An instructor, who teaches both graduate and undergraduate courses in storytelling, incorporates discussions of gender issues throughout the semester in various ways. In one course, class discussions are used to raise issues of the origin of Grimm's fairy tales and of story variants. Students are also encouraged to choose gender issues in storytelling as a research focus. In the graduate seminar devoted to college teaching, activities to spark interest in gender issues include viewing a video entitled "Shortchanging Girls, Shortchanging America," discussing gender inequities in higher education, analyzing textbooks to demonstrate how women's voices have sometimes been silenced, observing graduate teaching assistants, and allowing women a voice in improving their learning by having written assessments throughout the course of the semester. (Contains 15 sources.)
TEACHING GENDER ISSUES
IN STORYTELLING
AND IN THE
COLLEGE TEACHING CLASS

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I teach both an undergraduate and graduate course in storytelling. The accompanying syllabi indicate the focus of those classes. Gender issues are discussed throughout the semester in the following ways:

1. CLASS DISCUSSION OF THE ORIGIN OF GRIMM'S FAIRY TALES

The point is made that these tales were originally told by women (i.e. Nanny tales), but have often been altered from their own original versions.

Sources:


2. CLASS DISCUSSION OF STORY VARIANTS

I use a variety of examples to show how gender is portrayed in well-known stories.
Sources:


3. RESEARCH IDEAS: WRITING AND STORYTELLING BEYOND MALE-FEMALE DUALISM.

Students are encouraged to choose gender issues in storytelling as a research focus.

Sources:


COLLEGE TEACHING

In the graduate seminar devoted to college teaching, I introduce the following activities to spark interest in gender issues.


After viewing the videotape, we discuss the gender bias present in classroom communication. I have teaching assistants evaluate their own question-asking behavior in the classroom, both as instructors and students.
2. CLASS DISCUSSION: GENDER INEQUITIES IN HIGHER EDUCATION

Generally, I use the Sandler article as a springboard for discussion.

Sources:


3. TEXTBOOKS AND GENDER

To demonstrate how women's voices have sometimes been silenced, I ask students to analyze the chapter titles, speakers included, and photographs used in public speaking texts and in public address/rhetorical criticism texts. We also examine texts where women's voices are the only ones included:

Sources:


4. OBSERVATIONS OF GRADUATE TEACHING ASSISTANTS

As basic course director, I observe each of our teaching assistants at least once a semester. In observing their classes, I
note the following:

Description of Students:
1. Number of males and females
2. Ethnicity
3. Spatial arrangement in classroom
4. Number of traditional and non-traditional students

Classroom Activity:
1. Number of questions asked by males and females.
2. Number of comments made by males and females.
3. Response of students to instructor’s presentation.
4. Group work (noting performance of groups and gender make-up of each group)

Classroom Climate:
1. Interpersonal communication of instructor and students
2. Student Involvement
3. Student interest
4. Enthusiasm of instructor

I provide each teaching assistant with a copy of my report. We discuss the comments and talk about how instruction can be improved.

5. CLASSROOM ASSESSMENT PROJECTS

I coordinate the classroom research project for the basic course which involves the administration of three different assessment techniques in the course of a semester. GTA’s tabulate their results from each assessment and write a one-page narrative. Since female students often do not voice their concerns in class, the anonymity of this activity allows the women a voice in improving their learning. The assessments we use include Minute Paper, Stop-Start-Continue, Muddiest Point, and a self-evaluation of student learning in the course.