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MELVENE D. HARDEE
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WHOSE PERSONAL STORIES ARE PUBLISHED IN EDUCATIONAL JOURNALS? INVESTIGATING PRESUMPTIONS ABOUT WOMEN'S SUBJECTIVITY IN ACADEMIC DISCOURSE

Pamela LePage and Doris Flowers
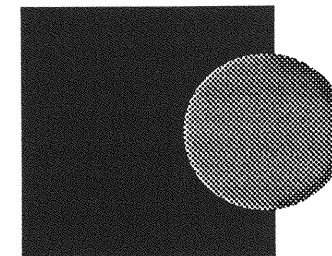
The goals of the research described in this article were to determine whose personal experience stories have been published in education journals over the last 13 years and to explore what topics have been discussed and how they have been presented. In sum, the goals of the research were to determine who has published personal stories, what they talk about, and how they present their information. Although this article describes a research study and not a personal anecdote, the idea was inspired by personal experience. Recently, one of us submitted a personal story to a social science journal. This article was sent back almost immediately (obviously reviewed only by the editor, not by an editorial staff) with a comment that since it included a "personal narrative" it did not belong in a scholarly journal. If true, this seemed a curious response, since the article had been represented as a personal essay and almost every issue of that journal had presented at least one personal essay.

After taking a second look at that publication, the answer became obvious: almost every personal essay published over the last five years had been written by a man and had provided some positive perspective on teaching, parenting, or life as a student. Still, it did not seem as though the editor was deliberately discriminating against women or against what some may call a critical tone; instead, it seemed as though the rejected essay somehow had been considered more personal or more subjective than the other essays the journal published. One explanation could be that since people more often hear men's stories and opinions, they may seem more objective. Or perhaps the way this article was written made it seem more personal. Whatever the reason, it seemed an interesting challenge to "objectively" investigate whether this "personal experience" did indeed represent more than just a coincidence.

Literature Review

The Place of Personal Narrative in Educational Literature

The journal editor just mentioned is not the only person who has argued that personal narratives do not belong among scholarly literature. In academia, many believe it is more acceptable to present yourself as the objective third party. Social scientists have hesitated to accept a more intuitive, less scientific approach because they have been afraid that students who do not distance themselves from their work would not be able to produce or present objective, scientific conclusions. Today, many social scientists are starting to recognize the drawbacks of this restriction. Lewis and Simon (1986) claim that to the extent that academic discourse appears objective and distanced (and is understood and privileged in that way), it becomes a vehicle for domination. It devalues alternative perspectives, understanding, and articulation of experience.

Personal Narrative and Feminism?

The controversy surrounding "objectivity" and "subjectivity," and the idea that there is a need to integrate the "personal" with the "intellectual" are related feminist issues (Spender, 1981; Miller, 1983; Lykes & Stewart, 1986; Walsh, 1989; Ricketts, 1989). Spender (1981) describes how feminists have moved from a defense of the personal to a critique of objectivity. She argues that objectivity is a distinguishing feature allocated to the dominant group.

> Women came to realize that the knowledge which men constructed about women (from their deviant physiology and psychology to the definition of women as non-workers) was frequently rated as 'objective' while the knowledge women began to construct about women (which has its origins in the role of a participant rather than a spectator) was frequently rated as "subjective." When men checked with men, their pronouncements were usually seen as credible, but when women checked with women, their explanations were frequently seen as illogical, irrational, emotional and liable to be dismissed by men. The hypothesis arose that legitimacy might be associated with gender rather than with the adequacy of an explanation, and this led Adrienne Rich to comment that in a patriarchal society, objectivity is the name we give to male subjectivity." (1981, p. 6).

Spender also suggests that men often discuss their opinions as if they represent truth, and women often discuss their explanations as partial or temporary truths.

One possible explanation for why people believe that the personal narrative is a feminine form of expression is because research has shown that women disclose information about themselves more often than men (Petronio & Martin, 1986; Snell, Miller, Belk, Garcia-Falconi & Hernandez-Sanchez, 1989; Derlega & Chaikin, 1976; Hayes, 1992). It has been suggested that when women are discouraged from expressing themselves with a more personal style, they may experience this as a rejection (Miller, 1983; Chase, 1990). For example, in a personal essay, Miller (1983) explored what she considered the constraints of form, proper academic demeanor, and scholarly approach that perpetuate the dichotomy between emotion and intellect in the university. She claims that she has felt restricted during her academic career from revealing her true self. She believes this is destructive and refuses to accept what she describes as the patriarchal restrictions placed on academic scholarship.

In another example, Chase (1990) presents a case study that describes the experience of a female student who had applied to graduate programs. Chase believes that this student received a rejection from one program because the admissions committee was uncomfortable with her essay that included personal opinions based on personal experiences. Chase thinks these committee members considered it inappropriate for a student to include this type of personal information in a formal, academic essay. Ultimately the student felt rejected by an academic community that adhered to traditional norms governing academic writing. Whether personal narrative constitutes proper academic form, it seems that some women have felt restricted by what they have labeled male-oriented restrictions on academic decorum.

Equity in Publication

In the past, investigators have studied equity in information dissemination (Hood, 1980; Lin, 1992; McCorkle, 1990; Ward & Grant, 1985; Foley, Keener & Branch, 1994; Nicoloff & Forrest, 1988). Foley, Keener and Branch (1994) analyzed articles published in 11 educational technology journals between 1988 and 1992 for which women were listed as either first or second author. They found that the percentage of women's journal publications ranged from a high of 68 percent in the 1989 *Journal of Educational Computing Research* to a low of 20 percent in the 1989 *Technical Horizons in Education*. The percentage was 34 percent; the mean, 36 percent. Nicoloff and Forrest (1988), who conducted a survey of a random sample of American College Personnel Association members, found a significant and consistent difference between men's and women's research and publication activities.

Investigators often use bibliographic data bases to explore equity issues in information dissemination. For example, Hood (1980) analyzed the ERIC database in an attempt to describe the literature content for five equity groups—the physically and mentally disabled, African-Americans, Hispanics, and women—examining the groups according to four topics: attitude, employment, counseling, and curriculum. Hood concluded that the literature for each of these groups was different along many dimensions, such as sheer quantity, proportions found in the *Current Index to Journals in Education* (CIJE) and *Resources in Education* (RIE), average age, type of publication, sponsorship, authorship, page length. In fact, the differences were so many and in some cases so large, that it was decided that each equity group should be examined separately. Hood concluded that there was no way to make predictions about the literature for these groups except in the grossest terms. It is possible that this study undertook too much at a time when technology was not so efficient as it is now. However, from that study, Hood also concluded that with a sample of even 100 articles, it was possible to provide a general profile of the topic area being studied.

Lin (1992) conducted a study to evaluate how advances in the technology of library automation were represented in the literature and to what extent males and females contributed to that literature. Using a database search of the WILSONDISC to identify publications in the area of academic library automation for the years 1984-85 and 1990-91, Lin selected for content analysis 240 articles from 1,198 citations identified. A test was used to determine if there was a statistically significant difference in publishing output for females and males, and a chi-square analysis was used to determine the relationship of subject coverage to period. Of the 303 writers and editors whose gender could be identified, 54 percent were female and 46 percent male. Female authors decreased their rate of publication from 1984-85 to 1990-91 by 5 percent, while the rate for males increased at about the same rate. The average publication output of female authors in both

time periods was about five pages; that of males was about seven.

In another study (McCorkle, 1990), investigators used database technology to examine gender inequities in book reviews published in three Speech Communication Association (SCA) journals—*Quarterly Journal of Speech, Communication Education,* and *Text and Performance Quarterly*—between 1980 and 1989. Each of 1,179 book reviews was coded for year, journal name, journal editor's gender, author's gender, reviewer gender, book editor's gender, book topic, placement, and space allocated to the review; whether the review was of one book or a group of books; and if the reviewer's name appeared in the table of contents. The conclusions were that in the three journals studied, female authors were not reviewed at the same rate as male authors; the majority (68.9%) of book reviewers were male, with reviewer gender relatively balanced in *Text and Performance Quarterly,* somewhat balanced in *Communication Education,* and clearly not balanced in the *Quarterly Journal of Speech.* Female reviewers were more likely than males to review books written by women.

It is clear there is controversy about whether stories of personal experience should be published in scholarly journals, a debate considered a feminist issue since many believe that most women are interested in integrating the personal with the professional and that most men would oppose this approach. The goal of our project was to use the ERIC database to determine whether personal stories have been written more often by men or by women, especially given the fact that women feel a need to defend their right to connect personal histories with their professional lives. Because past research has successfully used computer technology, specifically database technology (Hood, 1980; Lin, 1992; McCorkle, 1990), we used citations in the ERIC database to determine whether men or women present a greater number of personal stories in education journals.

Methods

Sample

We selected the citations used in this study from the ERIC database, limiting the search to certain subject categories between the years of 1980 and 1993. Although ERIC lists many other types of publications, including conference presentations and reports, only those identified as journal articles were included in this study. We selected the subject categories hoping that they would produce the greatest number of personal narratives. Figures next to each category title indicate the number of citations we considered as we looked for personal experience stories in each category.

Personal narrative 87
Personal essay 45
Personal history 391
Personal experience 711
Personal reflection 102
Personal story 120
Self-reflection 102
Self-reflective 102
First hand 79

We found 260 personal experience articles among the 1,695 citations. Some may wonder what other articles we found in these categories that were not personal narratives. Some articles described how teachers could motivate students to use personal experience in creative writing; others reported research that explored the effects of confiding to counselors or significant others; still others examined the role of personal reflection on the teaching process. In other words, only a small percentage of the articles in these categories were personal reflections. It is also important to emphasize that we did not use all of the personal experience narratives listed in ERIC in this study, only those under the subject categories above. Obviously, there are many more personal experience articles listed in the ERIC data base that for some reason do not appear in the subject categories used in this research study.

To determine which articles were personal experience narratives, we first considered clues from titles. If a title included identifying comments such as "my story" or "a personal account," they were considered likely possibilities. If the title clearly indicated that this was not a personal experience story, e.g., "the effect of basal readers on children's attitudes toward reading," we skipped this citation. Many articles had unclear titles, e.g., "Bombs Away." (This was a personal experience story.) Many personal stories had unusual though creative and interesting titles. If there was a question about whether a title described a personal story, we analyzed the content of the abstract.

The personal experience stories were not all found in a few specialized or magazine-like journals; on the contrary, the 260 articles we analyzed were published in 161 different journals. The type of journal was not considered in this analysis; if a publication was described as a journal article, we included it in the analysis.

Criteria for Identifying Personal Experience Publications

Determining criteria for what constituted personal experience publications was difficult. To some extent, all research is based on or influenced by personal experience. We chose only those articles that specifically stated that the story, anecdote, information, or position was based on personal experience. We placed some limitations on the criteria:

• A personal experience story had to stand alone as an example or as a story. In other words, if the author included his or her own experience and also interviewed or surveyed others, this was considered a different type of research that included the author as a research subject.

• Position papers that only seemed to be based on personal experience were not included unless the author stated explicitly that the position was based on personal experience. In other words, we made no assumptions. Even strong opinions can be based on literature or observations.

• Case studies were not considered personal unless the article focused on the author's personal experience with a particular student or subject. In other words, if the article focused on the author's experience, it was considered a personal story. If the article focused on the subject's experience, it was not considered a personal story. In the situations where instructors discussed teaching strategies, occasionally the abstracts were vague. If there was a question about whether an article included a personal story, we reviewed its contents.

• The article need not be written in first person. Many authors did not speak in the first person when relating personal stories; instead, they used "the author" or "their name" or "one," as if they were disconnected from themselves. As long as a story reflected the author's experiences, voice was not part of the criteria for inclusion.

Why Choose an Educational Database?

We selected an educational database for analysis because men and women are both represented in education. In fact, since so many public school teachers are women, if there is any bias, it probably is that there are more women than men in this field. However, although teaching has been stereotyped as a feminine occupation, men actually are employed in many education-related positions. Although approximately 85 percent of the teach-

ers in public schools are women (Strober & Tyack, 1980), men hold approximately 80 percent of the positions in administration (Moore, 1982). Furthermore, although 76 percent of the students earning degrees (other than doctorates) in education are women (Moore, 1987), and 52 percent of the students earning doctoral degrees in education are women (Ransom, 1990), 73 to 76 percent of college-level educators are men (Ransom, 1990; Moore, 1987), and 63 percent of education faculties are men (Heald, 1983; Ransom, 1990). Although it is true that women more often fill the lower-status, lower-paid positions in education, educators of both sexes could conceivably write education-related personal stories. This is also true for the general public as well. Everyone in this country, including men and women, has had education experiences and male and female parents have an equal opportunity to write about their children.

In addition to calculating the number of people who work in education or who have had education-related experiences, to test the assumption that men should publish as many personal experience articles as women, an analysis of 1,200 articles in ERIC was conducted under the general category "Learning." In that survey, 605 (50.5%) articles were written by men, and 595 (49.5%) by women. In this category men and women had published an equal number of articles.

For these reasons, it was determined that men and women should publish approximately equal numbers articles of personal experience in education.

Data Collection Procedures

After determining whether an article discussed a personal story, we copied or saved the abstract onto a computer disk for later analysis. Men's and women's personal stories were categorized into separate files. We identified author gender by name,

assuming that if an author's name was feminine (Betty, Diane, Judy), these people were women. If an author had a masculine name (John, David, Jack), they were listed as men. If the gender was not obvious from a name, the abstract was analyzed for content. Often, the abstract would provide clues: "the author writes about her experience in Africa," or "the author gives a personal account of his experience with graduate school." If the abstract and other articles written by the author did not reveal gender, we reviewed article content. This problem was rare; in fact, of the 260 articles we analyzed, this procedure was necessary for only six.

Data Analysis

The numbers of men's and women's personal experience articles were counted and then compared. A chi-square was used to measure whether a significant difference existed between these two categories. Also, since complete abstracts were printed for each citation, we also explored other topics. Some patterns and themes emerged from this exploratory investigation. Each abstract was coded and then categorized in four areas: voice of the author, social issues discussed, types of experiences presented, and goals of the articles.

Author voice. First, we analyzed author voice. Descriptive percentages provide information on how the authors presented themselves. Although the authors most often presented themselves in their current role (e.g., administrator, teacher, or business person), this was not always the case; sometimes the articles were written from a different perspective. In other words, if people who are now college professors talked about their experiences in graduate school, they presented the voice of a student. The categories for this analysis include K-12 teachers, adult instructors or college professors, students, parents, and

professionals outside of education.

Social issues. We also coded the abstracts according to social issues discussed and analyzed them according to whether the article touched on issues of race, gender, class, and/or disability. The only abstracts included for this analysis were those demonstrating a clear association between the article content and topics being analyzed.

Experiences. Abstracts were also coded according to types of experiences people discussed. In other words, did people talk more often about themselves or about a personal experience with another person (e.g., student or child)? Did they talk more about their career or their own education?

Goals and purposes. Finally, we also coded the abstracts according to the main goal or purpose of the article. In other words, did most people intend to give advice or defend a position? If they gave advice, did they give personal advice or professional advice? At times, there appeared to be more than one goal; in these cases, the article was coded according to what was determined to be the main goal. The main goal was chosen according to strict criteria, which at times was based on subtle distinctions. Both the investigators and the outside observers followed this protocol for the purpose of calculating reliability. In one case, the categories overlapped. In other words, one category was listed as "providing professional advice," another as "providing teaching strategies." Obviously, both categories describe types of professional advice. In this situation, however, there were so many articles that were meant to provide teaching strategies, we determined that this purpose should be separated from the broader category of professional advice.

Reliability

After we finished selecting personal experience articles, as a reliabil-

ity check, this same procedure was repeated two weeks later with one category, (approximately 87 citations). A score-rescore reliability was determined to be 100 percent.

Two outside observers, both men who had careers outside of education, were asked to assist in measuring interrater reliability. These two outside observers, one of whom has a PhD in mechanical engineering and the other a PhD in psychology, were asked to categorize each article according to whether it represented a personal experience story and according to gender, voice, social issues discussed, type of personal experience presented, and goal. A list of criteria for each category was presented to both observers before they rated the articles.

First, the raters were asked to select articles that represented personal experience stories from a list of 20 citations. After comparing three observation score sheets, we established a reliability of 100 percent. The outside observers were also asked to code ten abstracts according to gender, voice, social issues discussed, type of personal experience presented, and the goal of the article. A total of 150 questions (50 for each scorer) were compared. The interrater reliability for these categories was generally high. The lowest interrater reliability was found for determining article goal. For this category, subtle differences made consistency in rating difficult.

Findings

Comparing Men and Women

Results indicate that men's personal stories have been published in educational journals more often than women's. Of the 260 personal experience articles we examined, 158 (61%)

were written by men and 102 (39%) by women. A chi-square test (X2=12.06) yielded a significant difference at .001 for this comparison. This result was in direct contrast to the survey of 1,200 articles in ERIC under the general category "Learning." In that analysis, equal numbers of journal articles had been published by men and women. Of the articles sampled in that category, 605 (50.5%) were written by men, and 595 (49.5%) by women. This analysis presents a more equal representation of men and women.

Table 1 lists journals in the study sample that had published more than one personal experience article between 1980 and 1993. Among those that had published several personal stories, there seems to be a smaller gap between men and women (with a few exceptions). For those that had published only a few stories, the differences between men and women are more pronounced. This is especially true since 117 journals out of the 161 represented in this sample had published only one story. The largest difference was found among these journals.

There has been a slight increase in the number of personal experience publications for both men and women since 1980, peaking for men in 1988 and for women in 1990. It also appears that the number of publications authored by men has been more consistent over the last 13 years.

Focusing on Topic Areas

Although the main goal of our project was to determine whether men produced more personal experience articles than women, it also provided an opportunity for initial exploration of topics and content. For both topics and content, we included in the analysis only those abstracts that provided clear descriptions. Because of the imprecision in analysis of abstracts, we considered this exploratory research hypothesis-generating rather than hypothesis-testing. In this exploration,

some patterns did emerge.

Table 2 provides a comparison of the voices that were represented in the personal experience articles for both men and women. The most interesting finding is that most of the categories contain fairly equal numbers of articles. In other words, although men publish more personal experience articles than women, men and women from different areas in education write and publish approximately the same percentage of articles. Only a few differences are significant. A higher percentage of women K-12 teachers publish articles, probably because most public school teachers are women. The other significant difference is in the category of professionals outside education, where results indicate men write more personal experience articles than women.

Table 3 provides descriptive information about some of the social issues discussed in the articles we analyzed. Disability issues and racial/cultural issues were most often discussed by both men and women. Men talked most frequently about racial or cultural issues, women most frequently about disability-related issues.

Table 4 provides information about type of personal experiences. Men and women both described job or career-related experiences most often. However, women discussed personal experience with others, including students or children, more often than did men; men discussed personal experiences with family of origin or life events more often than women.

Table 5 provides descriptive information on the main goals of the articles. Women most often wrote articles intended to provide teaching strategies or other types of professional advice. Men most often wrote articles meant to defend a position or provide information about a population or a topic area.

Study Limitations

Although this study compared the number of personal stories written by men and women, it has produced no definitive explanations for the differences that exist. It should not be assumed that publishers intentionally discriminate against women. In fact, there is some evidence that reviewers may not discriminate against women. In a recent study, Lloyd (1990) investigated whether author gender affected reviewers' editorial decisions. In that study, publications written by men and women were given to male and female reviewers. Results indicate that the male reviewers did not evaluate the women's articles differently nor did they reject a significantly higher number of women's articles. In fact, if any bias was evident, women reviewers were more likely to accept articles written by women. This study had several limitations however; for example, the author suggests that since publishers had volunteered to participate in this study, editors may have tried harder to follow strict criteria.

Finally, it should be emphasized that since we did not analyze complete articles, categorization of topics and content may not be completely precise. This limit was especially evident as we analyzed the abstracts for social issues. It is likely that many more articles than we identified actually touched on the four categories listed (race, gender, class, and disability), but this was not obvious from the abstract. In future studies, a qualitative review of entire articles would clearly provide more complete information.

Conclusions

Gender Equity

The results of this study indicate that personal experience stories writ-

ten by men have been published more often than those by women. Of the 260 articles analyzed, 158 (61%) were published by men and 102 (39%) by women. For this comparison, a chi-square yielded a significant difference of .001 Results also indicated that over the last 13 years, rates of acceptance of personal experience stories for both men and women have increased slightly, although the men's publication rate has been more consistent. The number of personal experience articles published between 1980 and 1993 seems to have peaked for both men and women between 1988 and 1991.

Although we found that men have published more personal experience articles than women, we have not attempted to explain why this difference exists. In essence, this article raises more questions than it answers:

• Why does this difference exist?

• Are women being discriminated against during the publishing process?

• Do they write fewer articles?

• Do they consistently send their manuscripts to the wrong journals?

• Or, do women write personal stories in a way that is somehow less acceptable?

It should not be assumed that reviewers intentionally discriminate against women when accepting personal stories for publication. It is possible that women simply do not write and submit as many personal stories as men. If women believe that the academic community discourages this type of scholarship, they may be more sensitive to this subtle influence. Nicoloff and Forrest (1988) suggest that perhaps traditional methods of conducting research and evaluating publications are more embedded in separation than in connection and are inherently alien to the experiences of

women. Future research on this subject should focus attention on explaining gender differences in the publishing.

Some may question whether it is important to publish equal numbers of personal experience stories. Inequities in this area have some serious implications. Besides the obvious implication that such inequity may be sending the message to women and girls that men's experiences are considered more valuable, more interesting, more objective, or more important theirs, the fact is, men's voices are being heard more often than women's. And, if women are being led to believe that personal experience is subjective and therefore unscientific, are women being held to higher standard than men? Being discouraged to publish any type of writing puts women at a disadvantage in an academic community, where number of publications has become very important. Finally, if personal experience stories provide mentoring to those who have similar experiences and if men publish more stories than women, girls and adult women do not have an equal opportunity to gain the insight such personal testimonies provide.

Topics and Content

It is an interesting side issue that most of the personal experience articles were written from a positive perspective by successful people who had worked with a difficult child and somehow changed that child's life or who had taught a class and experienced success with students. Only a few articles were written by people who had failed, were angry with society, or openly criticized the school system. Most of the articles could be described as uplifting rather than discouraging. Most often, both men and women discussed their professional lives, concentrating on their success. Although some articles described problems faced by people who have disabilities or who are ethnic minori-

ties, other topics were not covered in any way. For example, no articles were written about the educational experiences of people with different sexual orientations, people who had been physically or sexually abused, women who had been sexually harassed, people who had experienced homelessness or mental illness, students who had witnessed violence in school, students who hated school because they were bullied or mistreated, students who dropped out, students who had drug problems, students who were held back by tracking or other self-esteem damaging school policies, students who had faced traumatic rejections, teachers who had a particularly rough time with a special needs or an at-risk child, or teachers who had to deal with a particularly bad principal who destroyed the climate at a school.

It is possible that people are uncomfortable writing about certain topics. It is also possible that publishers unintentionally discriminate against people who have been victimized and therefore come across as angry or critical. In our society, calling someone a victim not only labels that person as someone who has been victimized, it describes a response to victimization, one that projects a "feel sorry for yourself" mentality that it is often considered weak and nonproductive. For example, when someone has been victimized, it seems more appropriate, more politically correct, and more sensitive to call these people survivors. Using the word "survivor" is positive, if the purpose is to give victims credit for their resiliency. However, it can also send subtle messages describing how people are expected to respond to victimization. After a trauma, people are often expected to pick themselves up, dust themselves off, and go on with their life. This attitude takes the focus off the perpetrator and places responsibility on the victim to respond appropriately. After a short recovery time, if the victim does not

respond as a survivor, society stigmatizes that person with a label "mentally unstable or incapable," and then no longer feels responsible for that person. The implication is that if the only stories presented are those written by people who are successful and positive, we are not only misrepresenting the "truth" or the "big picture," we are subtly shaming victims/survivors.

Objectivity

As was mentioned in the literature review, controversy surrounds the inclusion of personal experience stories. Many believe personal stories do not represent an objective viewpoint. Criticism of what has been described as a male need to observe strict objectivity is central to the feminist position. In reality, when presenting personal experience stories, objectivity is an issue only if a person suggests that his or her experience is an example that can be generalized to others in similar situations. It is interesting therefore that men more often use their personal experience as an example to defend a position or to provide information about a population or a topic. Women, on the other hand, most often used personal experience stories to provide professional advice, especially to suggest teaching strategies (see Table 5).

Although it is a subtle distinction, if a person defends a position (I have encountered discrimination, therefore we live in a racist society and should change policy to discourage discrimination) or give information about a population (this is my experience as a person with a disability, so this is how people with disabilities experience the world), this is a way of generalizing his or her experiences to others. When a person gives professional advice (this strategy worked in my class, therefore it might work in yours), although there is an assumption that others may be able to use that information in their particu-

lar situations, a choice is offered, readers have the opportunity to decide for themselves whether this experience is relevant for them. The goal is not to convince but to offer suggestions. In other words, men more often generalize their personal experiences to other situations by using them as evidence to defend their opinions. Women not only write fewer personal stories, they rarely generalize their experiences; instead they offer alternatives. This finding supports Spender's (1981) claim that men often discuss their opinions as if they represent truth, and women often discuss their explanations as partial or temporary truths.

The point of this article, however, is not to berate anyone for discussing personal experience or for using personal experience as an example. In fact, most people who write personal stories make an assumption that others have had or will have similar experiences. The problem is that women have felt, and still feel, restricted from integrating a personal approach with a professional approach because they believe this style is considered inappropriate or inferior. It could be interpreted from the results of this article that in certain situations a personal approach in academics (subjectivity) has been more acceptable for men and less acceptable for women.

Women still complain about subtle discrimination. They claim that society sends subtle messages telling them where they belong, what they should do, and how they should define their roles. People who are unaware of these subtle messages are often skeptical and will dismiss these accusations unless proof is provided. The results of this study indicate that a difference does exist; men's personal stories have been published more often than women's. Although there is no definitive explanation for this difference, common sense suggests that when men's and women's ideas, opinions, and experiences are

valued equally in this society, then their voices will be represented equally.

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Table 1
Journals that published more than one personal experience article

Publications	F	M	Publications	F	M
Exceptional Parent	8	7	Principal	1	1
Hands On	10	1	Pretext: A Journal of Rhetorical Theory	0	2
Hornbook Magazine	4	6	Life Long Learning	1	1
English Journal	0	7	College English	0	2
Phi Delta Kappan	1	4	Freshman English News	1	1
Convergence	0	4	Journal of Staff Development	1	1
English Education	2	2	Journal of School Psychology	0	2
Language Arts	2	2	Journal of Higher Education	0	2
Learning	2	2	Journal of College Science Teaching	0	2
Social Education	3	1	History Teacher	0	2
Harvard Educational Review	3	1	American Sociologist	1	1
Journal of Counseling and Development	1	3	Amerasia Journal	0	2
Reading Teacher	1	2	Chinese Education: A Jour. of Translations	0	2
Teaching Education	1	2	College Teaching	1	1
Volta Review	1	2	Communication: Journalism Educ. Today	0	2
Youth Theatre Journal	1	2	Equity and Choice	1	1
Journal of Legal Education	2	1	Gifted Child Today	1	1
Young Children	2	0	Journal of Mental Health Counseling	0	2
Urban Education	0	2	Journal of Learning Disabilities	0	2
Theory into Practice	1	1	Journal of Education	0	2
Teachers and Writers Magazine	1	1	Journal of Cooperative Education	0	2
Sage: a Scholarly Journal for Black Women	2	0			
Total	48	53		8	34

Note: Of the 260 articles analyzed, 161 different journals had published personal stories. This table lists only those few journals that had published more than one personal story. The journals publishing more personal stories, in most cases, had more equal representation of men and women authors.

Table 2
The voices (perspectives) represented in personal experience articles

	K-12 teacher	Adult instructor or college professor	Student	Principal or other education admin.	Professional not in educ. e.g., art psychology business	Parent	Other or unclear	Total
Women	22 (22%)	16 (16%)	15 (15%)	6 (6%)	22 (22%)	9 (9%)	12 (12%)	102
Men	27 (17%)	26 (16%)	27 (17%)	8 (5%)	37 (23%)	12 (8%)	21 (13%)	158
Total	49 (19%)	42 (16%)	42 (16%)	14 (5%)	59 (23%)	21 (8%)	33 (13%)	260

Note: Only those abstracts in which the voice was clear was included in this analysis. Many people claimed they were teachers but did not say whether for adults or children. They are included under other or unclear.

Table 3
Social issues discussed in personal experience articles

	Racial or cultural issues	Feminist issues	Class issues	Disability issues	Other or unclear	Total
Women	14 (14%)	5 (5%)	4 (4%)	20 (19%)	59 (58%)	102
Men	34 (22%)	2 (1%)	4 (3%)	20 (13%)	98 (62%)	158
Total	48 (18%)	7 (3%)	8 (3%)	40 (15%)	157 (60%)	260

Table 4
Types of personal experiences presented

	Personal experience with others—child or student	Personal experience with job, career, class, or topic	Personal experience with one's own education	How I got where I did—chronol. account of a career	Personal experience with family of origin or life events (negative) oppression abuse failure	Personal experience with family of origin or life events (positive) success privilege special event	Other or unclear	Total
Women	14 (14%)	58 (57%)	10 (10%)	4 (4%)	5 (5%)	4 (4%)	7 (7%)	102
Men	14 (9%)	84 (53%)	16 (10%)	7 (4%)	15 (9%)	11 (7%)	11 (7%)	158
Total	28 (11%)	142 (55%)	26 (10%)	11 (4%)	20 (8%)	15 (6%)	18 (7%)	260

Table 5
Primary goals of personal experience articles

	Provide teaching strategies	Give advice on personal growth	Give Professional advice	Provide evidence to defend position	Provide information population or topic	Other or unclear	Total
Women	41 (40%)	7 (7%)	29 (28%)	8 (8%)	15 (15%)	2 (2%)	102
Men	25 (16%)	15 (9%)	31 (20%)	29 (18%)	39 (25%)	19 (12%)	158
Total	46 (18%)	22 (8%)	60 (23%)	37 (14%)	54 (21%)	21 (8%)	260

Note: Many articles had multiple goals. Some may have intended to provide teaching strategies and give professional advice. In this category, the primary goal was categorized.

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