



Warming Up The Chilly Climate

"... in a class discussion when the guys are dominating, well... I just stay quiet."

—Female, A&S4, Vanderbilt

Reading existing research studies on the classroom climate for women could be depressing, except that more and more research is coming out with techniques on how to encourage female/male equity. One such study was written by Catherine Krupnick, Harvard instructor in psychology and social relations, and published in the *Journal of the Harvard-Danforth Center*, May 1985. It restates and illustrates the difficulties of women competing with men in the classroom, analyses why gender inequality exists, and offers suggestions to educators/group leaders to help them lead more effectively for the benefit of both the women and the men in their group.

Krupnick is careful to state that this study explored how gender affects the quality of teaching and learning only at Harvard College. However, its subject—the ways women and men communicate—has implications for any situation in which women and men in a group interact, whether it is a classroom, a staff meeting, or a family conference.

The questions that Krupnick posed were: What are the differences, if any, between male and female students' participation in classroom discussion? How does the gender of the teacher affect the students' participation?

The Harvard research team reviewed videotapes of interactions in the classrooms of 12 men and 12 women Harvard instructors. They concluded that male students talked much longer in a classroom with a male instructor and a male student majority, two

and a half times longer than their female peers. In classrooms with female instructors, the female students spoke almost three times longer than in classrooms with male instructors, but still not as much as the male students. Gender of the instructor, then, greatly influences the degree of male domination.

Why don't women talk as much as men? Krupnick's observations suggest that women are more vulnerable to interruption than are men. The surprise is that the videotapes revealed women being interrupted by other women. Like the men, their talk is clustered in "runs": long periods of predominately male talk followed by short bursts of all-female talk characterized by overlapping comments. "Over the course of a class hour the tendency of men to speak at length (and the lesser likelihood that they will be interrupted) leads, in the case of male-majority classes with male teachers, to a male-dominated hour—a phenomenon that is reinforced by the tendency of women to speak less frequently, more briefly, and to overlap one another's comments."

This is a manifestation of mixing conversational styles. In single-sex groups at Harvard in 1972, Elizabeth Aries observed that women students tended to have a "rotating" participatory style, while male groups appeared more contest-like, with extremely uneven amounts of talk per man. The males established hierarchies which remained stable for the duration of the group meetings. In mixed groups, the competitive style won out.

Teachers in class discussion situations hesitate to "put shy students on the spot." Unfortunately this can mean that a small, aggressive minority of students in class benefit from the instructor's questions, correction, and praise that come from being "on the spot." The rest learn mostly from listening; they reap only partial advantages of the classroom experience. Students at the bottom of the conversational heap—women and minorities—frequently prepare less thoroughly for class, and listen only half-heartedly.

Classroom environment, the development of self-esteem, and, later on, self-confidence in a profession, may be linked. A recent study at the University of Illinois tracked male and female students from high school into college. After two years of college males (23 percent) who ranked themselves as "far above average" in intelligence in high school maintained that self-ranking; females who still ranked themselves as far

above average dropped from 21 percent to 4 percent.

If two facets of a good education are to instill self-confidence in an atmosphere of scholarly dialog, encouraging gender equality in classroom discussion should facilitate good education for a broader student base. Krupnick offers techniques for counteracting the male competitive edge in male-majority classrooms, including the following, published in the *Chronicle of Higher Education*, October 1985:

- Hold all students responsible for assignments and call on them even if they don't raise their hands.
- To encourage shy students, pause three or four seconds and look around the room after asking a question. This permits instructors "to choose contributors with an eye towards gender equality."
- Learn students' names and use them frequently, so all know they are recognized members of the class.
- Ask male and female students the same questions. Don't, for example, reserve "all abstract questions, or all factual questions, or all hard questions for one gender."
- Try to avoid interruptions. Intervene when comments occur too quickly so students can complete their contributions.

Women's Professional Support Group

The Women's Professional Support Group began in January 1985 at the Psychological and Counseling Center. Its principle purpose is to provide a forum for women who are pursuing a career either in conjunction with or instead of marriage. Such a format allows women to examine the problems they experience in the work world and to express their doubts and fears both regarding a career life and the impact of such a choice on their personal life. Group members offer each other opportunities for discussion and feedback regarding the difficulties inherent in a career role and offer support and understanding to those who need it.

The content of the group meetings has varied over the months as have the members. Those attending have been staff, undergraduates, graduates, and faculty. Their occupations have varied just as greatly: from ministers to secretaries, to engineers, to small business owners. Because of the wide varieties of professions, topics of discussion have been diverse. Some areas of concern arise more frequently than others. For ex-

(continued on next page)

2 to 5 in Nashville: A Parent's Resource Guide

ample, overscheduling and an inability to prioritize goals often result in feelings of guilt, anger, and frustration. Another frequent topic is a belief that only through constant work can success be achieved. This leaves little time for social activities, and when time is taken for such there is little enjoyment because of the work that "should" be done. The support and understanding of the group allows those feelings to be expressed without fear of censure. It opens the way for the discovery of alternative solutions to the problems.

As the members structure the group according to their needs, the content changes in response to those needs. Often someone will bring an article from a newspaper or periodical which they share with the others. At other times, a member will ask for help in role-playing an expected confrontation or ask for feedback regarding some project they are considering. Many times, members will ask for special time to discuss a personal problem regarding family or friends. As a result, the group remains flexible and more dynamic in structure than is typical of some groups.

As the group progresses, so do the members. The transient nature of the academic setting results in a fluctuation in the number of those attending. Some of the members have graduated from school, some have taken new positions, some have been transferred from the city. This introduces the major problem with the group—friends move on. Without a doubt, many of the group members become close. However, without such changes, often with the approval and encouragement, albeit sadness, of the group, progress and growth is not possible. The future of the group follows inevitably from the experiences of the past. However, new members add so much that the future of the group cannot be predicted. The excitement and expansion that they offer adds new experience as well as new problems. This serves to keep the meetings viable and exciting. We are looking forward to a new season of growth and new friends.

—Nancy Anderson

Psychological and Counseling Center

For more information, or to reserve an opening to attend, please contact Nancy Anderson at 322-2571. Meetings are held on alternate Mondays in room 300 at the Oxford House.

Pension Plans and Divorce

Until recently, divorced persons did not always have the right to claim part of their spouse's retirement benefits, but a new federal statute allows the assignment of retirement benefits as part of a divorce decree.

—ABA Journal, 11/85

Students Attend Leadership Conference

While most students were trudging to yet another day of classes on the rainy morning of November 1, Sylvia Wilson and I were enjoying the sunshine above the clouds on our flight to Washington, D.C. and the Second National Conference for Women Student Leaders and Women of Achievement. Organized by the Office of Women in Higher Education, over 300 college students and administrators from around the country attended. Interacting with this highly motivated group of women was a tremendous experience that I will not soon forget!

The conference opened Friday afternoon with a reception on Capitol Hill honoring women who had made special contributions in their chosen fields. Among those honored were Nancy Kassenbaum, Donna deVarona, Loret Ruppe, and Helen Thomas. Following dinner, the opening address was by Kathryn Moore, a senior Research Associate for the Study of Higher Education. A dynamic speaker, she focused on women as leaders in organizations, institutions, and government. The opening session instilled in us to "have the habit of freedom and the courage to be yourself" (Virginia Wolf), and that *real* power is unity.

Afterwards there were open discussions for the students concerning campus leadership issues. Attending a peace activist group, I heard what other students were doing at their respective campuses around the country. Groups at Tufts, for example, had protested against CIA interviews on campus, while Kansas State students had erected a Vietnam Memorial on campus to honor their alumni that fought in the war.

On Saturday, Mary Leonard and Brenda Sigal from the University of Maryland conducted a personal power seminar. The emphasis was directed toward developing our potential and combining the power of women and men. The view that women must always have that professional look and that they can not handle power was repudiated. Women should act upon the fact that power and femininity compliment each other. Women should be assertive, enthusiastic, creative, and perceptive. Along with saying the *right* thing, say the *real* thing.

Afternoon sessions focused on lifestyle issues and career decisions for women. I attended one of the small group sessions run by Suzanne Forsyth, the Personnel Director of the American Council on Education. The group discussed networking: what it is and how to do it. While not a new term to the majority of the women there, few understood how the network of contacts works. For Suzanne Forsyth it meant listing all colleagues and friends and what roles they played in her life. It was undoubtedly a

The Parents' Advisory Committee of the Vanderbilt University Child Care Center (VUCCC), chaired by Gloria Mason, has put together a 63-page resource guide for families with children ages two to five. The committee solicited ideas from parents and teachers of what had been most successful in classrooms and with families involving young children. From this idea pool came the resource guide with the contents as follows:

In-Home Activities

- Indoor/Rainy Day Fun
- Young Artists
- Household Collectibles
- Recipes for Children
- Birthday Party Games

Places to Go and Things to Do Around Nashville

- Free and Low-Cost Ideas
- Museums and Visitor Attractions
- Parks and Recreation
- Libraries, Theater, Educational Programs, and Storytelling
- Fairs, Festivals, and Events
- Summer Camps

Books for Parents and Children

- Resources for Parents
- The Caldecott Medal Books
- The Newberry Medal Books
- Favorite Children's Books
- Children's Records and Cassettes

Community Service Numbers

The book costs \$9.16, this includes tax, and \$8.50 of each book goes to the child care center to fund scholarships. To order, call 322-8074, or mail your check to Box 83, George Peabody College, Nashville, TN 37203. No postage charge for campus mailings; add \$1 for off-campus postage.

Readers' Commentary

One woman who read the *Women's VU* article in November on reproductive health rights commented that another service Vanderbilt offers is the Center for Fertility and Reproductive Research (C-FARR), 322-6573. This clinic offers female and male infertility help, artificial insemination, and in vitro fertilization.

Another reader said that the Vanderbilt Child Care Center (VUCCC—see December issue) is too expensive for some single parents whose financial resources are limited, but who can't afford to stay home with the children. Caught between a rock and a hard place, these parents face difficult choices. There are scholarships available through VUCCC for a few children. For information call 322-8074.

time-consuming task for her to keep in touch with these contacts, but nevertheless they had proven to be instrumental in the advancement of her career. Each woman agreed that a career is built by layers of experience and persistency.

Sunday sessions focused on ethics and health issues including a brief report on Nairobi by several women who attended the United National Decade on Women. The world view of women was a great way to end the weekend. It reminded us that, regardless of challenges the women's movement still faces, as Americans we still have more political and civil freedoms than any other women in the world.

Many conference thoughts impressed us, some of which were "you must love yourself and know yourself," "Lead while you follow," and "If you can dream it, you can do it." We came away realizing that leadership and achievement is within the grasp of all women.

—Bonnie Sachatello, A&S '86
Sylvia Wilson, Engineering '88

Making Career Choices

What can I do with a liberal arts major? Should I change my major to engineering, even if I hate it, in order to get a job after graduation? What are employers looking for? What do I have to offer them?

All of these questions and more go through students' minds as they begin to think of life after Vanderbilt. Career Planning and Placement Services (CPPS) offers a career planning workshop in which these questions are raised, and students do exercises to help them begin their career search. Linda Bird, Assistant Director, and Brenda Ley, Career Counselor, offer this workshop to any student, freshman through senior, who is interested in looking for a suitable career field, finding more information about that career, preparing for interviews, and developing interviewing skills.

In session one and part of session two, the students are encouraged to assess their skills, values, strengths, interests, and work preferences.

Next students learn how to begin identifying career fields which are consistent with their interests and values. The exercises concentrate on procedures for researching careers in regard to educational requirements, type of entry-level positions available, average salaries, etc. As a junior economics major, I was curious to know just what careers were open to me. These sessions helped me to see the myriad of options not only in career jobs, but also in summer employment which would give me experience in my chosen career area.

The fourth session teaches students job search strategies for both career and summer jobs, especially in writing resumes and cover letters, and developing contacts, networking and interviewing skills. The stu-

dent learns how to prepare for informational and job interviews. This session helped me to see the importance of informational interviews with people who hold positions in which I am interested. After completing the workshop, the student can do an informational interview with a local officer in her/his field. I took advantage of this opportunity, and as a result I was able to see what the position in which I was interested was really all about. The woman I spoke with was very honest about the best ways to enter the field and gave me some excellent advice in regard to important steps in attaining a job in this field.

My my questions are being answered one by one through my own job research. In looking back, the knowledge I gained through participating in the career planning workshop is a primary reason that I am confident and secure in my ability to acquire a job that will be the beginning of a career that is challenging and satisfying for me.

—Kathleen Brazzel
A&S '86

The spring Career Life Planning Workshop for students will begin January 28. Call Career Planning and Placement Services, 322-2750, for details.

Women's Center Programs

THE UNIVERSITY NETWORK LUNCH begins the new year meeting in room 126, the Faculty Lounge in Hill Student Center. The time will be 12:00-1:30 P.M. on the following Wednesdays: Jan. 15, Feb. 19, March 19, April 16, May 21. All women staff and faculty are welcome. Bring a lunch or go through the cafeteria line, and then enjoy a break with friends.

THE DUTCH TREAT BREAKFAST CLUB will meet Thursday, January 16, in the Rand Faculty Room at 7:30 A.M. for breakfast. At 8:00 A.M. Jo-Ellen Hunter, Manager of the Vanderbilt Bookstore in Rand, will speak and then answer questions. Club membership for the remainder of the year is \$1 which you can bring when you come.

THE UNDERGRADUATE WOMEN CAREER SERIES will begin January 16 with a program cosponsored by Career Planning and Placement Services. Jannell Glasgow, President of Events Management, Inc. in Nashville, will speak about her experiences as a liberal arts graduate in carving out a career for herself as a small businesswoman doing what she wants to do and getting paid for it. An informal talk followed by questions and answers. At the Women's Center, 4:30-6:00 P.M. Refreshments will be provided.

THE GRADUATE STUDENTS' GROUP will begin spring semester meetings with a new format. January 24, 4:30-6:00 P.M. at the Women's Center, we will meet for

conversation and to organize discussion topics for spring which will include the graduate student job search, how to get papers published, and other topics of interest to the group. Open to all women graduate/professional students. Refreshments provided.

THE WOMAN DOCTOR: PRACTICE PATTERNS AND LIFESTYLES is a four-part series beginning January 27, 12-1:00 P.M. in Light Hall room 420. Dr. Jeanne Ballinger, a surgeon in private practice in Nashville, will speak and answer questions. Three other women doctors—one from academia, one in rural practice, and one whose career has evolved—will continue the series through April. Open to medical students, faculty, and staff.

"MACHO IS NOT ENOUGH" is the title of a Lunchtime Seminar by Don Welch, Jr., Asst. Dean of the Law School. He will be speaking about his book of the same name which was published in 1985. Thursday, January 30, 12:15-1:15 P.M. at the Women's Center. Bring a bag lunch if you like; coffee and juice are provided.

"THINKING ABOUT THE FUTURE: LEADERSHIP" is a program for women undergraduates, February 4, 4:30-5:30 P.M. at the Women's Center. Bonnie Sachatello and Sylvia Wilson will be sharing information on leadership which they brought back from a leadership conference in Washington, D.C. in November (see article in this issue). Refreshments provided.

Pregnant College Students Suspend Loan Payments

In response to a loan repayment problem of UW-Madison student Karen Jolly, the Education Department has told colleges and universities that they may grant pregnant students a leave of absence which will suspend their loan payments for up to six months. The department had earlier refused to defer the payment of loans on grounds of disability because of pregnancy. Jolly was declared ineligible for deferral of payments on her \$2,500 student loan when she took a break from classes last year to have her baby. Rep. Robert Kastenmeier of Wisconsin told the Education Department that its policy made "abortion the only recourse to female students who want to be able to continue with their college education." Student aid administrators say the leave of absence provision is obscure and that there are no policies in effect to make it usable. Kastenmeier's staff said he will push for legislation to include pregnancy as a reason for allowing students to receive disability deferments.

—University Women, University of Wisconsin, Nov. 1985

ANNOUNCEMENTS ET CETERA

The **MIDDLE TENNESSEE WOMEN'S STUDIES ASSOCIATION** will hold its charter meeting Sat., Jan. 18, at the University Club, 10:00-2:30 P.M. Schedule includes registration, coffee, plenary meeting (getting acquainted, organizational ideas), interest groups, lunch, election of officers and program committee.

Dues will be \$5 for students, \$10 for faculty and others. The cost of lunch and share of room fee is \$10. To reserve a place, call Elisabeth Perry, 322-8151/2575. Make checks payable to MTWSA and send to Dr. Perry, Box 113, Station B, Nashville, TN 37235.

Vanderbilt Sports:

● **WOMEN'S BASKETBALL**, Jan. 23, Alabama; Jan. 19, Auburn; Feb. 5, Kentucky. Games are in Memorial Gym. For tickets, call 322-3544.

● **LADY COMMODORES' SWIMMING**, Jan. 25, Alabama A&M & N.E. Louisiana; Feb. 8, Eastern Kentucky. 1:00 P.M. in Memorial Pool. Free.

STARTING YOUR OWN BUSINESS, a six-week course offered by A Woman's Place, begins Jan. 13, day or evening. Cost is \$100. Call 321-3700 for information.

The Psychological and Counseling Center offers the following programs on a semester or monthly basis:

- Assertiveness Training
- Weight Management Program
- Eating Problems Workshop
- Time Management
- Relaxation Training
- Stress Management Skills

- Vocational Self-Assessment
 - Professional Women's Support Group
- Call 322-2571 for information and reservations.

The **WHITE HOUSE CONFERENCE ON SMALL BUSINESS** comes to Tennessee Feb. 28 at the Hyatt Regency, Nashville. There will be an opening session, forums on key issues of concern to small business, luncheon and election of delegates to August meeting in D.C. Fee: \$35, including registration and meals. Call 322-4843.

WINE AND CHEESE PARTY WITH TKALS (Tennesseans Keeping Abortion Legal and Safe) Jan. 22, the anniversary of Roe vs. Wade, the Supreme Court decision legalizing abortion. The party will commemorate that decision, celebrate present opportunities for choice, and rededicate for the important future struggle for abortion rights. \$15 donation, but discount for financial need. Call 297-8540 for information and reservations.

Academic Funding Opportunities: For information on the following, please call the Women's Center, 322-4843.

● **SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM FOR WOMEN IN THE HEALTH PROFESSIONS** for women 25 years of age or older who are seeking the education necessary for entry into or advancement in a career in the health-care field. \$250-\$1,000, full-time or part-time undergraduate study. Deadline: April 15.

● **CLAIROL LOVING CARE CAREER ADVANCEMENT SCHOLARSHIP** for women 25 years of age or older, full-time or

part-time study in academic, vocational, or paraprofessional courses to upgrade skills or complete education for career advancement. \$200-\$1,000 for one year. Does not cover doctoral or post-doc study. Deadline: April 15.

● **Business & Professional Women's (BPW)/Sears LOAN FUND FOR WOMEN IN GRADUATE BUSINESS STUDIES** encourages women to enroll in graduate business programs, full or part-time. \$500-\$2,500 for academic year, renewable. Deadline: May 1.

● **BPW Foundation LOAN FUND FOR WOMEN IN ENGINEERING STUDIES** is designed to assist women in their final two years of an engineering program, full or part-time. Maximum loan: \$5,000/year. Deadline: May 1.

Junior Counsel
Melody Lenkner
Speech-Language Pathologist
Twin Falls, Idaho

After four years of working in the public school system as a speech-language pathologist, I decided to open a private practice. I quit my job and stayed at home for a few months to reorganize and think through my career change. One evening during this phase of my life, my husband and I were engaged in a fairly heated discussion over some family matter, when my eight-year-old daughter piped up: "Mom, you shouldn't argue with Dad like that. Remember, you're just a housewife now."

—Savvy, Nov. '85

Edited by Joan Anderson

TO RECEIVE YOUR OWN LABELED COPY OF WOMEN'S VU return the form below or call the Women's Center, 322-4843, to place your name on the mailing list.

Newsletters are sent to all students free. For non-student, off-campus addresses there is a \$3.00 fee for ten monthly issues through June 1986. Please make checks payable to Vanderbilt University Women's Center.

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