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Virginia van der Bogert

Kathleen T. Brinko

Sally S. Atkins

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Transformational Faculty Development: Integrating the Feminine and the Masculine

Virginia van der Bogert

Kathleen T. Brinko

Sally S. Atkins

Ellen L. Arnold

Appalachian State University

Feminism has been one of the most influential sociopolitical forces of our time. It has provided an expanded perspective on our culture and all of our major institutions, including higher education. As faculty developers, agents of change in academe, it is important that we understand the implications of this wider view for the men and women with whom we work. It is our purpose in this article to summarize some of the recent research on gender differences and to consider its ramifications for faculty developers. In doing so, we will propose a transformational faculty development practice which, through the integration of masculine and feminine perspectives, can support fundamental change in our institutions.

Different Worlds, Different Values

In the socially turbulent 1960s and 1970s, the feminist movement dramatically broadened opportunity for women, especially in terms of role and career choices. During these years, women learned to focus on

competition and achievement in order to claim their rights in a professional milieu which often devalued, even rejected, traditionally feminine qualities. In doing so, many women found that “making it in a man’s world” left them feeling alienated, isolated, and unfulfilled. The recognition of this dissatisfaction has been a major factor in encouraging both women and men to reflect on the extent to which male and female realities differ.

Research confirms that men and women do, in fact, tend to live in different worlds (Bernard, 1981). Chodorow’s (1978) analysis of the dynamics of gender identity formation showed that male and female children experience very different early social environments. Since women are generally responsible for early child care, the female child develops in the context of an ongoing relationship with a person of the same sex, while the male child does not. To establish adult identity, the male child must separate from his mother, while the female child need not do so. Chodorow suggests that women thus come to define themselves in terms of their relationships with others, while men define themselves in terms of separation and personal autonomy.

Gilligan’s (1982) ground-breaking study of moral development found a similar difference in the way women and men experience moral dilemmas. When evaluated in light of Kohlberg’s (1976) theory of moral development, women have commonly been judged deficient in moral reasoning. Gilligan determined that the women she studied had, in fact, a system of moral thought different from that of the men on whom Kohlberg based his theory. She found that people who define themselves in terms of separation and autonomy—most often men—think in terms of hierarchies, rules, and rights. Those who define themselves in terms of their connection to others—most often women—think in terms of webs of interconnection, care, and responsibility. Men, therefore, usually develop within a “morality of rights” based on abstract principles and logic, and women within a “morality of responsibility” rooted in a concern with relationships and caring.

Belenky, Clinchy, Goldberger, and Tarule (1986) identified yet another difference in the way men and women view the world. In their study of how women “come to know,” Belenky et al. discovered that women tend to express their epistemological premises using metaphors of speaking and listening rather than the metaphors of sight so prevalent among men. They found that while knowing for men tended to be an abstract, logical, and objective act, for women it was more often a personal, interactive, and subjective process. Belenky et al. determined that women are frequently “silenced” by the competitive, adversarial atmos-

phere of our schools and workplaces which, in contrast, many men find stimulating. They concluded that women most effectively learn and work in supportive, connected environments.

In their recent study of women faculty, Aisenberg and Harrington (1988) found that academic women strive to integrate their personal and professional lives in a way that men do not. For men, education is often a means to an end, a tool to be used. For women, learning is usually a transformational experience integrally connected to a sense of self. In addition, Aisenberg and Harrington found that women, more so than men, tend to be non-hierarchical in their interactions with others, collaborative in their teaching and writing, and inclusive in their choice of subject matter and research methodology.

Consistent with the findings of Aisenberg and Harrington (1988), Guido-DiBrito and Carpenter (1986) found that women tend to use leadership styles that are more participative and democratic than do men and, further, that this model of leadership is frequently more productive than autocratic styles. Sagaria and Johnsrud (1988) call this style of leadership

generative to emphasize the commitment to fostering productivity, creativity, and a sense of self-esteem in others. Generative leadership is an approach to working with individuals and groups that emphasizes mutual empowerment among leaders and participants. Because generative leadership is synergistic, it stresses collaboration as a means of identifying and accomplishing goals. (p. 16)

It is important when reviewing this research to emphasize that although men and women as groups may differ, individual women and men can and do exhibit identical constellations of personality traits. Just as there are women who relish the challenge of competition, there are men who find it to be a pointless game. We must also keep in mind that most research conducted on gender traits has been done with white, middle class subjects. Members of other racial and socioeconomic groups live in still different worlds, as yet little explored by social scientists.

Our Experience

Sanford (1980) describes higher education in our society as a "masculine wilderness." He notes that postsecondary education is dominated by men at every level of organization and is reliant on methods of instruc-

tion and research developed in accordance with masculine principles. By “masculine” he means

stressing analysis, to the neglect of how things fit together; separating thought from feeling, inquiry from action, teaching from inquiry and action, work from play; abstracting functions for purposes of study and then basing practice on the abstractions as if they were separate in reality...putting science and technology ahead of other values...focusing on a single purpose and then making everything else instrumental to it...adopting for the running of the university the mechanical theory of management, with its emphasis on differentiation of function, specialization, precise role definition, efficiency, and the use of status competition as the motive force for keeping the machinery going. (p. 92-93)

There is no doubt that we in higher education have profited greatly from the application of these principles. Efficient and task-oriented, fueled by personal ambition and a competitive spirit, we have obtained knowledge and mastered skills undreamed of only decades ago. Difficulties arise, however, when these traits become overpowering, leaving no space for the practicing or valuing of other ways of thinking and acting. Recent criticisms of academe, including those by some male academics (Schaefer, 1990; Smith, 1990), suggest that the pendulum has swung too far in this direction, creating an imbalance in our educational environment that many women and men find neither congenial nor productive.

Our university, like most other American institutions of higher education, is strongly masculine in orientation. In our various professional roles – as female faculty, psychotherapists, and faculty developers – we encounter colleagues, male and female, who respond to this orientation in different ways and with varying degrees of satisfaction. Some faculty work to master the unwritten “rules” of academic life; they follow the traditional “masculine” path to success by concentrating on personal ambition, individual achievement, and professional competition. We see them work long hours in their offices or labs; we see them strive to be the “first” or the “best” in their fields; we see them sacrifice their personal lives in order to advance in their professions. Some of our faculty find this lifestyle very rewarding and thrive in this milieu; others have lost their sense of self, their families, their friends, and their joy in life.

Another group of faculty at our institution, whom we call “peripheral” faculty, reject this accepted path to success and find niches in out-of-the-way corners where they can work undisturbed. These faculty often sacrifice their professional lives to keep their personal lives intact. Although extremely talented individuals, many lack the credentials neces-

sary for participation as “real” academics and piece together part-time teaching jobs or take positions as advisors or other support staff. Often these women and men are underpaid, underutilized, and unrecognized for their contributions to the academic community. While we know of several faculty who are very satisfied with this lifestyle, we know others who feel invisible and robbed of their self-esteem. None are in a position to have a significant impact on the institution.

In our work we also encounter a third group of colleagues who are attempting to integrate the feminine and the masculine in their professional lives. We see these men and women as connected and interdependent with their families and friends, as well as with their colleagues and students. With their families and friends, they share the joys and struggles of life. With their colleagues, they team teach, collaborate on research, provide mutual support, and celebrate their individual and joint achievements. With their students, they are guides and companions as they explore together the worlds of knowledge and human experience. This approach, however, is not without risks. Since collaborative activity is not as highly valued in our society as individual achievement, some faculty report that they are under-rewarded, even penalized, for these kinds of efforts.

In our own lives we are also striving to incorporate both the masculine and the feminine. We are seeking to achieve a balance between competition and cooperation, independence and interdependence, personal ambition and group achievement, analysis and intuition, technology and relationships. In the parlance of Sagaria and Johnsrud (1988), we are searching for a generative style of interaction that will empower us, our colleagues, our students, and our institutions to reach our fullest potentials.

Integrating the Masculine and the Feminine

As faculty developers, we have supported faculty growth with a variety of services: orientations, sabbaticals, exchanges, grants, workshops, and curricular and instructional development programs (Bergquist and Phillips, 1975, 1977, 1981; Centra, 1978; Nelson & Siegal, 1980). We have attempted to enhance equal opportunity for women with a variety of strategies: increasing awareness about discrimination, monitoring campus climate, and providing support for those who have been victims of inappropriate behavior (Hall, 1982; Kantor, 1977; Sandler, 1986; VanderWaerd, 1985).

However, while we feel that these are important and necessary efforts, we believe more can be done to help faculty reach their full potential. Despite the fact that individual faculty developers often have a personal style that incorporates masculine and feminine approaches, all of these activities address the issues from a predominately masculine point of view: service-oriented endeavors most often focus upon individual growth; equal opportunity-oriented programs focus upon “rules” and “rights” (Gilligan, 1982). We propose an approach to faculty development that will more fully incorporate the feminine and the masculine. Valuing both aspects of human experience, this approach strives to weave the two strands together into a cloth stronger than either of the threads. We call this approach “transformational” because our emphasis is not on providing services but on facilitating personal, professional, and organizational change.

Personal Development

Personal development, of course, is the most fundamental level at which one can undergo change. In our experience as therapists and faculty developers, we have found that one’s personal and professional lives cannot be separated. Faculty performance may be improved by new techniques; however, we have witnessed several faculty who have enhanced their teaching, scholarship, and/or service by becoming more whole and fully functioning individuals. As faculty developers, we have the opportunity not only to teach skills, but to create supportive relationships with faculty that validate their sense of self and encourage their openness to others. If we are not already doing so, we can begin:

- valuing feelings, hunches, intuitional thinking as much as rational, logical, linear thinking.
- empowering subordinates; sharing decisions.
- empowering colleagues; nurturing mutual respect and appreciation of differences; sharing enthusiasms and common commitments.
- empowering leaders; providing honest feedback to help them understand the impact of their decisions.
- refusing to conform to role expectations that compromise our full functioning as human beings.
- providing support groups for men and women.
- providing personal and career counseling for faculty through employee assistance programs or other such services.

- providing opportunities and support for individuals to pursue new areas of personal interest, for example, through individual growth plans.

Professional Development

In the past, instructional development has been the heart of professional development for faculty. Until recently, the areas of scholarship and service have been relatively neglected (Boice & Turner, 1987). A transformed faculty development practice would address all three aspects of the faculty role and address them from a new perspective—one that integrates and balances the feminine with the masculine, the collective with the individualistic. If we are not doing so already, we can help facilitate this transformation by:

- approaching instructional/curricular/departmental/institutional problems as a collaborative consultant rather than as “the expert.”
- valuing and encouraging collaboration in teaching, scholarship, and service.
- emphasizing collaborative learning; helping faculty find ways to reward students for helping each other learn.
- emphasizing interdisciplinary, transdisciplinary, and cross-cultural issues in curricular and course design.
- encouraging faculty interdependence in the department/college/institution.
- encouraging mentoring among faculty.
- providing “peripheral” faculty with opportunities for growth and development.
- working toward having quality child care facilities on campus.

Organizational Development

Our present organizational structures reflect the fact that we, as a society, have taken individualism and competitiveness to its logical extreme. Most often we work within programs, departments, or divisions that must compete with each other for limited resources and power. Such competition may be challenging, but it may also be divisive, even destructive. We agree with Astin (1987) that a more cooperative world view would provide a very different, more fruitful frame of reference for our institutions of higher education. As transformational faculty developers, we measure human progress not in terms of our victory over others, but in terms of our growing ability to relate to others and to create solutions that

are beneficial to all involved. If we are to foster this perspective, we must work to modify many of our existing personnel practices and organizational structures. If we are not doing so already, we can spearhead this change by:

- encouraging cooperation and collaboration; emphasizing relationships.
- cultivating consensual groups, committees, and networks.
- focusing on process as well as product.
- resolving conflicts by reframing dichotomies as inclusive, connected issues; identifying resolutions that are satisfactory to all parties involved.
- seeking solutions that incorporate what is “caring” or “responsive” with what is “right” or “fair” or “equitable.”
- valuing professors who contribute to their students and to their institutions as much as those who contribute to their disciplines.
- rewarding faculty who engage in collaborative efforts as well as individualistic ones.
- creating/maintaining rituals such as commencements and convocations which celebrate common values.

Conclusion

Faculty development as a discipline has traditionally focused on programs and services intended to enhance individual professional growth. Developers have responded to feminism primarily through supporting activities designed to provide equal opportunity for women, not recognizing the implications of feminism for the academy as a whole. These efforts, although valuable, have often done little to help faculty become more fully functioning individuals or to change the imbalances prevalent in American higher education. We have proposed a faculty development practice that intentionally incorporates both masculine and feminine perspectives. We believe that the resulting synergy will have the power to enhance lives and reshape our institutions. We call this practice transformational faculty development.

Words Associated with a Traditional and a Transformed Academy

A traditional academy is dominated by these traits:

Hierarchy
 Autocracy
 Dictates, Fiats, Majority Rule
 Laws, Rules
 Rights, Equity, Equality
 Autonomy, Independence
 Competition
 Individual Achievement,
 Personal Ambition
 Zero Sum, Win/Lose Philosophy

A transformed academy also incorporates:

Circle, Spiral, Web
 Participation
 Consensus
 Relationships, Context
 Care, Responsibility
 Connectedness, Interdependence
 Collaboration
 Group Achievement,
 Empowerment
 Win/Win Philosophy

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