committed herself to action, even in precarious circumstances.

Looking back on this incident, Eileen expresses surprise that she had taken such a strong action, because it would have been far easier to fall into line:

I wasn't a rebellious person, but I knew I was right. I couldn't see how this reflected on her. I wasn't a member of the church, I wasn't her child. I didn't believe in it, I had no reason to go. I thought she was overstepping the bounds. And she was a good Christian lady!

In our follow-up interview, Eileen remarked that just remembering how she acted on that occasion has altered her self-image. It has empowered her,

because she realizes that she must have been more independent and resourceful than she has ever given herself credit for.

### ***Attitude Towards Knowledge***

Eileen seems to share the Constructed Knower's perspective that knowledge is socially constructed, and that "objectivity" is a chimera:

Objectivity is important, but it's very difficult to do. Because we all bring our own biases to any situation. We can't help that, and to say our biases don't exist. . . . It's like a mother with two children fighting, how do you get to the bottom of it, which child is right and which is wrong? I think it's important but almost impossible.

Even in the same family, siblings can have the same parents but they'll act differently. People will read the same books and come to different conclusions.

Eileen has the Connected/Constructed perspective that knowledge does not come "from on high." She considers that in the classroom both teachers and students can construct knowledge:

The teachers are not necessarily more right than the students. Well, they have the experience and the education so that stands them in good stead. At the same time, the student has living experience and what she or he says might be just as much value or more value than what the teacher has to say.

Eileen demonstrates the Constructed Knower's stance that most questions have more than one answer that is right or true:

Oh, more than one. I'm sure of that. Very seldom is anything in life black or white. We may do something, take a decision to do something, but maybe we could have done it better or responded in a different way, so it's very seldom it's black or white.

In her "salad days" she had once thought she would be able to figure the world out, but not any more:

Not if I live to be 150! That doesn't bother me, I like that. That's fine. I mean, when I'm doing something particular, a task, then I like it tied up with a red ribbon. It has to be done, I like to do it properly, but as far as life goes . . . even in personal relationships, it's never the perfect situation, right? (laughs) It's a question of balance, of give and take.

She epitomizes the Constructed Knower's abandonment of either/or thinking, attention to situation and context, and high tolerance for contradiction and ambiguity. She sees the world as a wonderfully complicated and elusive place where nothing is ever finally settled:

Yeah, *wonderfully* complicated. I like all the bad parts and the good parts. And nothing ever does get settled. It's a balance. Like living in Montreal: I *love* it, I *love* it, but I realize all the bad parts, the climate and the political climate, but I wouldn't want to live anywhere else. And it's because of all this . . . I thrive on it!

### ***Playing Devil's Advocate***

Eileen enjoys playing devil's advocate with her adult son who lives with her, because "it's fun, it's a game, a good way to play with ideas and look at different aspects of them." But she prefers to do it in a friendly context with someone she trusts, not in a situation "where I wouldn't be up to it." Nor does she favor it as a classroom learning technique designed to put the teacher on the spot:

No, I don't like that. We've had a few of those contrary people in class. I don't believe in challenging the person just to be contrary, no I don't like to do that, no, no, not just to be mean, to see if you can upset the person or deliberately throw him off balance. I don't play those games in class, taking up time with a professor just for the sake of it.

### ***Connectedness To Others***

Playing devil's advocate is generally associated with Separate Knowers, but Eileen plays it only in protected, non-adversarial relationships; she shows more signs of Connected than Separate Knowing. Rather than picking apart another's thought, she is more likely to probe further, to try to understand why the person thinks a certain way:

It's probably truer now since I've taken these courses, because I think I've developed a little patience. You know, we tend to think we're right, we're doing it the right way. . . . I think now I'm more accepting of the other's point of view.

She tends to be empathetic to others and ameliorative in her relationships with her peers:

I consider myself to be intuitive, I can pick up on people's feelings. I think I do have empathy and I have confidence in that ability—I think it's important. I don't want this to sound egoistic, but I think of myself as a sensitive person, sensitive to the feelings of others. And I get that back from them.

Eileen generally does not have disagreements with her friends, but that does not mean she always goes along with the crowd:

I'm generally considered easy to get along with, I don't know whether that means I'm a pushover! Generally, I'll go my own way or do my own thing if it's something I want to do. I'll tell them it's up to them to do what they want, and I'll do what I want.

My friends like to do things in groups; for instance, when the class is over, they may say, "I'm going to the Metro, you want to come with me?" I'll say, "You go ahead, I'll find my own way." I like to maintain a little independence, I guess, not follow the crowd.

She seems to rely strongly on identification with agreed-on ways of knowing when she says she really likes it when people agree with her opinions:

Oh yes, oh yes. I guess it gives more credence or more value to my opinion or my way of thinking if somebody else agrees with me.

However, agreement with others does not shut down learning or make her feel it's "case closed." On the contrary, it pushes her to seek more knowledge on the subject in collaboration with others:

I like to pursue things, to investigate. In the Ethics course I'm taking at Concordia, I wanted to form a group to have a little discussion group on the side, because philosophy and ethics you can go on and on. I'm looking for more knowledge in different fields.

She values sharing knowledge with others and being treated in a connected manner by them, but this does not imply that her ideas remain static:

Oh yes, oh yes. We like to think we're being listened to and that what we have to say is of value. And if you listen hard enough you may come around to their way of thinking, to agree with that person.

There are dangers to that, yes. You might get voted down! You might have to change your mind! You lose your autonomy I guess. You think, I've always done it this way, then you have to find a new way of doing it. It's true, we get jostled around a bit, and it's difficult sometimes.

These excerpts certainly indicate a Connected Knower, embedded in connectedness and empathy for and collaboration with others. It is arguable how much they also indicate the Received Knower's symbiotic desire to have the same ideas as others or the Constructed Knower's pursuit of "real talk" with others and capacity to listen to self and to others simultaneously.



### ***Most Powerful Learning Experience***

All her adult life Eileen was a busy traditional wife and mother who did not venture far from hearth and home. But with her husband dead and her children raised, she asked herself, "What on Earth am I going to do with myself?" So she enrolled as a full-time student in the three-year diploma (D.E.C.) program, Social Science for Seniors, at Collège Marie-Victorin. This CEGEP program was her first foray into higher education, and she confesses, "I hadn't a clue what I was getting into."

When she started attending classes, she was in the position of a Received Knower, with no confidence in her own ability to speak or to create knowledge:

I was *incredibly nervous*. Whenever a teacher wanted an opinion I would be shaking, my voice would be shaking, my hand would be trembling. Nevertheless, I screwed up my courage and would raise my hand. I thought I was the only one, and that everyone else was much smarter than I was. I guess I felt sort of inadequate *in the beginning*. But I overcame that.

The last five years have been a remarkable period of empowerment and growth that "cracked open her mind":

The powerful learning experience for me was the learning of self-esteem, and to give more value to myself and to my opinions. In school, people have said to me, "Gee, you're smart!" So, that's really validating for me. It's rather incredible to say I'm worth something, I have something to offer, ideas to give to people. At first I was a little surprised, but now I've accepted that.

All my life I spent looking after others, my main concern was for my husband and children. And now, it's a totally selfish time for me. I'm doing what I want, when I want, I don't have to consider anybody else. It's a good feeling.

I have more time to be interested in education and other learning, time to explore and give full rein to my ideas, and I can do it when I want to and in the way I want to. There's no end to what you can learn or what you can experience. It's a good time in my life.

She is a Procedural Knower in her high valuation of formal instruction, her accommodation to others' views of what is knowledge, and her increasing sense of control over her own life. Eileen also reflects on how much she learned from her years spent raising a family:

*Then*, I didn't think so. I didn't realize I was learning anything. Now I view raising my family as contributing to whatever I do now. When you're banking, shopping, raising children, I think it's the most important thing we can do, there's not enough importance placed on it. I think I did a good job. I have nice children.

In this reflection, she acts as a Constructed Knower in acknowledging the importance of caring for others and in redefining her own identity to validate her life experience rather than accepting the traditional dictum, "You're just a housewife."

### ***Is There Life After a D.E.C.?***

After achieving her goal of a CEGEP diploma, what was she to do for an encore? Graduation spelled the end of the intellectual and social stimulation

Eileen had become accustomed to. Without missing a beat, she embroiled herself in activities that served to balance her creative, intellectual, social and practical interests: a characteristic of the Constructed Knower. She is auditing university courses two days a week at Concordia; simultaneously, she is developing impressive organizational skills as vice-president of the Collège Alumnae, planning many activities, from guest lectures to overnight bus trips to Stratford. This work enables her to maintain her friendships and her social and intellectual ties with the Collège:

Because the group wanted to stay together. We didn't want to part after graduating, we were a community. And we wanted to maintain our contact with the school.

Eileen says she is auditing courses in Politics and Ethics at Concordia rather than tackling a degree program because, "I thought I'd take it easy, and I'm enjoying that":

Both of these subjects are interesting. A lot of it is repetition of what we've had at Mary Vic because we've had history and politics. It's less challenging because I'm not doing the work. I religiously write notes—I guess I'm programmed to do that. Sometimes I look at them and sometimes I don't, but it helps me to learn.

When Eileen is stuck or needs to learn more, she will ask the professor to clarify it for her:

I was hesitant at first, because I was with younger students. I didn't want to infringe on their time. I felt *it's their time*,

but sometimes I just can't stop myself, because I want to know, or give my opinion.

There was some discussion among the coders as to how to interpret these particular passages and uncertainty as to how much you can read into them.

### Conclusion

I met with the two other coders, and we discussed our interpretations at length. While we basically saw Eileen in the same way, there were some differences, which is not surprising in a qualitative research that seeks insight into complex thought processes. One coder looked at Eileen developmentally from the time she was a child and concluded:

I had a sense of her moving from Received to Subjective. Now she's more of a Connected Knower working on Integrated/Constructed.

The second coder concluded:

Eileen entered the school at Received and has retained some of this, but has adopted primarily the stance of Connected Procedural Knowing with probable leanings towards Constructed Knowing. It is sometimes hard to tell if deviations from Connected are "back" to Separate or "forward" to Constructed.

Personally, I am more inclined to see Eileen as a Connected Procedural/Constructed Knower who is moving steadily towards more Constructed ways of knowing. I coded Eileen twice, and the bulk of my “ticks” were in this perspective both times, but I can certainly see my colleagues’ point of view. I think there can be a number of legitimate ways in which to interpret a particular passage—or one might decide to ignore it as not being relevant to the coding categories.

For example, my colleagues think that Eileen’s approach to university studies indicates the passivity of a Received Knower. They said, “If the courses were repetition for her, why didn’t she complain to the professor, or drop the course, or find some new way to approach the material for herself?” I had not coded this myself because I did not think it provided enough information, but if pressed, I am inclined to give Eileen the benefit of the doubt and view her behavior as the autonomous choice of a Constructed Knower. Why do I differ from my colleagues? Perhaps the comment that “a lot of it is repetition” looked like a complaint on the printed transcript. But I *saw* Eileen’s facial expression when she said it, and *heard* the pride and satisfaction in her voice when I transcribed the tape. I think that much richness and nuance are lost with the shift in medium. While my colleagues think Eileen is acting as a Received Knower with her copious note-taking in lectures, I find this is problematic to code, because the Received Knower’s trait of attending to the expertise of others in some situations is also a

characteristic of the “integrated voices” of the Constructed Knower.

Again, my coding colleagues interpreted Eileen’s reluctance to speak up in class as the rather “wimpish” passivity of a Received Knower. I did not originally code this excerpt either, but on reflection, I know from my own experience and that of other older women learners that this is a common reaction and results not so much from feeling *inarticulate* but *too articulate* compared with the younger students. A self-imposed “reining in” could, therefore, be interpreted as a Connected/Constructed Knower’s sensitivity to balancing the needs of self and others. Constructed Knowing is the most difficult perspective to identify because it is an amalgamation of the earlier perspectives. There is a considerable overlap in the characteristics, and my tendency is to code them in the “higher” perspective.

We all stressed the importance of sensitivity to context, and the necessity to *read forward and look back*. We realized very quickly that you must keep in mind the totality (at least the bit of “totality” at your disposal) of a woman’s thought when interpreting a particular passage. For example, when Eileen says, “The teachers and the program at Mary Vic are marvelous, marvelous, I can’t say enough good about them!” it is important to know that she is not a person who habitually grants that authorities are all-knowing and worthy of unconditional respect.

We all experienced some difficulties in coding, and found a conceptual vagueness in terms like “gaining a unique voice,” which is one of the key

characteristics of the Constructed Knower. What is a "unique voice"? Who decides? Can many/most women aspire to having it? Does it come with maturity? Or is it reserved for the intelligentsia? We also concurred that it is sometimes difficult to know just how much to read into a particular passage and that one should exercise care not to over-interpret a woman's words.

The input of the other coders was invaluable to me. Their perceptions gave me feedback that helped me to reflect on my own thinking. It was reassuring to find that their coding, while not identical to mine, was "in the same ballpark." Their questioning helped me to identify and articulate some conceptual problems in the theory and coding process. Finally, their enthusiasm was contagious, and their collaboration did much to overcome the *ennui* of working in isolation.

## SUMMARY

The foregoing case studies portray older women learners in the framework of the *Women's Ways of Knowing* perspectives. Each case study provides evidence for how and where that woman fits into a particular perspective or perspectives, and illustrates the anomalies, difficulties, and ambiguities encountered in the coding. Not surprisingly, some cases fit into a particular perspective more easily than others. Joan epitomizes Constructed Knowing; Doris blends Subjective and Constructed Knowing; Mary is primarily a Procedural Knower; Rita embodies several perspectives simultaneously; and Eileen seems to be a Connected Procedural Knower with Constructed Knowing emerging. In spite of the difficulties associated with taking idiosyncratic individuals and trying to "slot" them into one of five discrete categories, the rich data that emerge from the interviews provide valuable illustrations of women's development of self, voice, and mind.



## Chapter V

# CONCLUSIONS

## INTRODUCTION

This study consisted of five case studies of women students aged 65 to 78. It explored how these women view themselves as learners in the overall context of their lives, using the *Women's Ways of Knowing* framework as the organizing principle. The objectives of the research were to explore the merits of *Women's Ways of Knowing* as a theoretical framework, to extend the theory by applying it to a data set not addressed by the original researchers, to validate the voices of older women students, and to provide insights that may be helpful to adult educators. The conclusions, therefore, will focus on what the research reveals about the theoretical framework, whether it tells us anything meaningful about women students—especially older learners, and the implications for lifelong learning.

## **WOMEN'S WAYS OF KNOWING AS A THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK**

The literature review details the theoretical assumptions and objectives from which *Women's Ways of Knowing* emerges. Feminist theorist Charlotte Bunch posits that a comprehensive theoretical framework is essential for planning and implementing both long- and short-term goals (1982, p. 249). Bunch contends that a theoretical model for change must have four inter-related parts: a description of what exists; analysis of why that reality exists; an alternative vision; and strategies to bring about change (1983, pp. 251-53). The *Women's Ways of Knowing* theory does address all four parts, but this study examines only the first part of the theory—the part that describes *what actually exists*. That is, this study utilizes the theoretical framework and methodology to explore how women presently view themselves as learners and how they evaluate their educational experiences both in and out of school. The conclusions, therefore, relate only to the efficacy of this conceptualization as a means of providing insightful information about women as learners and the usefulness of the methodological instruments. This is an important first step in theory building, because it is necessary to determine if the description of *what actually exists* is meaningful, before examining whether the resulting visions and strategies for change have promise.

## **The Interview Schedule as a Methodological Instrument**

While the authors make it clear that subsequent researchers should feel free to adapt the *Women's Ways of Knowing* interview schedule in any way they wish, I deliberately stuck fairly closely to it in order to assess its merit as an information-gathering instrument. I found some of the questions ambiguous. For example, when I asked an interviewee, "How would you describe yourself as a learner?" and my respondent queried, "In what way?" I was not even sure myself! Does the anticipated response have to do with: fast/slow; impulsive/deliberate; visual/auditory/experiential—or something else altogether? Parrying with "Whatever comes to your mind" may be a good mind/word ploy in a therapeutic setting, but it sounds both manipulative and vague in a setting where the expectation is that the researcher will ask clear and answerable questions. In addition, some of the questions are rather abstract and couched in language suitable for an educated clientele but intimidating to people with limited verbal skills. I found it necessary to augment the interview schedule with informal questions that emerged from the respondents' life stories, and in some cases the degree of spontaneity with which they answered those questions was markedly greater than the way in which they answered questions from the formal interview schedule. However, in spite of these reservations, I did find the interview schedule to

be a useful instrument, at least as a starting point, in eliciting thoughtful, detailed responses from my research subjects.

### **Matching Data to the Learning Perspectives:**

#### **More of a Sketch than a Blueprint**

The forte of qualitative research is its unearthing of detail and its penchant for nuance, and the resultant richness of the data tends to defy categorization. It, therefore, seems paradoxical to uncover the complexities of people's lives and then to deny the nuances by trying to fit the responses into one of five discrete categories. Therefore, in coding the interviews, I often found it difficult, frustrating, time-consuming, and somewhat unfair to my respondents to fit their responses into these coding categories. Also, the overlap of characteristics that seem applicable to more than one perspective sometimes made it difficult to assign a position. This is particularly true of the Connected Procedural Knower who is difficult to differentiate from the Constructed Knower. Ambiguity also arises over the position of the Silent Knower. I think a distinction needs to be made between women who are truly "voiceless and powerless" and those who *choose* to remain silent in certain situations for pragmatic reasons of their own.

I wondered if my difficulties were caused by an incomplete understanding of the coding criteria or whether it was the result of a

personal bias on my part that rejoices in human idiosyncrasy and feels that "pigeonholes are for pigeons." However, co-author of *Women's Ways of Knowing* Jill Tarule recently reassured me that, "If you found the coding painful and time-consuming, you got it right!" She stresses that it is rare to find a "pure" position and that women generally incorporate several learning perspectives simultaneously.\*

Because the authors did not supply details of their coding criteria, I devised my own coding sheets (see Appendix D) by extricating from the book the characteristics that seemed to best typify the inter-related themes the authors were describing. This can only be an approximation of their vision, and greater accuracy would be assured if the authors themselves articulated detailed coding criteria that best exemplify their thought.

If possible, the interviewer should be the person to transcribe the tape-recorded interviews because she or he is the person who can best capture the nuances on the tape and be alert to distortions that can occur in transferring from one medium to another. Obviously, the interviewer is the best person to code the responses, being the only one who can interpret responses holistically, taking into account the nuances of the respondent's body language, voice inflection, and demeanor. I must stress that it is vital to interpret responses in the overall context of the interview when assigning a coding position, rather than assessing only small slices of dialogue.

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\*Personal communication at a workshop on *Women's Ways of Knowing* and Collaborative Learning, Concordia University, February 8, 1991.

In spite of the above-mentioned difficulties, I conclude that the five learning perspectives are identifiable and useful when applied to my data. Therefore, they do meet Glaser and Strauss's criteria in that they "fit" the data in my study and "work" in providing useful information about the research subjects (cited by Taylor and Bogdan, 1984, p. 126). However, I do think it may be realistic to conceptualize these learning perspectives as more of a "sketch" than a "blueprint."

### **Is This A Developmental Scheme?**

Belenky et al. eschew the developmental term "stages" in favor of the more egalitarian "perspectives." Because they interviewed women from such widely different backgrounds, they found that "universal developmental pathways are far less obvious" (1986, p. 15) than in Perry's (1970) clearly sequential scheme. They declare that, because they lack longitudinal data, they "leave it to future work to determine whether these perspectives have any stagelike qualities" (1986, p. 15).

But this stance evades some perplexing questions. Do women move sequentially from one perspective to the next? Can they skip steps? What pushes people to move from one stage to another? Do they revert? Is Constructed Knowing an attainable goal for many women, given opportunity, education, and maturity? Or is this an exalted endpoint to be aspired to

only by the intelligentsia? Surely there are some stage-like qualities: would anyone who supports women's intellectual growth argue that Silent or Received Knowers are as empowered as Constructed Knowers? And, finally, what does it say about women's development if one-half of the 135 women interviewed were Subjectivists; that is, only at the mid-point of an arguably developmental scheme?

While these questions are not well addressed in the 1986 book, Jill Tarule recently clarified some of these questions for me at a workshop at Concordia.\* She now thinks that women clearly *do* move sequentially through Silence to Received to Subjective Knowing, but that developmental pathways are "murkier" at the top stages. She also states that people who have attained the advanced positions can always revert to earlier positions, either across their lifespan or at the micro-level when they take on a particular task or find themselves in a new situation. It would seem to me, however, that those who have already attained a higher developmental stage would remain in the Silent or Received positions a shorter time before they "bounced back" than those who had not.

This recognition that it is not always "onwards and upwards" dilutes the hierarchical aspects of the model and suggests a certain circularity. Perhaps it would be helpful to conceptualize it as a circular or spiralling model, somewhat analagous to Marilyn Taylor's adult education model in

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\*February 8, 1991

which self-directed adult learners move through a four-stage learning process—from equilibrium through disorientation to exploration and reorientation, and then attain equilibrium and a consolidation of their new learning (1987, pp. 179-96).

### **An Empowering Model for Women**

The book *Women's Ways of Knowing* has been widely read and discussed in both formal and informal adult education settings and has relevance as an adult education theory as well as a feminist model. It has aroused considerable enthusiasm and has generated workshops, lectures and "spin-off" research. Its strength is in its accessibility and the fact that it "resonates" with women; i.e., many women find that it "rings true" for them, and they find they can connect their own lives to both the theoretical learning perspectives and to the lives of the women portrayed in the book's case studies. Women tend to read excerpts from the case studies and say, "Wow, that's me!" or, "That's the way I used to be, but I'm not any more."

It provides a focus for self-reflection and stimulates lively dialogues among learners. The theory is simple enough that it can be explained and illustrated in a fairly short time, yet it is rich enough that it yields further insights when explored at length. For instance, I have presented this theory several times to naive audiences, and I have found that in a two-hour format



I have been able to explain the background of the theory, outline and illustrate the five learning perspectives, incorporate at least one experiential exercise, and talk about the implications for teaching and learning.

Because it is an evolutionary model that describes change over time rather than one that is concerned with more static concepts such as personality types, it is an empowering model in that it encourages women to reflect on their past and present positions and consider ways of expanding their intellectual horizons. The conceptualization of the Constructed Knower is one that is complex and open-ended; it encourages the idea that increasing growth, autonomy and lifelong learning are worthwhile and attainable goals.

### **Extending the Theory to Older Learners**

This study seeks not only to explore the merits of the *Women's Ways of Knowing* theory per se, but also to use it as a vehicle to gain insight about older women learners. Belenky et al. note that perspective change can come at any age:

What is remarkable in the stories of our women is that this seeming move toward greater autonomy is not tied to any specific age. Many of the women described listening to other voices for most of their lives, only to move to the subjectivist perspective at age forty or fifty (p. 50).

If such a dramatic shift can occur at midlife, the intriguing question is: what happens after 50? Although Belenky et al. had interviewed four older women for their planned chapter on "wise old women," they dropped them from the sample. Belenky says this was because they were simply too difficult to code and that "we could have sunk with the complexity of their stories and never got the book finished."\*

So it is no wonder that I had difficulty in coding my respondents! In addition to the admitted difficulties of coding people of any age, psychological research indicates that older people are harder to categorize because individuals become more differentiated as they age as a result of life experiences, physical and psychological variables and socioeconomic factors (Willis, 1985, pp. 818-23).

The women in my sample, aged 65 to 78, told very different stories about their lives and their learning, but there were commonalities. Clearly, they are all vital, active learners, still moving toward greater autonomy and intellectual growth. They all exhibit traits of Constructed Knowing, and their educational experiences seem to be related to their evolution. Whether we listen to Rita, who generally solves her own problems but pragmatically consults experts if there's money involved; or Doris, who integrates her "whoosh!" feelings into her decision-making; or Joan, who is confident she can make good decisions while being aware that she will never have all the

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\*At Workshop at Concordia University, May 17, 1989. Also, see correspondence with Belenky, Appendix A.

answers, we are hearing voices that exemplify growth and a commitment to lifelong learning. These voices are congruent with current psychological theories on aging. Much of the recent work on adult development has overturned the earlier pessimistic assessments of elders' intellectual abilities. Longitudinal research now shows a far more positive picture of aging, and indicates that high levels of intelligence, learning, and thinking are possible far into old age.\*

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\*For example, see Willis, 1985, pp. 818-23; Perlmutter and Hall, 1985, pp. 233-64; Lachman, 1985, pp. 188-211; Baltes, 1986, pp.467-499; and Gold, 1987, pp. 8-9.)

## IMPLICATIONS FOR PROVIDERS OF LIFELONG LEARNING

Canada is an aging society. Demographic studies reveal an accelerating growth path for the population aged 55 and over, and this population is projected to continue rapid growth until the year 2021 (Stone and Leroy, 1979, p. 48). Many of those past middle age will have relatively good health and vigor, higher educational levels and more political awareness than previous cohorts, and at least a degree of affluence. At 65, they can expect many more years of active life. According to psychologist Dolores Gold:

The growing expectation is that there can be development in these years, and that one can be healthy, involved and productive. But this is a relatively new concept that only now is being translated into policy" (cited by Roig-Tarr, 1990, p. 10).

This unprecedented situation poses new challenges for adult educators. Although they endorse the concept of lifelong learning as the organizing principle for all of education, "lifelong" seems to stop around age 50 (Knowles, 1980, p. 19). For both women and men, enrolment in adult education programs declines after age 45, and the lowest participation rate is among those over 65; a mere *four per cent* of the population in that age group were enrolled in programs in Canada in 1983 (Devereaux, 1985, pp. 6-7). If providers believe that education is a basic right and a lifelong process, they must respond imaginatively to this burgeoning clientele with

educational opportunities that will enhance the lives of the elderly and enable them to use and expand their skills and contribute to society in meaningful (not make-work) ways.

The *Women's Ways of Knowing* theory explores how women shift their learning perspectives over a lifetime, and, therefore, has potential as an adult education theory for all age groups. However, this study focusses on the older learner, and the case studies provide a wealth of detail that illustrates the motivations, learning strategies, self-concepts, and evolving attitudes toward learning of these older students. The narratives of women like these can help to explode the stereotypical idea that "you can't teach an old dog new tricks," and can provide insight for those designing and implementing educational programs for the older learner.

## CONTRIBUTIONS OF THE STUDY

### **Enrichment of the *Women's Ways of Knowing* Theory**

Although this is only a small, exploratory study, it contributes to the understanding and enrichment of the *Women's Ways of Knowing* theory in three ways:

(1) The study extends the theory to include women students aged 65 to 78. This not only enriches the theory but demonstrates that the framework can be successfully applied to other data sets.

(2) The case studies in the chapter "Voices of the Learners" are written up in a way that portrays the students as "flesh-and-blood" women in the overall context of their lives. This approach not only reveals, at least partially, the complexity of their thought but also serves to expose the resultant difficulties in coding them in one or even two discrete categories. This methodology differs from, and supplements, the organizational framework of the book *Women's Ways of Knowing*. The book's chapters were organized around the learning perspectives, and salient quotes from the interviewees were selected to illustrate these theoretical perspectives.

(3) The detailed list of characteristics for coding criteria devised for this study can be used to assist readers to better understand how the

person/perspective fit is arrived at, as well as providing a useful coding instrument for future researchers.

### **Validating Women's Voices**

By attending to "ordinary" women, the study publicly validates voices who would otherwise not be heard. The stories of older women as "passionate knowers" are particularly poignant because this is a population that is doubly stigmatized. The literature indicates that older women are frequently devalued as students not only because of their sex, but because of their age and their likely part-time status (Hall and Sandler, 1982, p. 12). Evidence that women in this age group are lively and sophisticated knowers and keen students is helpful in counteracting these negative stereotypes. The women in the sample provide admirable role models; public awareness of the vitality of women such as these can help to change the negative images of older women and thus diminish the anxiety about aging on the part of younger women.

## **A Guide for Adult Educators**

The case studies provide insight into women's epistemological perspectives that may serve to guide adult educators in designing and implementing gender-sensitive programs. The focus on the older learner draws attention to this neglected clientele and to the implications of extending the concept of lifelong learning to the long-lived.



## LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

(1) Because the study depicts only a small number of cases (my original sample was seven, from which I selected the five that illustrate the greatest variety of "fit" with the *Women's Ways of Knowing* framework), I can make no claim that their learning perspectives can be extrapolated to all women students "of a certain age."

(2) Belenky et al. acknowledge that "the question of why and when women shift from one mode of knowing to another . . . is not well addressed by our data" (p. 15). Like the original researchers, I limited my case studies to one intensive interview, supplemented by get-acquainted and follow-up telephone calls. Consequently, I do not have longitudinal data to map with precision women's changing perspectives over time.

(3) The study relies on uncorroborated self-reports. Undoubtedly, retrospective bias and memory decay occur, especially when respondents are looking back over a period of fifty or sixty years. However, these caveats are not as serious where the purpose of the study is to probe the respondent's own self-concepts as they would be in an overt "fact-finding" research.

(4) The study is ethnocentric in that the subjects are all white and have eurocentric backgrounds. However, they do represent both anglophone and francophone cultures and have varied socioeconomic statuses. The study has no need to be cross-cultural because the *Women's Ways of Knowing*

theory is an ideographic theory that seeks to explain events, behaviors, and beliefs of groups or individuals in a particular historical and cultural context and is grounded in selection of relevant instances, rather than a nomothetic theory that lays claims to universality (Goetz and LeCompte, 1984, p. 56).

## FUTURE RESEARCH

The widespread interest and enthusiasm that *Women's Ways of Knowing* has generated among both educators and students makes it seem likely that future researchers will refine and expand both the theoretical framework and its educational ramifications. Longitudinal research would clarify the developmental nature of the theory, and this is already being addressed by Belenky with her two-year action research program "Listening Partners." In addition to longitudinal research, inquiries that explore the theory with new data sets would both enrich the theory and add to an understanding of how it applies to various populations. One question that needs to be addressed in the future is: how gender-specific is the theory? While one-sex studies are legitimate and justifiable "to compensate for the many gaps in knowledge, errors and omissions which characterize the social sciences and the humanities" (Eichler and Lapointe, 1985, p. 21), it is relevant to determine the degree of gender-relatedness of the learning perspectives when considering educational reform. Finally, future researchers might fruitfully experiment with reconceptualizing the learning perspectives and "fine-tuning" the Interview Schedule and coding criteria.

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## **Appendix A**

**Correspondence from Blythe Clinchy and Mary Belenky,  
co-authors of *Women's Ways of Knowing***

Department of Psychology



# Wellesley College

Wellesley, Massachusetts 02181

March 1, 1989

Ms. Kathy Silver  
305 Rivermere Road  
St. Lambert, Quebec  
CANADA J4R 2G3

Dear Ms. Silver:

Thank you for your very generous comments on our book. We are delighted that you plan to do research related to ours. I understand Mary Belenky is coming (or has come?) to Concordia, so I hope you'll meet her there and talk with here.

Enclosed is a copy of the most recent revised version of the Ways of Knowing Interview. Mary Belenky and I have been working on successive revisions of the interview, as we administer it to various samples and learn more about the effectiveness (or lack of it) of various questions. This is what we call the "generic" interview. We've adapted it to different contexts, and you will surely have to do so too.

I hope you will find the interview useful in your work. If you do use the interview, please let us know how it goes. We like to hear how people are using it and would be most grateful for any feedback you can give us on the interviewing and coding. We are beginning to think that some time in the future we might edit a volume of papers written by people who have used the interview in research, teaching, or applied work of various kinds.

I'm afraid I haven't time at the moment to tell you about our current research and the myriad projects that WWK seems to have spawned. But perhaps you can talk to Mary about it. I well remember the awful stage of trying to come up with a focused dissertation project. Believe me, it does pass. I've found that "connected conversations" ("real talk") with colleagues--others interested in the same general area, who will listen carefully and sort of "interview you" about your interests, can help enormously.

Thank you again for your interest in our work, and good luck in yours.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Blythe Clinchy".

Blythe Clinchy, Ph.D  
Professor

# The University of Vermont

DEPARTMENT OF PSYCHOLOGY  
JOHN DEWEY HALL  
BURLINGTON, VERMONT 05405-0134



December 18, 1989

Kathy Silver  
305 Rivermere Rd.  
ST. Lambert, Que J4R 2G3  
Canada

Dear Kathy,

I am delighted to hear that your work is progressing. I hope that these materials will help you along.

Some people combine this little manual with the first half of the book and find that combination is a sufficient guide for classifying their interviews and thinking about their respondents' ways of knowing. There is also a very elaborate coding manual (a dense 75 pages) a student developed on a freshman college population which I could send for a \$10 charge. Some people find this document overwhelming.

Probably only one of the 4 wise women we interviewed seemed to be some sort of complicated Subjectivist to us. We have not made any more progress trying to sort out the many issues the women raised. The book that the woman who was so much of a subjectivist has published since that interview was conducted seems more in the constructivist mode. I am not sure what to make of it. Has she undergone a lot of epistemological development between the 77th and the 87th year? I assume not. She may have been limiting her discussion with us about the use of the mind at that interview because she was critical of us for choosing to focus on the experience of mind while she thought we should be looking at the whole system. Something like that. Maybe. The whole thing is so complicated. I am sure that you women will raise all sorts of hard questions in your mind as well.

I do hope that this will help. Have a good study, a good holiday, and a good new year!!

Sincerely,

  
Mary Field Belenky, Ed.D.  
Associate Research Professor



## **Appendix B**

### **Interview Schedule**

**prepared and provided by the authors of**

*Women's Ways of Knowing*

September 8, 1988

WAYS OF KNOWING: An Interview

by Mary Field Belenky, Blythe McVicker Clinchy, Nancy Rule Goldberger,  
and Jill Mattuck Tarule

The following questions invite the interviewee to talk about his or her intellectual growth and development. Conversations on this topic may be out of the ordinary for many people.

The questions are often hard to answer. They are designed to encourage someone to think through their experiences in a new way. Be patient. Give people time.

Be very liberal with follow up questions such as, "Why?" "How so?" "Can you give me an example?" to draw out your interviewee's thinking. Specific examples can show that you and the interviewee have a very different understanding of a word or a concept.

Your respondents may give you leads that will be very revealing if you follow their trains of thought closely with questions of your own design.

If you come to a question that has already been answered, or touched on, skip it. Or say something like "I think you have already answered this question, but you may have something to add."

Stop asking questions when a topic has been exhausted so your respondent will not feel badgered, or that you have found their answers deficient.

Feel free to adapt these questions to fit the needs of your particular study or institution.

THE WAYS OF KNOWING INTERVIEW

by

Mary Field Belenky, Blythe McVicker Clinchy,  
Nancy Rule Goldberger, and Jill Mattuck Tarule

We are trying to understand people's ways of knowing and you can help us by sharing your experiences. These questions will focus on how you think about thinking and the ways that you come to know things.

1. Think about times when you are trying to understand something new. How do you go about it? (If they do not respond, ask: How would you describe yourself as a learner?)

(After s/he has described the context for learning that first comes to mind, ask the following questions, if not covered:

A) How do you go about understanding (learning) new things in school or on the job?

B) How do you go about understanding (learning) new things in your personal life, say with friends or family?

2. How would you describe yourself as a thinker?

A) How have you changed as a thinker (learner) over the years?

B) What led to the changes?

C) Who was particularly important to you in your growth as a learner or a thinker?

D) Who held you back?

3. Now I would like you to think about authorities in your life. Who comes to mind when you think about authorities?

Think about the times when you had an idea or an opinion about something that differed from some authority's opinion. (If they do not respond, ask: Like when [authority mentioned above] thinks one thing is true and you think something else is true.)

--How would you actually decide what was true, given the different opinions? (How would you know what was right?)

--Generally, how do you handle situations like that?

--Do you feel differently about disagreeing with authorities now than you did in the past?

--How so?

--What accounts for the change, do you think?

4. Now think about the times when you and a friend had different opinions about what was true. How do you go about deciding what is true in situations like that? (How would you know what was right?)

--Generally, how do you handle situations like that?

--Do you feel differently about disagreeing with friends now than you did in the past?

--How so?

--What accounts for the change?

5. We've talked about times when you disagreed with other people. Now think about the times when you and someone really agreed about something, and it seemed important to you. What's that like for you when it happens?

(If they mentioned agreeing with a peer ask):

--Has that ever happened to you with an authority? What was that like for you?

(If they mentioned agreeing with an authority ask):

--Has that ever happened to you with a friend? What was that like for you?

6. In general, does it seem to you that usually there is only one answer that is that is really right or true, or do you think there can usually be more than one?

Would you explain what you mean by that? (How do you know what's right or true?)

Why do you think there can/can't be more than one answer that is really right or true?

Does it depend on the question? How so?

7. In general, how do you think people get their knowledge and ideas? (Where do they come from? )

(Ask only if not covered earlier): And you, in general how do you usually get your knowledge and ideas? (Where do they come from?)

8. (Hand her 4 cards.) Here are four statements by others. I would like you to comment on each of these. (These are conversation starters and give a chance to explore their thinking and their developmental history more.) (Use these quotations only with informants who are currently or have recently been students.)

A) Sometimes classroom discussions are so confusing. I tend to trust more what a teacher says than what a student says. The student is giving her opinion; it might not be the right one. The teachers are always more or less right.

B) I like it when teachers show you, not tell you what's what. I find it really hard to learn just from words.

C) I like it when teachers aren't above us— aren't being the boss. I like making my own decisions about what I am going to learn.

D) I had one teacher who was really special. She knew a lot herself, but she still had respect for what ever we had to offer in class. She had a way of elevating what a student said. She got a lot out of teaching us and learning from us, and we learned from her.

9. (Hand out the following three cards, one at a time, in this order. The comments on these cards are designed to promote discussion of received, subjective, procedural and constructed knowledge.)

Here are other statements I would like you to comment on:

A) When I need to learn something, I like to just listen to the people who really know about it.

B) I can count on my gut to tell me the truth--the truth for me.

C) When I have a problem to solve, I use my mind. I like to really think things through carefully before I make a decision.

(Probe after each card to find out whether or not and under what conditions the comment is true for the person. Try to get examples. After the person has commented on all three cards, ask her/him to order them in terms of the degree to which they agree with them.)

10. (Hand her two more cards. The comments on these cards are designed particularly to promote discussion of procedural and constructed knowledge.)

Here are other statements I would like you to comment on:

A) I think it is important to be objective and unbiased about things.

Comments? Do you agree? What does being objective mean to you?

B) Once upon a time I really hoped I'd be able to figure the world out. I really thought if I were only smart enough I could figure it all out and settle things. Its different now. Now I see the world as wonderfully complicated and elusive. Nothing ever gets settled. Nothing is resolved.

Your comments? Do you agree with her? Why? Why not? Why do you think she says the world is "wonderfully" complicated? And that "nothing is resolved"?

11. (Hand her two more cards. The comments on these cards are designed to promote discussion of separate and connected knowing. Encourage the person to respond spontaneously. Use the probes below only to elicit information that has not been offered spontaneously.)

Two more statements I'd like your opinion about. These are the last!

A) I never take anything someone says for granted. I just tend to see the contrary. I like playing the devil's advocate, arguing the opposite of what somebody's saying, thinking of exceptions, or thinking of a different train of logic.

--Is this true for you?

(If "yes,"):

Why do you play devil's advocate? Do you like to do it?

Do you find it easy to play devil's advocate?

Are you glad you do it? What does it accomplish? Do you like people to play devil's advocate with you?

Do you ever play devil's advocate with yourself?

Are there or have there been people in your life who play devil's advocate with you? How do you feel about that?

Do you ever wish you didn't play devil's advocate as much as you do? Is it ever dangerous, do you think? How so?

(If "no,"):

Why don't you play devil's advocate? Do you dislike it?

Do you find it hard to play devil's advocate?

Is it dangerous to play devil's advocate, do you think? How so?

Are there or have there been people in your life who play devil's advocate with you? How do you feel about that?

Do you ever play devil's advocate? Do you ever wish you did it more? Does it ever accomplish anything, do you think?

Do you ever play it with yourself?

B) When I have an idea about something, and it differs from the way another person is thinking about it, I'll usually try to look at it from that person's point of view, see how they could say that, why they think that they're right, why it makes sense.

--Is this true for you?

(If "yes,"):

Why do you do this? Do you like to do it?

Do you find this an easy thing to do?

Are you glad you do it? What does it accomplish, do you think?

Do you like people to treat you this way?

Are there or have there been people in your life who do treat you this way? How do you feel about that?

Do you ever wish you didn't do this as much as you do? Is it ever dangerous to do it, do you think? How so?

(If "no,"):

Why don't you do this? Do you dislike it?

Do you find it hard to do?

Is it dangerous to do this, do you think? How so?

Are there or have there been people in your life who treat you this way? How do you feel about that?

Do you ever do this? Do you ever wish you did it more? Does it ever accomplish anything, do you think?

12. Looking back over your whole life, can you tell me about a really powerful learning experience that you have had, in or out of school?



## Appendix C

Coding Manual, Directions for Reading Transcripts,  
and Reader's Notation Sheet,  
prepared and provided by the authors of  
*Women's Ways of Knowing*

"GAINING A VOICE": A MANUAL FOR CODING  
THE WAYS OF KNOWING

The following is a brief overview of the modified Perry scheme developed from woman's descriptions of their epistemological assumptions and development, which will be used for classifying data from the Ways of Knowing Interview. A fuller description of the epistemological positions can be obtained from Women's Ways of Knowing: The Development of Self, Voice, and Mind by M. F. Belenky, B. M. Clinchy, N. R. Goldberger, and J. M. Tarule. Basic Books, Inc., 1987.

**Silence**

The women who see things from the first of the five ways of knowing live in profound silence and isolation. While they use language to refer to their own action-based experience, they do not seem to be very aware of the power of language for exploring and learning from that experience. They also doubt their capacity to hear and understand the words that others use, making it difficult to acquire knowledge from others.

Someone has to show me--not tell me--or I can't get it.

I could never understand what they were talking about.

The references these women make to language suggest that words are perceived more as weapons than as a means of reflection and communication.

I deserve to be hit, because I was mouthing off.

At home people talk about you.

Purposeful acts on the part of these women seem to be in the form of immediate responses to the direct commands of authorities. They are probably not responses to remembered commands, and most certainly not to the directives of their own inner voice. There is little, if any, questioning of the content of authorities' commands: To hear is to obey. It is as if the commands and the actions are undifferentiated--like puppets moving with the jiggle of a thread. One woman explained why her abusive husband ruled the roost for so many years:

You know, I used to hear his words, and his words kept coming out of his mouth. He had me thinking that I didn't know anything. But now, you know, my own words are coming out of my mouth.

## Received Knowledge: The Voice of Others

While those who live in silence are amazingly unaware of the power of words for transmitting knowledge, the women at the next position think of words—not their own actions and experience—as central to the knowing process. Notions about ideas and ideals are entertained. They want to understand what others think; to know what others know. As they conceive of themselves as capable of receiving ideas but not of creating them, they listen to others to find out. Thus, they are subject to the standards, directions, and authority of others. Relying on the words of others for self-knowledge, they view the self solely in terms of conventional social expectations and roles. Intense conversations with peers become a major source of personal pleasure and learning. Receiving, retaining, and returning the words of authorities is seen as being synonymous with learning—at least with the kind of learning that they associate with school.

I tend to trust more what a professor says than what a student says. I have more faith in the teacher, that what he says is correct and concise. Whereas the student might be giving her opinion. It might not be the right one. The teachers are always more or less right.

These women conceptualize ideas and ideals dualistically: as true or false, right or wrong, good or bad, black or white. They assume that there is only one right answer to each problem. All other answers and all contrary views are automatically wrong.

There is a right or a wrong answer. No matter how you say it, it is right or it is wrong.

In dichotomizing the world, these women appear to value the objective over the subjective. In truth, they are just beginning to differentiate such contrasting stances for knowing. Truth is thought to have a concrete, tangible existence independent of mind because they have not yet noticed that a person's reflection and feelings can shape his or her perceptions and knowledge of the world.

While these women are good at listening, speaking can be another matter.

I don't talk in class very much myself. I am not a participator. Everybody at college is sort of outgoing. Everybody I've met has a vocabulary a mile long. My problem is—is that I have trouble communicating. Even if I have it straight in my head, it's very difficult for me to talk.

Before I use to talk and the wrong words would come out and people would say, "What, what?" They would never understand me.

These women have the gift of gab, but they do not see that voice and mind can be intertwined. Not having a conceptualized mind, they do not see that voice can give expression to mind. Even when verbose they can feel voiceless.

Wanting to do the right thing, but having no opinions of their own, the women at this position listen to others for directions as well as for information. As one women said:

My brother--he is a person who will talk and reason with you. He's calm. He's calm and he will talk things out. I listen to him, whatever he tells me. Whatever my brother tells me, I do. I do it because I know that he has thought it out and he's not going to tell me nothing but the best that's for me. I trust him.

Looking outward for direction, they are often buffeted by shifting winds.

When I read things, I get very frustrated. I can read one thing and it seems to make sense. Then I read something else and that makes sense, and it would be conflicting views. I don't trust what I believe. How can I trust what I read? Or, How to know what's valid?

This women outlines for herself the work that must be accomplished if she is to find anchorage and self-direction from within.

I think maybe part of that is finding a voice, a way to express myself, not just among women, but in the world. I think that is something that I am having a hard time doing. I come up against all kinds of insecurities. I think that might be the hardest thing to do. It involves being clear, inside myself-confident of what I am saying.

She understands further that she must begin to listen to her own voice if she is to become clear and confident.

When I listen to others, I get confused. If I were to listen to my deep-rooted intuition, I might be able to say, "that's right and that's wrong". But right now in my own life, I cannot find what the right answer is.

### Subjective Knowledge: The Inner Voice

Such critiques of one's voicelessness seem to be routinely accompanied by a shift in orientation from listening to the voices of others to listening to one's own inner voice.

I'm turning in. I try and watch myself more. I keep discovering things inside myself. I am seeing myself all the time in a different light.

Attending to the inner voice is so salient that we have chosen to call this next way of knowing the Subjectivist position.

The Subjectivists think there are as many right answers as there are people listening to their own inner voices.

Anyone's interpretation is valid if that's the way they see it...I mean nobody can tell you your opinion is wrong, you know.

The Subjectivists see their own first hand experience as the only reliable source of truth--not the words of others. With the discovery of a small still voice to which a woman begins to attend, the external voices which had long directed her life are discounted and ignored. It is as if there is some oracle within that stands opposed to the voices and dictums of the outside world. One of these women calls it the "infallible gut".

I can only know with my gut. I've got it tuned to a point where I think and feel all at the same time and I know what is right. My gut is my best friend--the one thing in the world that won't let me down, or lie to me, or back away from me.

With direction from their own inner voice, the Subjectivists try to wrest control for their own lives out of the hands of their parents or other authorities.

I was rebellious--not wanting to be told what to do. I thought I was old enough to know right from wrong.

Truth for the Subjective Knower, is an intuitive reaction--something experienced, not thought out--something felt rather than actively pursued or constructed. She does not see herself as part of the process, as a constructor of truth, but as a conduit through which truth emerges. The source of her ideas remains mysterious and beyond her control:

I try not to think about stuff because the decision is already made up inside you and then when the time comes, if you trust yourself, you just know the answer.

Occasionally these women distinguish between truth as feelings that come from within and ideas which come from without. Traditional sex role stereotypes seem to encourage these women to value their inner feelings while denigrating the intellect which appears to be associated with the voice of fathers and external authority.

#### Procedural Knowledge: The Voice of Reason

The women at this next position have noticed that intuitions can be wrong, that some truths are truer than others, that we can know things that we have never seen or touched, that truth can be shared, and that expertise is often worthy of respect.

At this position, the women are absorbed in the business of acquiring and applying procedures for obtaining, reflecting on, evaluating, and communicating knowledge.

I'm learning to reason, learning how to write decently, learning how to speak concisely and to say what I mean.

They work hard to cultivate the voice of reason.

They have learned that truth is not immediately accessible, that you cannot "just know". Things are not always what they seem to be. Truth lies under the surface, and you must ferret it out. Knowing requires careful observation and analysis. You must "really look" and "really listen". They think before they speak. At first, in learning to speak with the voice of reason, they speak in measured tones. When first cultivating the voice of the mind, these women denigrate the inner voice that is so important to Subjectivists.

#### Constructed knowledge: Integrating the Voices

The central insight that distinguishes the next and last position is that all knowledge is understood to be constructed by the knower herself. While procedures aid in the creation of knowledge, the construction is seen as a function of mind, not of procedures.

We can assume that something exists out there-but "something" is thinking that something exists. Our consciousness is part of the world. We are creating the world at the same time.

They put the knower back into the known. They see that the knowledge acquired depends on the whole frame of reference of the knower as well as on context in which the events to be known have occurred.

As knowers, they draw out and listed to all their own

voices--to the inner voice of intuition as well as to the voice of reason. They are able to listen simultaneously to all of the various kinds of voices that others might bring to conversations as well.

To them intimate knowledge of the self not only precedes but always accompanies the understanding of contexts. They weave together the strands of rational and emotive thought, integrating objective and subjective knowing. As one woman described it, "You let the inside out and bring the outside in".

We have characterized the kinds of procedures for knowing that were described in the previous position as procedures for Separate Knowing. These procedures are found particularly among students in rigorous, highly selective traditional colleges.

Separate Knowing contrasts sharply with an approach we call Connected Knowing. Connected Knowing is most fully elaborated by the Constructivists who have put the knower back into the known. Connected knowing is cultivated in the context of interpersonal relationships not in the academy. Rising out of the experience of relationships, Connected Knowing requires intimacy and equality between self and object, not distance and impersonality; its goal is understanding, not proof.

Separate Knowing is essentially an adversarial form--the doubting game--uncomfortable to most women. The Separate Knower, armed with her new powers of reason, realizes that she can criticize others' reasoning.

You take a point of view, and then you address the points of view that might most successfully challenge your point of view. You try to disqualify those.

Both the Separate and the Connected Knowers strive for "objectivity", honoring the truths inherent in the external world. The Separate Knower refrains from projecting the contents of her own head into the external object by suppressing the self, taking as impersonal a stance as possible towards the object. She relies on "blind" observations and other techniques for codifying reality so that she can remain separate from the object to be known. Feelings and personal beliefs are rigorously excluded. These procedures have been most highly elaborated and codified in the sciences. They also exist in some form and in some degree of explicitness in all of the academic disciplines; among the professions; and in the rights orientation to moral reasoning. We found no woman carefully cultivating this mode outside of the academy, and many in the academy who resisted it.

Connected Knowers also develop procedures for gaining access to other peoples' knowledge. They try to attend truly to the object, waiting for meanings to emerge rather than imposing the

contents of their own head or their own gut. To do so they develop a way of looking and listening that "is" as Simone Weil describes, "first of all attentive. The soul empties itself of all its own contents in order to receive into itself the being it is looking at, just as he is, in all his truth." (Weil, 1951, p.#115). Thus:

I was confused about everything. I was unrealistic about things. I was more in a fantasy world. You have to see things for what they are, not for what[how?] you want to see them. I don't want to live in a dream world.

Connected Knowers are good interviewers. "Why do you think that?" they ask. They want to know how people think, not just what they think. By inviting the respondent to tell her story, without interruption, the questioner allows the respondent to control and develop her own narrative. Through interviewing, the Connected Knower discovers the experimental "logic" behind others' ideas, the ideas thus become less strange, and the owners of the ideas cease to be strangers.

If you listen to people you can understand why they feel the way they do. There are reasons. They're not just being irrational. Through interviewing, the Connected Knower expands her experimental base: she acquires vicarious (second-hand first-hand) experience and so expands her knowledge. Through interviewing, the Connected Knower develops her capacity for empathy. She comes to see things through a different lens--the lens of another person. Says a Connected Knower:

A deep relationship offers you a chance to really get to know another view of looking at the world.

Constructivists in the Connected mode try to enter into others' frame, to see the world as they see it--not doubting, not comparing. One woman says of her mother:

She trusts me. Any decision that I make--We have a constant understanding of one another, a constant trust of each other's judgement. I could do just about anything and if I sat down and explained it to her she would see my point of view and trust that I was doing it right,--as I would for her. If I felt uncomfortable about something that she was doing, she would explain it to me and I'd feel comfortable--I'd trust her.

Both suspend judgement, listen to one another, and find their trust rewarded.

The process of trying to understand another person in their



own terms invites questions and discourages lectures. They tend to proceed--like Socrates--with a rhetoric of inquiry, drawing out each other's thinking through the posing of questions. A college student described how her mother interviews her:

She makes me question. I think that is intelligence. She is always asking me, "Why?" She sees what I am doing.

She interviews her mother as well.

My mother probably gets tired of me asking her hard questions. I suppose that I challenge her morals sometimes. That might annoy her about me.

The capacity for "question-posing" is at the heart of the ethic of care or the responsibility orientation to morality that Gilligan heard in the women's voice. In the responsibility orientation, conflicts are resolved not by invoking a logical hierarchy of abstract principles, but through trying to understand the conflict in the context of each person's perspective, needs, and goals--and doing the best for everyone who is involved. Constructivists in the connected mode reject the ideal of "blind Justice" or "taking the veil of ignorance" and the presumption that all should be treated equally--all values that are central to the rights orientation to morality. They understand the reality of inequality and that if all were treated impartially and equally, it is the children who would be trampled.

Constructivists are perpetual students and perpetual teachers. In trading these roles back and forth, they make colleagues of their parents and teachers. A college alumnus says of her father:

I tease him about the fact that I am finally getting myself established in life, and that now he can start learning things from me. (Laugh) I am going to love it! (Laugh) It makes me feel great! He laughs! He agrees!!

Directions for Reading Transcripts  
of  
The Ways of Knowing Interviews

Understanding how ordinary people think about thinking is not easy. As people are seldom asked to stand back and think about how they know what they know, they are not very articulate about their ways of knowing. As one woman said on being interviewed about such things, "I'm telling you these things, but I ain't never think them." Even children and adults who are being given very elegant formal educations find these questions hard to answer but fascinating as their teachers and professors have seldom asked them to reflect on how they know.

As educators, psychologists, and philosophers have only recently begun to understand the epistemologies that ordinary people develop as they try to make sense of their experiences in the world, you will have only rough maps to guide you. Understanding frameworks for meaning-making that are distant from your own is difficult and requires a great stretch of the imagination. We hope that as you collect and analyze your data you will share the new insights and understandings you have gained so the maps will become better and better and imagining the epistemological frameworks that others use will get easier and easier.

The first step towards understanding someone's ways of knowing is to read through the transcribed interview, getting a brief overview of the interview's story of herself as a knower.

Then we slowly reread the interview looking for those statements that suggest the underlying assumptions that the speaker holds about the nature of knowledge and of herself as a knower. Using the descriptions in Women's Ways of Knowing or "Gaining a Voice: A Manual for Coding" as a guide, we begin classifying the epistemological frameworks or positions held. Every time we come across a quote that we believe indicates the speaker's perspective on knowing, we copy the quote in the appropriate space on the Reader's Notation Sheet. If we come across a quote that reflects two different ways of knowing, we copy it out in both sections.

Lining up the quotes will be greatly facilitated if your interviews are typed in a computer. We pull up a file with the Reader's Notation Sheet on one screen while the file with the transcribed interview is on a second screen, allowing us to transfer quotes accurately and efficiently.

After we have assembled all of the salient quotes we reread each quote and write an explanation depicting the reasoning we have used in categorizing the response. These explanations are distinguished from the quotes by some convention. We indent but brackets would serve as well. These explanations will allow

others to follow the reader's train of thought for establishing reliability, settling disagreements, etc. As the work of coping out and justifying all of these quotes can bring about a deeper understanding of the interview, we then reread the entire interview and the assembled quotes at least one more time. During this round of reading we often find material that once seemed insignificant is now suddenly full of meaning. Re-interpretations can also lead you to move quotes from one category to another. New quotes are then added, old ones moved, and interpretations are modified as needed.

The reader is then asked reread the assembled quotes and explanations before deciding which framework(s) most characterizes the respondent's ways of knowing position or framework. In summarizing the material we think of the interview as the person's story of their own intellect development. We pay attention to the tenses used and ask such questions as, Is the person describing their current approaches, or are they depicting former ways of knowing that they now discount? If the position or framework is clearly discounted and behind them little or no credit would be recorded for this position.

The summary is recorded numerically and in a written description. First, indicate the number(s) of the predominate framework(s) in the appropriate space at the top of the Reader's Notation Sheet, using the following conventions:

- a. If all of the material seems to reflect one framework the corresponding number will be recorded (i.e. 3 will indicate a consistent Subjective Knowledge perspective).
- b. If the material suggests that two different frameworks are being used pretty much equally, the corresponding numbers of both will be recorded with an intervening slash (i.e. 2/3 would indicate approximately half Received and half Subjective Knowledge).
- c. If one framework predominates but there is a substantial amount (about 1/3 of the quotes) of thinking suggestion another position that will be recorded in brackets, (i.e. 2(3) would indicate approximately 2/3 reflecting Receive Knowledge and 1/3 reflecting Subjective Knowledge assumptions.) While we indicate the presence of a position in the written summary, we want the numerical summary to include only those positions that seem to have achieved a significant presence.

The reader will also summarize their thinking in words at the end of the Reader's Notation Sheet so others can understand how they reached their conclusions.

Read.way  
October 26, 1987

Reader's Notation Sheet  
WAYS OF KNOWING INTERVIEW

Subjects:

Reader:

Date Read:

Position Code: \_\_\_ Separate Knowing present \_\_\_ predominant \_\_\_  
Connected Knowing present \_\_\_ predominant \_\_\_

---

1) EVIDENCE FOR SILENCE

2) EVIDENCE FOR RECEIVED KNOWLEDGE

3) EVIDENCE FOR SUBJECTIVE KNOWLEDGE

4) EVIDENCE FOR PROCEDURAL KNOWLEDGE

5) EVIDENCE FOR CONSTRUCTED KNOWLEDGE

EVIDENCE FOR SEPARATE KNOWING

EVIDENCE FOR CONNECTED KNOWING

**OTHER INTERESTING RESPONSES that don't fit:**

**SUMMARY EXPLAINING WEIGHTING USED:** (Pay attention to the tenses used etc to speculate on development--e.g. have they just overthrown one position for another? Note if position or mode varies depending on the context or content of the learning.)

**a. Epistemological Position:**

**b. Separate & Connected Modes:**

## Appendix D

Criteria for Coding Interviews  
Derived from *Women's Ways of Knowing*  
Prepared by Kathy Silver

## CRITERIA FOR CODING INTERVIEWS

Derived from Women's Ways of Knowing

Prepared by Kathy Silver

### SILENCE

#### Self-Concept

- Deaf and dumb. Can't learn or speak. Selfless and voiceless. Powerless.

#### View of Knowledge

- Words perceived as weapons.
- Do not tell me; have to show me.
- Knowledge is mysterious, inaccessible, remote.
- School a place of chronic failure, confirms self-concept.
- Polarities: good and bad; win or lose.

#### Attitude toward Authority

- External authorities all-knowing and all-powerful.
- Authorities unpredictable, belittling, brutal, mysterious.
- To hear is to obey.
- Authorities must guide every action.
- Students should be seen but not heard.

#### Connection with Others

- No connection with others; looking for a safe place to hide.
- Is labelled as immature, acting out, psychotic.

#### Moral Imperatives

- External. "They made me." "I had to."

## CRITERIA FOR CODING INTERVIEWS

### RECEIVED KNOWLEDGE

#### LISTENING TO VOICES OF OTHERS

##### Self-concept

- Confident of ability to absorb and store information.
- No confidence in own ability to speak or create knowledge.
- Silences own voice to hear others.
- Sees herself through others' eyes.
- Static.

##### View of Knowledge

- To be taken in, absorbed unquestioningly.
- Dualistic, only one right answer.
- Intolerant of ambiguity.
- Only "facts" matter; opinions don't count.
- Even self-knowledge originates outside the self.
- Is literal, imitates, can't read between lines
- Listening is demanding and active process.
- Words central to learning.

##### Attitude toward Authority

- Security blanket.
- Authority knows answers, is always right.
- Instructors have duty to provide answers to students.

##### Connection with others

- Symbiotic relationship with friends; wants them to have same thoughts.
- Shapes perceptions to match those of peers.
- Values relationships of mutuality, equality, and reciprocity.

##### Moral Imperatives

- To live up to expectations of others, esp. authorities.
- "Shoulds," "oughts," self vs. other, "selfless," "good girl."
- Strengthens self through empowerment of others.



## CRITERIA FOR CODING INTERVIEWS

### SUBJECTIVE KNOWLEDGE

#### THE INNER VOICE

##### Self-concept

- Gaining a voice, and moving toward autonomy and independence.
- Self as "becoming." Instability and flux.
- Values gut feeling: "I just know."
- Difficulty in describing or reflecting on self.

##### View of Knowledge

- First-hand experience most valuable source of knowledge.
- Learns by observing self and others.
- Personal, private, intuitively known.
- Magical, mysterious
- Distrusts logic, analysis. Anti-rationalist.
- Dualistic: truth is found in self only.
- Lacks public voice or public authority. Few tools for expressing self or persuading others.

##### Attitude toward Authority

- Redefining relation to authority. Shift to authority within.
- Defends own authority by declaring, "It's just my opinion."
- Suspicious of authority figures. Ignores and evades external authorities.

##### Connection with Others

- Values personal experience of peers.
- Preserves connections with others rather than isolating self.
- Embedded in human relationships and alert to details of everyday life.

##### Moral Imperatives

- "What works best for me."
- Each person has own truth, but should not impose it on others.
- Quest for self.

## CRITERIA FOR CODING INTERVIEWS

### PROCEDURAL KNOWLEDGE

#### VOICE OF REASON

#### SEPARATE KNOWERS:

##### Self-concept

- Separate from others.
- Increasing sense of control over self and environment.
- Pragmatic problem-solver who thinks before acting.
- No authentic, unique voice.

##### View of Knowledge

- Rejects subjectivity: gut can be fallible, intuitions can be deceptive.
- Truth comes from impersonal procedures, and reason is detached from lived experience.
- External truths prevail.
- Invests in learning skills, techniques, systematic analysis.
- Accepts male model, e.g.: bull sessions, debates.
- "Weeds out self": feelings and personal beliefs excluded from people or objects studied.
- Can degenerate into cynicism, boredom, alienation.
- Cannot move outside systems.

##### Attitude toward Authority

- Respectful of knowledgeable experts.
- Accepts impersonal rules, authorities' standards and evaluations.
- "Methodolatry."
- Values formal instruction.

##### Connections with Others

- "Doubting game," adversarial style.
- Sees listeners as judges.
- Seeks reciprocity in relationships.

##### Moral Imperatives

- Abstract principles of justice, equality, rights.
- One should "play the game" by accepted rules.
- Self-critical.

## CRITERIA FOR CODING INTERVIEWS

### CONNECTED KNOWERS:

#### Self-Concept

- Connected to others.
- "Receptive rationality."
- Increasing sense of control over self and environment.
- No authentic, unique voice.

#### View of Knowledge

- Realizes limitations of subjectivity: gut can be fallible.
- Builds on subjectivism, values personal perception and objective procedures.
- Tries to get into others' frame of reference even when alien-- authors, texts, as well as people.
- Learns through gossip, informal discussion.
- Truth emerges through care for and connection with others.
- Accommodates to others' ideas of what is knowledge; answers others' questions rather than asking own.

#### Attitude toward Authority

- Sees knowledge can be shared; respects experts.
- Sees teacher as conductor, facilitator.
- Believes authority rests in commonality of experience.
- Personal sense of authority comes from identification with power of group and its agreed-on ways of knowing.

#### Connection with others

- Responds to others on their own terms.
- Rejects ceremonial combat of debates, confrontation.
- Wants to understand, not judge. "Believing game."
- Works collaboratively.

#### Moral Imperatives

- Care and responsibility for others.
- Empathetic.

## CRITERIA FOR CODING INTERVIEWS

### CONSTRUCTED KNOWLEDGE

#### INTEGRATING THE VOICES

##### Self-concept

- Integrating thinking and feeling.
- Seeking identity: asks, "Who am I?"
- Gaining unique voice

##### View of Knowledge

- Integrates subjective and objective knowledge: "You let the inside out and the outside in."
- Has high tolerance for internal contradiction and ambiguity, and abandons either/or thinking.
- Sees all knowledge as socially constructed.
- Sees theories as models, not facts.
- Answers to all questions vary according to context in which they are asked and framework of questioner.
- Moves beyond established frameworks, makes new connections, and creates new knowledge.
- Has passion for learning.

##### Attitude toward Authority

- Believes intuition, reason and expertise of others all authoritative.
- Questions conventional knowledge and assumptions of experts.
- Believes experts must demonstrate understanding of complexity; their perspectives must "resonate."
- Takes responsibility for evaluating authorities.

##### Connection with others

- Needs to balance creative, intellectual, social and practical interests rather than giving one up.
- "Real talk" as opposed to didactic talk, to connect with others and share knowledge.
- Capacity to listen to self and talk to others simultaneously.
- Collaboration, reciprocity and cooperation.
- Needs strangers as well as friends to exchange ideas with.
- "Believing game," relatedness, intimacy with others.

## CRITERIA FOR CODING INTERVIEWS

### Moral Imperatives

- Preoccupied with spiritual, moral dimensions.
- Cares for people rather than abstract theories of justice.
- Situational, contextual, no easy generalizations.
- Balances needs of self and others.
- Believes ideas and values must be nurtured if they are to thrive.
- Commitment leads to action.

## Appendix E

Feature Article on Mary Pollock  
from *The Gazette*, Montreal, February, 1957

# Steno. Makes Banking History

Mary Fellock, a quiet-spoken, unassuming person made history in Canadian banking circles yesterday.

She was appointed assistant to the manager of the Sherbrooke and Drummond streets branch of the Bank of Montreal.

And she accepted the unprecedented appointment in the quiet efficient way which has been responsible for her steady advancement since she joined the bank at two dollars a day back in 1938.

Although used to meeting the public, Miss Fellock's appointment brought about her first contact with the press. And she was eager "to get all this publicity over with" and get back to work.

"I joined the bank back in 1938, starting with the Guy and Sherbrooke streets branch," she recalled in an interview. "I started at two dollars a day and was glad to get it," she said.

A girl had to be on her mark in those days, she said. "If you weren't you knew there were four others, ready, willing and able to take your job. When I got the job I'd been three or four months waiting for an opening. I even have a letter from the bank saying there were no openings. But in those days, you kept going back until you found something."

Miss Fellock graduated from a St. Lambert secretarial course in 1935. "I worked for my father for a year . . . he was in business for himself at that time. Yes, jobs were very hard to find. You couldn't be selective then. When I started I was the only girl in my branch. Things certainly have changed. We have a staff of 30 in this branch, 12 are women."

## No Special Goal

She began as a stenographer and though she didn't have any special goal in mind, she became so interested in banking she enrolled for courses with the Canadian Bankers' Association. She passed her associate examina-

By HILDA MEEHAN

tions with honors in 1939 and five years later became one of the few women to be made a fellow of the C.B.A.

She feels stenography is a good "door opener" in most fields but that few girls today want to do this kind of work. They seem to prefer any other kind of job.

But she isn't critical of today's young people. "Certainly they are selective but you can't blame them. I'm sure I would have been selective in my day had I had ten jobs offered to me. But you couldn't afford to be selective then. You were glad of any job."

She has seen many changes in banks both as to general decor as well as to the variety of jobs available to women. Today

women work as ledger machine operators, tellers, chief clerks as well as assisting in accountants' departments.

Miss Fellock loves to meet the public. I think it's the one aspect of my work I enjoy most."

She lives in St. Lambert with her parents, Mr. and Mrs. W. H. Fellock. In her spare time she likes taking extension courses in economics, interior decorating, French and current events. She also does volunteer work at the Montreal Children's Library.

As to her appointment, Miss Fellock, naturally, is very pleased. She has no definite ambitions about the future. But she feels her appointment is a step in the right direction — that of opening up more banking jobs for women.



(Graphic Photo Service)

Helpful Advice: Miss Mary Fellock helps a customer