

**Teaching Masculinity: An Examination of the Professional Literature and Design of a
Curriculum of Men's Studies 12 Targeting At-Risk Adolescent Males**

Gordon R. Weber

B.A., University of Lethbridge, 1994
B.Ed., University of Lethbridge, 1994

Project Submitted in Partial Fulfillment Of

The Requirements for the Degree of

Master of Education

In

Multidisciplinary Leadership

The University of Northern British Columbia

July 2009

© Gordon R. Weber, 2009

**UNIVERSITY of NORTHERN
BRITISH COLUMBIA
LIBRARY
Prince George, B.C.**

Abstract

This qualitative project explored the implementation impetus and barriers to the creation of a men's studies program in a rural Canadian school district. Student engagement in several countries and continents has drawn significant academic attention over the last decade and statistical evidence of lack of engagement, poor attendance, inappropriate behaviour, school suspension, special education enrolment, and low graduation rates demonstrates an oversubscription by male students. Using school district qualitative and quantitative data, I examined the local need to create a program of studies which would support culturally appropriate constructions of masculinity. Then, using a synthesis of international research literature and supporting materials from a variety of sources, I outlined the actual men's studies program with its overt (and hidden) learning outcomes.

The project concluded with a series of recommendations, the most notable recommendation being that a men's studies program should be implemented in a pilot alternate school with specific caveats.

Table of Contents

Abstract	ii
Table of Contents	iii
Dedication	vii
Acknowledgements	viii
Overview	1
Chapter One: The Genesis of Men's Studies 12 in a Rural School District	3
Introduction	3
The Research Topic	3
Board Authorized Women's Studies 12	4
The Research Question	5
Delimitations and Limitations	6
Definition of Terms	7
Recognition of Personal Bias	7
The Need for Similar but Distinct Curriculum	9
Importance of the Project	10
Chapter Two: Recent Debates in Boys Education and the Western Cultural Context...[2	
The Australian Research Context	12
The Irish Context	13
The American Context	15
The Canadian Context	17
The British Columbian Context	17
The School District Context	20

Conclusion	20
Chapter Three: Literature Review	22
Introduction.....	22
Theoretically-Oriented Literature	23
Practice-Oriented Literature.....	26
Finding a Balance	27
Critical Reflections of Academic Literature Reviewed	28
The concept of hegemonic masculinity	29
Statistical disaggregation	30
Ethnographic hegemony	31
The myth of political conspiracy	32
The flexible benchmarks for gender equality	33
Synthesis and Conclusions of Literature Review	34
Chapter Four: Framework for Men's Studies 12 Course.....	36
Course Synopsis.....	36
Rationale	37
Unit Descriptors	38
Historical perspectives	38
Global issues	39
Men's health and fitness	40
Statistical overview of social issues.....	41
Literature of masculine identity	42
Gender relations	43

Media literacy	44
Final project	44
Final reflection/final response.....	45
Assessment and Evaluation.....	45
Chapter Five: Research Findings	47
Methodology	47
Emergent Themes	47
Support of concept of Men's Studies 12.....	47
Transferability of the program	48
Delivery format.....	49
External indicators of success.....	50
Examination of Key Barriers	50
Feminist Reaction	51
Public Reaction	51
Student Reaction and Motivation.....	51
Identification of Scope and Sequence.....	52
Chapter Six: Future Research and Recommendations.....	53
Recommendations	54
Chapter Seven: Personal Reflections and Conclusion	56
Conclusion	58
References.....	59
Appendix A: BAA Course.....	67
Appendix B: Participant Consent Letter	81

Appendix C: Research Questions	83
--------------------------------------	----

Dedication

I dedicate this project to the love of my life, Shannon, who has had the patience and ability to motivate me through this project as well as graduate and undergraduate programs in our twenty three years of marriage. Thank you!

Acknowledgements

I would like to thank my wife for her love, motivation, support, patience and wonderful computer support skills.

Thank you to Mrs. Diane Wright, Superintendent of Schools, School District 27 and Mrs. Jan Fichtner, District Vice-Principal for Vulnerable Student Support, for their support and input into possible directions of the project.

Another thank you to Diane Wright and Mr. Vic Brett for supporting my passion for action research within the local Alternate education program.

I would also thank the members of my supervisory committee, Dr. Colin Chasteauneuf, Dr. Theresa Healy, and especially Dr. Andrew Kitchenham whose expertise in both subject matter and motivational ability inspired me and for his precise eye in seeing errors or omissions.

And finally a special acknowledgement and thanks is required to my students who have taught me over the last fifteen years.

Overview

The issue of gender is a volatile subject in our society. While universities have recognized the legitimacy of women's studies as an academic field of study in its own right, the public school system in Canada has been catatonic in its response. Further, the concept of male studies is remarkable for its absence: courses of study in male pedagogy, psychology, and sociology seem non-existent in the Canadian context.

Through my professional background in teaching a senior secondary school alternate education program, I have witnessed the social disconnection of youth from formal education regardless of gender. This led me in early 2004 to develop and implement a four-credit curriculum entitled *Women's Studies* (WS) at the Grade 12 level. The course was approved by the Education Committee of the school district through the provincial Board/Authority Authorized (BAA) process.

With the success of the WS course with young women, I began to wonder if change could be initiated in male youth through a targeted curriculum. My concern led me to this project with which I hope to provide a mechanism to demonstrate similar positive transformation.

At the risk of over-generalizing, women's studies has been primarily concerned with the usurpation of power and status of male over female in society in the historical and contemporary setting. Society's efforts to redress the imbalance may have unintentionally led to a neglect of the male component of the power equation. While I would not argue against the feminist position of male privilege throughout the historical record of western civilization, like Sommers (2000), I believe that in our society's efforts to enfranchise girls and women we have neglected to adequately research and design strategies to educationally

re-engage a growing number of underachieving males. Weaver-Hightower (2003a) supports Sommers' position in reiterating that the failure to address this portion of our population may have serious social and economic repercussions in the near future.

Chapter One of this document will provide a description of the genesis of the concept of Men's Studies 12 (MS) in this school district and frame the research question. Chapter Two will provide an international and local cultural context to the research. Chapter Three, the literature review, discusses both academic and popular literature and provides an organizational framework of etiologies. Chapter Four outlines the proposed MS course and includes examples of suggested content with references to theoretical research. Personal reflections on the process of course development and feedback from school district leadership comprise Chapter Five. Chapter Six contains recommendations for future development in the field of men's studies and final concluding remarks.

As this project is intended to provide impetus for future studies, I hope that it will create meaningful dialogue and pique interest amongst educators and gender theorists. Preliminary interest at the local, provincial, and national levels has been promising.

Chapter One: The Genesis of Men's Studies 12 in a Rural School District

This research project into the potential for a men's studies course began as a result of many factors. Since 1994, I have developed and taught in an alternate education program attached to a senior secondary school in rural British Columbia. Alternate education programs are funded through the provincial Ministry of Education and are established for youth who are identified through a set process as exhibiting moderate and severe behaviour problems. Anecdotal and statistical evidence from a British Columbia Ministry of Education report (BC Ministry of Education, 2006a) attested to the fact that these programs are heavily subscribed by male youth. In British Columbia, all special needs categories, except physically dependent (Category A) and gifted (Category P), are predominantly male. One might speculate that trauma injury and identification of academic giftedness are gender neutral occurrences.

The Research Topic

The last decade has seen male gender issues slowly come into vogue in North American popular press, as well as in the academic research community and among social justice advocates (Weaver-Hightower, 2003a). Research literature is limited but growing on this continent. Practice-oriented research is more likely to come from Australia and Great Britain where government initiatives have given a higher degree of professional legitimization to the field. There is also an existing literature, often described as pro-feminist, which denies or downplays the concept of perceived male disadvantage in the public school system. As a result, an über-purpose of this project was to strengthen the pro-feminist social justice agenda in a manner palatable to the identified target group through the creation of a new course. This involved the synthesis of concepts and promising practices from sources

ranging from academic ethnographic research to popular-rhetorical literature and practice-oriented research filtered through my own perceptions and experiences as a career educator of at-risk youth.

As such, I would argue that my argument for and development of a male gender studies in the British Columbia public school system is exploratory in nature. A review of the province's Ministry of Education authorized courses (BCED, 2006b), which number slightly over 500 (not including Advanced Placement, International Baccalaureate, and External Credit courses) indicated no gender-related courses. Further review of the 1800 Board Authorized courses for the province, produced four results: BA Women's Studies 11, BA Women's Studies 12, BA Gender Studies 12, and BA Gender and Society 12. While the range of courses offered through both Ministry-authorized and Board-authorized is broad, no reference is made to a distinct male gender course.

Board Authorized Women's Studies 12

After working with at-risk youth for ten years, I noticed a pattern of educational disengagement with young women who seemed academically capable but unaware of gender options beyond their small resource-based community. While the Social Studies curriculum touches on some historical aspects of the role of women in Canadian history, there seemed to be both interest and need for a more complete examination of various themes of modern Canadian and global feminism. This led to the creation and implementation in 2004 of the above mentioned board-authorized Women's Studies 12 course.

The course was originally intended for use in a self-paced independent learning environment such as found in alternative education programs and correspondence-type courses. It was designed to prepare underachieving but academically capable young women

for possible entry to college and university through the high interest level in subject matter combined with high academic rigour. Coincidentally, the scope and sequence of WS12 mirrors some introductory first year college courses. As such, the academic expectations discouraged some students. Currently, I am revising the course to appeal to a wider range of academic abilities in an effort to encourage enrolment. Some interest has been generated by students to have it provided as a regularly-scheduled class. To date this course has not been timetabled into the schedule primarily due to student recruitment and timetabling issues.

While the success of the BAA Women's Studies 12 course has not been documented, the results are highly suggestive: there is an observable transformation of the young women who have completed the course. It must be noted that it is not within the scope of this project to justify Women's Studies in our high schools. Most major universities consider this an area of human endeavour worthy of departmental status and in itself justifies the possibility of an introductory course at the high school level.

The Research Question

Having observed the potential of the BA Women's Studies 12 course and the British Columbia First Nations Studies 12 in the empowerment targeted curriculum can bring to marginalized groups, I began to examine the feasibility of a men's course. Therefore, in this project I:

- 1) reviewed pertinent literature on male gender-specific targeted educational strategies,
- 2) developed a curriculum framework for Men's Studies 12 comparable to BA Women's Studies 12 in scope and sequence; and,

- 3) provided personal reflections regarding the impetus and barriers to the possible implementation of Men's Studies 12.

Therefore, the research question was:

Grounded in the professional literature, what characteristics might be the scope and sequence of a curriculum of Men's Studies 12, designed for identified at-risk youth?

Delimitations and Limitations

Gender studies from a pro-feminist male perspective are a relatively new area for academic research. Researchers in North America have only recently responded to the popular literature of the 1990s attributing some level of recognition to the lack of success boys in general have in the public educational system. Other countries, particularly Australia, have overcome this passivity and taken strides to identify promising practices in meeting boys' educational needs primarily through the mechanism of politically-sponsored research.

The Australian and Canadian social, economic, and geographical situations are remarkably similar. Both countries have sparsely inhabited large geographical areas and have developed economies that, particularly in the rural and remote areas, rely heavily upon resource extraction and/or agriculture. Both countries are situated in the Pacific Rim economic area and compete for similar markets globally and deal with significant indigenous populations. I believe that the research and projects occurring in Australia are very applicable to the context of British Columbia and Canada. In a similar vein, work from the United Kingdom, particularly Ireland, must be carefully examined for cultural nuances which may affect application in rural Canadian settings.

A cultural limitation of note which may be experienced by Canadian readers of Australian gender research is the Australian social emphasis on sport which in the North

American context more closely resembles American football and basketball fanaticism. The impact of media and sports on pseudo-masculine adolescent behaviours may be the focus of future studies.

Perhaps the most significant limitation of note is the fact that the definitions of culturally-appropriate constructions of masculinity have yet to be identified and agreed upon. As such, my own limited knowledge of masculinities and pro-feminist ideologies must be acknowledged.

Definition of Terms

This project uses gender exclusive terminology like “boys”, “men”, “girls”, and “women”. It must be made clear that each of these groups is not culturally homogeneous. While statistical and anecdotal evidence speaks of each gender group with generalizations, one must remember that within each group there is an extremely broad range of abilities, personalities, and traits. Even the binary division of gender becomes elusive as the project attempts to address transgender, homosexual, and other non-hegemonic constructs of masculinity.

The term “alternate school” must also be defined. In its fullest sense, “alternate school” could be defined as any educational program that provides an alternative to traditional pedagogical approaches. However, in this study, the term is limited to educational programs which target students who have been identified through an approved process as in need of moderate or intensive behaviour support. This subset may include youth displaying some degree of learning disabilities (British Columbia Ministry of Education Special Education Category Q).

Recognition of Personal Bias

At this point in this project I must clarify my personal philosophy of gender and society. I describe myself as pro-feminist in my approach to gender studies. However, this descriptor should not imply an anti-male or uncritical view of feminism and feminist theories. As such, this project may take a critical approach to some tenets of feminist gender analysis, but only in the hope deepening an understanding of the complexities of gender analysis to promote social justice outcomes regardless of gender.

I believe that gender studies should accomplish two basic goals in the cultural milieu in which I have pursued my professional practice and passions. First, Women's Studies 12, in the high school context at least, should introduce feminist concepts and empower young women to overcome gender stereotypes which are common in rural, single-industry settings. And second, Men's Studies 12, again in the high school context, should teach late adolescent youth how to create a personal masculinity that is meaningful in a modern society and have empathy for diverse expressions of masculinities and other social justice outcomes. Literacy development and graduation rates are secondary to these social justice outcomes.

My personal interest in this project is multi-faceted. Having spent the major portion of my teaching career developing and teaching a senior alternate program, I have seen hundreds of students, defined by the educational system as exhibiting moderate or severe behavioural problems, thrive in this particular program. Generally, the teachers and support staff in the program can successfully speculate on the success of a student within a week or two of that student's enrolment in the program. Often, the visible signs of student re-engagement with the culture of school are predicated on gender and gender-targeted activities. When a student feels that she or he has a voice that is heard and is personally supported through social, academic, and disciplinary conflicts, the effect is visible.

Through the use of targeted curriculum, whether First Nations Studies, Women's Studies, or in this case, Men's Studies 12, I hoped to accumulate and disseminate enough information to the target group to have therapeutic value. As educators, we give some credence to the adage that knowledge is power, and each of these courses should serve to empower students to become culturally productive individuals. While I do not believe that curriculum can replace an effective teacher, a well-planned curriculum package designed for independent study can overcome some of the unpredictabilities of student/teacher relationships common in at-risk youth. I have seen students empowered to personal change through the first two courses mentioned above and I wish to explore the potential of seeing if the same will be true for boys.

The Need for Similar but Distinct Curriculum

In the modern context, Brod (1987a) claimed "men's studies is essential to fulfilling the feminist project which underlies women's studies, and that feminist scholarship cannot reach its fullest, most radical potential without the addition of men's studies." (p.180) a sentiment elaborated upon by both Brod (1987b) and Justad (2000).

In rebuttal, Libertin (1987) responded to Brod by suggesting that (pro)feminist men would be more effective as an agent of masculine change within women's studies rather than through the creation of a separate entity of men's studies. However, her premise begs the fundamental question of where or how a man or boy who has not developed a feminist consciousness would learn both academic and social justice outcomes most effectively. Others, such as Lerner (1993), define feminist consciousness as a concept that can only be attained by women. The premise of this project is that men can develop a feminist

consciousness; however a separate but complementary course would best deliver these possibilities.

In addition, the vocabulary and lexicon of a discipline or field of study may often be misunderstood or even be counterproductive when dealing with an uninformed audience. According to Sommer (2000), “the social stereotyping of the word feminist has so polluted it as a word that even those who are feminist in their lifestyles and beliefs are apprehensive about calling themselves feminist” (p.398). In other words, terminology and word choice are extremely important in delivering sensitive course material to students.

Therefore, for the purpose of reaching the previously-defined target population (rural, underachieving male youth in need of behavioural modification programs in the public secondary school system), I believed it necessary to create a course of studies which gently introduces pro-feminist concepts of masculinity that counter and undermine gender negative stereotyping.

Importance of the Project

This project surveyed relevant professional literature on gender disparity, the motivation of boys, and need for gender specific curricula in the public school system. This literature review, combined with personal experience and reflection, informed the creation of a model framework for a male gender specific course of studies. Through the process of research, curriculum development, and implementation the very act of obtaining knowledge by researchers, educators, and students creates the potential for change (Reinharz, 1992)

The designed curriculum could become a method by which individual secondary schools might engage at-risk males to better understand and engineer their developing masculinity and the role they play in a changing world. As a course intended for distributed

learning and in a format easily adapted to individual students' interests and reading levels, school district goals of social responsibility and literacy development were supported.

Many of the research and resultant government reports use graduation/dropout rates and high school truancy and disciplinary rates as benchmarks; much of the support and research however concentrates on primary and middle school education practice (DEST, 2005). This project was designed to enable and empower male youth during their senior high school years to overcome some of the shortcomings involved in personal creations of masculine identity. It also provided a *raison d'être* for gathering quantitative data as graduation/retention, discipline frequency, and course completion rates are aggregated indicating re-engagement with formal schooling.

This project may also serve as an example to professional educators and academic researchers that innovative curriculum coupled with action research can be a mechanism for school and cultural improvement.

Chapter Two: Recent Debates in Boys' Education and the Western Cultural Context

The Australian Research Context

As early as 1992, examples of programs designed for boys to include gender and social justice issues emerged from Australia. Connell (1996) cites the "Personal Development Program for Boys" as an exemplary program that taught a variety of topics including gender awareness and sensitivity. By 1994, media and public concern over perceived disengagement of education by boys led to a parliamentary inquiry into boys' education. This initial inquiry served to propel and maintain the issue of boys' educational achievement as a political and popular culture issue in that country.

While the Australian experience began almost seventeen years ago, the gender disparity debate set a pattern for the current debate developing in North America.

Seminal Australian research includes Alloway and Gilbert (1997a) and Teese (1997) who cautioned that boys not be treated as a homogenous group and that the predominant question should be "which boys?" Following up on this socio-economic paradigm, West (1999) followed by Collins, Kenway, and McLeod's (2000) identified Aboriginal boys, boys from working class areas, and boys from homes where the first language is not English as the groups most at-risk of underachieving.

By 2001, Trent and Slade (2001) recommended systemic changes to the teaching and learning environments for boys and suggested research into the nature of learning environments and society's understanding of what constitutes good teaching for boys. Synthesizing the information, Alloway, Freebody, Gilbert, and Muspratt (2002) called for more studies by educators and researchers.

By 2002, the Australian government again commissioned an inquiry into the education of boys. The inquiry resulted in twenty-four recommendations that included a call for increased funding to further review existing qualitative and quantitative research, the creation of a coordinated strategy to address girls' and boys' educational strategies, support research into pre- and in-service teacher education, and funding to evaluate different existing and promising programs and practices (House of Representatives Standing Committee, 2002).

Since 2003, the Australian government has allocated substantial financial resources to initiatives intended to improve boys' educational achievement. In response to the debate, the Government of Australia initiated the Boys Education Lighthouse Schools (BELS) Project in 2003 (DEST, 2003) in which approximately 350 schools devised and documented projects to improve learning outcomes for boys in order to identify and showcase successful practices in the education of boys. With the apparent success of the project, Stage 2 was initiated in 2005 and was ongoing into 2007.

The Irish Context

In response to the perceived crisis in the national and international education of boys, the Gender Equity Unit of the Department of Education and Science in Ireland developed and piloted in 1995 to 1997 an educational program entitled *Exploring Masculinities* (EM). This program was implemented in September 2000 but was quietly withdrawn by September 2002 due to public and media concerns (Mac an Ghaill, Hanafin, & Conway, 2002). The EM program was one of several options available to boys in gender segregated schools during their transition year (equivalent to the Canadian junior high or senior middle school). The program consisted of seven themes each of which provided the students with the opportunity

to reflect on concepts of masculine identity and learn about gender and equality issues (Gosine, 2007). While the EM curriculum is similar in scope to the proposed Men's Studies 12 course, the Men's Studies 12 design hopes to address some of the barriers experienced in the Irish cultural context.

Perhaps the most significant barrier Irish educators faced was the media backlash to what was perceived as the imposition of an overtly feminist agenda in a religiously conservative cultural milieu. The cultural geography of the proposed MS 12 program is significantly secular and minimal opposition by conservative groups is envisioned. In addition, the project-choice format of the proposed Men's Studies 12 will allow for a guided exploration of social constructionist and biological determinist ideologies.

The Irish experiment imposed a controversial curriculum on a broad age range of male youth in non-coeducational schools. This attempt to appeal to a large conservative audience may have been counterproductive. The intended target group of the Men's Studies 12 project is youth, aged 17 to 19 who have been identified by educators and parents as having social/behavioural issues.

Other criticisms of *Exploring Masculinities* were timetabling issues in smaller schools, limited in-school options for students whose parents requested non-participation, and the perception that school time be best used on subjects with comprehensive broad-based performance exams. Each of the criticisms of the EM program experienced in the Irish context are addressed in the implementation of MS. As MS 12 is envisioned to be available through distributed learning formats as an elective course, some of these issues are avoided. On a similar note, as many alternative education programs, including the program which piloted WS 12, have a limited course selection, I believe that it will be relatively easy for the

program teacher to motivate young men intent upon high school graduation to subscribe to the MS course provided the school district approves the course for four credits through the Board/Authority Authorization (BAA) process.

The American Context

American academic research in school disengagement by male students is conspicuously conservative. Sommers (2000,) accuses American educators and politicians of being ten years behind British and Australian counterparts in acknowledging and addressing male underachievement in the public school system. Summers further identifies American reticence to examine boy issues on legal interpretations of Article IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 and the Fourteenth Amendment of the American Constitution which have effectively prohibited gender discrimination in publicly funded educational institutes. Until the Act was amended in 2006, male single sex classes were considered discriminatory while female single sex classes were permitted. Powerful political lobby groups in the United States, such as the American Association of University Women, the National Organization for Women, and the American Civil Liberties Union have influenced gender policy to a greater extent than lobby groups in other western countries.

The American public however, has generated a demand for accessible analysis of perceived gender disparity issues in children through news media and popular-rhetorical literature. This type of literature has become the standard by which popular media, parents, and perhaps students form and reform their personal realities. These works often attempt to synthesize research, pseudo-research, observations, and cultural constructs of common sense into volumes intended to appeal to a mass market of parents, teachers, counselors, and others

working directly with boys. The inclusion of titles and sub-titles in the American context serves to illustrate the often emotional and inflammatory nature of the genre.

The current gender equity debate seems to have experienced its adolescence with the publication of Sadker and Sadker's (1994) *Failing at Fairness: How our schools cheat girls*. This work illustrated perceived inequities within the American public school system that favoured boys. The same year, Pipher's (1994) popular bestseller, *Reviving Orphelia: Saving the selves of adolescent girls*, described the cultural and social plight of adolescent females in North American society. Perhaps in reaction to these works and the popular media response, authors such as Australian Biddulph (1998) (*Raising Boys: Why boys are Different – and How to Help Them Become Happy and Well-Balanced Men*,) and Pollack (1998) (*Real Boys: Rescuing Our Sons from the Myths of Boyhood*), attempted to demonstrate a similar cultural victimization of school-aged males. Both authors provide a critique of modern cultural influences on boy's development of personal masculinity and both provide suggestions for school practice. In this work Pollack coined the term "the boy code" to describe the cultural transference of traditional hegemonic masculinities.

In April 1999, the school shootings at Columbine High School in Littleton, Colorado catapulted into the media spotlight the issues of adolescent male violence, male disengagement with schooling, and male underachievement. Within months, books on the subject of male gender inequities in American culture appeared and became best sellers. Perhaps as a reaction to the unchecked media appetite on the issue, the popular rhetoric became increasingly pointed in its scapegoating of feminist influences in modern culture as a primary influence on failing masculinity. The result was the rapid publication of a number of books that became increasingly anti-feminist in their message.

Further examples of provocative titles which form the canon of popular literature and thought include, Faludi's (1999) *Stiffed: The Betrayal of the American Man*, Kipnis' (1999) *Angry Young Men: How Parents, Teachers and Counselors Can Help "Bad Boys" become Good Men*, Sommers' (2000) *The War Against Boys: How Misguided Feminism is Harming Our Young Men*, and Canadians Nathanson and Young's (2001) *Spreading Misandry: The Teaching of Contempt of Men in Popular Culture*. Also by this time, Gurian's (1999) *The Good Son: Shaping the Moral Development of Our Boys and Young Men* and Sax's (2005) *Why Gender Matters: What Parents and Teachers Need to Know about the Emerging Science of Sex Differences* argued that essential brain-based differences created innate challenges in learning styles of genders.

The Canadian Context

As recently as March 2008, correspondence with the Ontario Ministry of Education, Curriculum Development Branch has indicated that the board authorized Women's Studies 12 course in the school district in which this project is being undertaken along with three other gender studies courses developed in this province (BA Women's Studies 11, BA Gender Studies 12, and BA Gender and Society 12) may be the only such courses in Canada. The Ontario Ministry was beginning to study the feasibility of creating and offering a Ministry-authorized course or courses in gender studies but opted instead to increase the scope of the curriculum to broader social justice learning outcomes. At this stage the courses are in draft form and are confidential (S. Wolfe, personal communication, September 04, 2008). The British Columbia Ministry of Education has recently followed Ontario's example with the implementation of a Social Justice 12 course.

The British Columbian Context

Of note in the provincial context on gender issues in public education is the research report by Schaefer (2000), sponsored by the British Columbia Teacher's Federation. This document expanded beyond the issues of public education into a kindergarten to retirement cultural meta-analysis. While Schaefer acknowledged multiple educational and social issues negatively affecting boys, she pointed out that men still had major economic advantage compared to women throughout their careers.

In a cultural milieu in which gender equity issues are changing at a rapid pace, Schaefer's research document has quickly become dated and in need of revision as new data has emerged that indicate significant educational and economic reversal in gender equity issues in Canada. Statistics Canada and the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) reports suggested that women had made significant educational gains in Canada and globally in areas of post-secondary enrolment and post-secondary completion (McMullen, 2008; OECD 2008). This educational attainment has slowly started to reduce the gender gap in employment earnings (Frenette & Coulombe, 2007). Men still dominate blue-collar careers in the resource industry, heavy labour, and industrial trades.

Schaefer inadvertently downplayed the oversubscription of boys in various special education categories. Using her own criteria that percentages greater than or equal to 63% gender participation in a category indicates "great overrepresentation" (p.10), boys overrepresented not only her stated Provincial Resource Programs (63%) and Containment Centres (87%), but moderate behaviour programs (69%), intensive behaviour programs (71%), and learning disability programs (71%) which she failed to acknowledge. Such provincial-level meta-analysis of special education enrolment by gender, based upon the entire public school population, is significant as the sample size is nearly 100% of the school

population, thereby reducing the chances of error that may occur in smaller sample sizes (Cresswell, 2005). This large sample size minimizes the chance that factors identified in some studies (e.g., Alloway and Gilbert, 1997a; Collins, Kenway, & McLeod, 2000; Teese, 1997; West, 1999), such as socio-economic status and cultural nuances, are of more significance than gender.

Schaefer also allowed for the extrapolation of an American study sponsored by the influential American Association of University Women Educational Foundation, yet she downplayed the future role and potential of the province of British Columbia's own gender analysis in the Foundation Skills Assessment (BCED, 2008a) which illustrated the widening gap in performance between boys and girls at Grades 4 and 7 in reading and writing.

Schaefer's work, while attempting to examine trends in the provincial public education system, is perhaps more analogous to a fading snapshot of a rapidly-changing educational landscape. By failing to adequately address gender disparity issues in public schools, Schaefer allowed her topic to expand to social and economic issues well beyond the scope of public school gender phenomena. Schaefer concluded the report with a number of recommendations which included the call for more gender-specific data collection by the Ministry of Education. To date, little has been conducted by the Ministry to address this significant recommendation.

Significant to the provincial context of boys' underachievement in school is the statistical evidence now available from the BC Ministry of Education website (BCED, 2006a) which includes gender disaggregation of special needs categories in public schools for the province. Boys exceed girls in every special needs category except Category A (physically dependent) and Category P (Gifted) both in which the differences are statistically

insignificant. Categories H, Q, and R (Intensive Behaviour Support, Learning Disability, and Moderate Behaviour Support, respectively) indicate a 2.3:1 boy/girl ratio. There is a growing body of evidence which suggests that many categories of learning disability including behavioural disabilities are social constructions rather than organic disabilities (e.g., Dudley-Marling, 2004) and may be suitable indicators of school disengagement.

The Pilot School District Context

The pilot school district faces demographic challenges typical of rural school districts serving resource-based local economies and significant remote populations. Echoing provincial and international trends, the 2008 Foundation Skills Assessment for the pilot school district finds boys significantly behind their female peers in writing and reading. First Nations students also show significant delay in meeting the expectations of this assessment tool but are not disaggregated by gender (BCED, 2008b). Boys also accrued 74.4% of out-of-school suspensions in the district in 2005-06, the last school year statistics were available to the public.

Conclusion

The modern cultural context of the perceived failure of the public school system to effectively address the needs of boys has its roots in various government and private sponsored inquiries and resultant high profile reports in the early 1990s. The public, perhaps sceptical of politically sponsored reports in general, quickly became avid consumers of mediated opinion editorials and of the early “fix the boy” literary genre. By 1999, a number of high profile tragedies involving young males and violence aided again by the media etched the debate on the role of schools in the development of young men into the public psyche. This new literary genre proved popular due to its accessibility in both language and

availability and appealed to the conservative values of the middle class families most affected by the issue. The genre, generally non-academic and non-peer reviewed, had little accountability to its readership and became increasingly anti-feminist even misogynistic in its bid to produce another best-seller. The genre has credibility in this project as it forms the basis of public knowledge which must be addressed in the attempt to develop public school curriculum. Likewise the statistical disaggregations by school districts and conservative political groups must be addressed to the satisfaction of parents, teachers, school administrators, and politicians in the implementation of men's studies.

Chapter Three: Literature Review

The volume of literature on male-gender studies and its relationship with contemporary constructs of social justice has gained momentum in the last decade, but its modern origins can be traced back another decade. At that time debates were beginning to occur within some academic circles on the concept of men's studies and whether such a program was best served within or separate from women's studies at the university level (Brod, 1987a, 1987b; Libertin, 1987).

In the same period, socio-linguistic research findings (Tannen 1990) indicated significant observed differences between males and females in communication strategies. Gender differences of significance to educational researchers include the apparent differences in preferred physical alignment when children verbally communicate personal feelings – boys tend to avoid eye contact – and the male propensity for aggression to initiate friendship or affiliation.

By the early 1990s, academic research and popular books on gender issues were commonplace but generally described the disadvantage girls and young women faced in school and society. Of note is the report published by the American Association of University Women (AAUW) *How Schools Shortchange Girls* (1992) which argued, amongst other things, that female students' needs were not being met in the current school system. This publication was followed by books such as Sadker and Sadker's *Failing at Fairness* (1994) and Pipher's *Reviving Ophelia* (1994) which unfavourably compared girls with boys on various indicators of social dysfunction (e.g., emotional and mental health indicators such as depression, anxiety, and stress). The publication and public reaction of Pipher's work

served as a significant milestone as it seems to be the work which catapulted social and educational gender issues into the public realm through accessibility and media attention.

Connell (1996) drew attention to the growing public and media awareness of boys as an educationally-disadvantaged group and began to frame the issue within a pro-feminist paradigm. Specifically, Connell described the active and passive roles that schools had in the formation of masculinities.

By 1998, three popular books (Biddulph, 1998; Gurian, 1998; Pollack, 1998) on the subject of boys and their developing masculinities echoed Pipher and became best-sellers in the United States. A brief overview of the publications in the popular-rhetorical genre has been described previously. Since the publication of these works, the debate has increasingly become binary with social construction theorists and biological determinists forming opposite ends of the research continuum (Kitchenham, 2002).

Theoretically Oriented Literature

Connell (1996) provided an analysis of new social-scientific research on the construction of modern masculinity. He described a number of conclusions drawn from this research; three of which are central to this project. Firstly was the concept of multiple definitions of masculinity. Researchers, teachers, and curriculum writers must recognize that masculinity varies by culture, economic status, and historical period. Secondly he posited that masculinity was an active construction of social behaviour. Thirdly, Connell concluded that masculinities were dynamic and therefore teachable. Connell continued by implicating schools as primary agents in the perpetuation of traditional constructions of masculinity which will be discussed below.

Further analyses of the construction of masculinity within the school system include Martino (1999) in which he called for educational initiatives to find ways to address the deconstruction of hegemonic masculinity and reconstruction of equitable forms of masculinity. Lingard, Martino, Mills, and Bahr (2002) and others (e.g. Schaeffer, 2000) cautioned that any educational initiatives targeting boys not come at the expense of ignoring the needs of girls. Martino and Berrill (2003) also cautioned theorists “not to downplay or to lose sight of the significance of gender as a category of analysis” (p. 109).

Influential American studies at the time include Darling-Hammond (2000) and Shulman (1997), each of which indicated teacher quality as being the predominant variable rather than curriculum standards, class sizes or state-wide testing in influencing learning outcomes for boys. Education and professional development of teachers in developing and critically analyzing their own constructs of gender and classroom practices is seen as a key to school improvement (Lingard, Martino, Mills, & Bahr, 2002) as the strategies undertaken by educators often serve to strengthen traditional dominant roles for young males (Martino & Berrill, 2003). These researchers pointed to the need for strategies of classroom and learning community practices designed to engage boys without reinforcing hegemonic versions of masculinity and for more research on teacher threshold knowledges of gender. Martino and Kehler (2006) provided research that teacher gender was not a significant factor in determining positive learning outcomes for most boys.

Schaeffer (2000) and Lingard, et al (2002) also stressed the need for systematic longitudinal data collection at both the system and school level. Martino and Berrill (2003) called for the need for further disaggregation of results of standardized tests so that specific groups of boys and girls could be identified for remediation.

While the work of Martino and his associates provides a solid pro-feminist anchor for further research, Martino limited his own effectiveness by downplaying other research methodologies, such as quantitative and neuro-biological, calling ethnographic studies “a more nuanced” (Kehler & Martino, 2007, p.91), “more informed” (Martino & Kehler, 2007, p.408), and “a more sophisticated”(Martino & Berrill, 2003, p.104) research-based knowledge.

Pro-feminist ethnographic research-oriented literature writing also provided a critique of what they describe as the moral panic over male gender educational issues (Martino & Berrill, 2003). The term “moral panic” in the context of this project is defined as:

the intensified concern over boys’ failure in school. This term has been used to capture the neo-conservative political agenda that continues to position boys as the new disadvantaged and, hence, as victims of feminist interventions in education that have ignored their particular needs as males. (Kehler & Martino, 2007, p.108)

The concept of moral panic is described in detail by Titus (2004).

Allying themselves closely with ethnographic research-oriented literature, feminist responses tend to focus on the social, historical, and political construction of gender. Much of the academically published research from Canada and the United States downplays the concept of a gender gap in public education (Mead, 2006; Ministère de l’Éducation Québec, 2004). While the Quebec report pointed to the commonality of boys’ difficulties with language of instruction, Mead, like others, downplayed the entire examination of male underachievement to educational and ideological beliefs of “conservatives” and “progressive education thinkers” (p.17) in the popular media.

Keddie and Mills (2007) suggested that boys’ issues be addressed under the social justice framework and that the adoption of feminist and pro-feminist perspectives be

imperative to broadening boys' definitions and understanding of masculinity. Martino and Kehler (2007) provided impetus to this project by stating:

It is only by interrogating assumptions about boys, masculinity, and schooling, and by adopting a sophisticated conceptual or analytic framework that attends to the social construction of gender... that a more informed basis for pedagogical reform can be established and justified to improve boys' literacy skills. (p. 408)

It was that informed basis for pedagogical reform that I sought in the design of the Men's Studies 12 curriculum.

Practice Oriented Literature

Practice-oriented literature attempts to balance research-oriented literature, both ethnographic and psycho-biological, with the popular media debate and more recently, the pro-feminist ideologies. The writers of this genre synthesize information from a variety of sources, often with minimal citations, write in styles accessible to a public readership, and publish as non-peer reviewed texts. This literature is often critically associated with the popular rhetorical genre and, as with academically-oriented literature, distinct boundaries between categories are vague and fluid. Practice-oriented literature attempts to provide a needed bridge between the common sense approach of mass media genres to gender issues and the often inaccessible literary style of theoretically-oriented literature (Weaver-Hightower, 2003b). In fact, Lingard (2003) called for teacher unions to critically work together pro-feminist academic literature on masculinities with practice-oriented literature.

Works of this genre are often published as books and become important due to their impact upon educational and social culture. They are written in a style accessible to readers unfamiliar with academic discourse and their contents become debated in a variety of forums including theoretically-oriented literature. Seminal in this collection are the works which target parents and teachers and give strategies to assist boys to become men (Biddulph, 1998;

Gurian, 1998, 2005; Pollack, 1998; Sax, 2005). Unlike the ethnographic research literature which describes gender as a sociological construction, the practical literature gives more acceptance to possible biological foundations for gender and gendered behaviours.

Kitchenham (2002) provided a brief description of the continuum of gender differences within the research community and outlined some pedagogical implications.

Other contemporary examples include Gunzelmann and Connell (2006) published in a non-peer reviewed periodical. They summarized, with side-bars, the social, psychological, neuro-biological, and educational factors affecting boys. As a personal observation, it seems that much of the practical literature written for magazines rather than journals attempts to cover a multitude of issues sacrificing depth for breadth regarding the topic of gender achievement,

MacDonald (2005) provided a quintessential tips-for-teachers book in the British Columbia context that provided brief ethnographies, statistical evidence, and advice on helping boys be successful in school. Like other writers of this genre, he attempted to weave together promising practices from a variety of disciplines into a work that is accessible to parents and educators. He does not, however, provide alternative arguments to his own and provides minimal reference and evidence from the academic research literature.

Finding a Balance

One of the purposes of this project was to find a balance between the theoretically-oriented academic literature and the practice-oriented literature to suggest a possible strategy that might address the needs and concerns of both and to impact educationally-disengaged boys. Weaver-Hightower (2003b) described a level of antagonism between the two etiologies but suggested that commonality of purpose should supersede technical or philosophical

differences. He made four suggestions to bring the two literatures together: (a) that theoretically-oriented work demonstrate relevance of findings to practice-oriented fields and conversely that practice-oriented fields make better efforts to describe theories that support practical strategies; (b) that each literature formulate research questions of relevance to the other; (c) that researchers must meta-analyze findings from each; and, (d) that teacher threshold knowledges include skills to apply theoretical research in classrooms.

Weaver-Hightower (2008) argued:

the main reaction (of social construction theorists)..., has been to ignore, reject, or dismiss boys' issues. Often, this is accomplished through writing off such issues as simply backlash politics. ...this is a tremendous strategic error. Even with the dangers for the progress of girls in mind, failing to address the concerns of parents, teachers, and others with interests in the success of boys completely cedes any possibilities of alliance with these parents and educators to conservative interests. ...the Left must attempt to regain the issue of boys' socialization and achievement, reshaping the debate toward progressive, socially just ends and ensuring through engagement, not withdrawal or refusal, that the important gains that girls have made are protected. (p. 209)

However, Mills and Keddie (2005) presented a framework that might have accomplished the task of bringing together the two literatures in a manageable form. Although stopping short of calling for a course of studies similar to this proposed Men's Studies 12, these researchers called for the explicit teaching of boys about gender, effects of obsolete constructs of masculinity, communication, and requisite skills for living in a democratic society. Using the productive pedagogies framework (Education Queensland, 2001) these researchers described the usefulness of this tool to teach social justice initiatives to boys.

Critical Reflections of Academic Literature Reviewed

While it is not the purpose of this document to provide a thorough critique of the research literature cited, I will identify several prevalent contentious issues which I believe are important to the creation of a Men's Studies 12 program.

The concept of hegemonic masculinity. One reoccurring theme in the research-based literature is the concept of *hegemonic* masculinity. Defined by Connell (1996) as the form of masculinity that is culturally dominant in a given setting:

“Hegemonic” signifies a position of cultural authority and leadership, not total dominance; other forms of masculinity persist alongside...
Hegemonic masculinity is hegemonic not just in relation to other masculinities, but in relation to the gender order as a whole. It is an expression of the privilege men *collectively* have over women.

While Lingard (2003) and Martino and Keller (2006, 2007) wrote pejoratively of the concept of a dominant male construction of masculinity, they fell short of ascribing its perpetuation to previous generations of men and fathers. Instead, the ethnographic studies ascribed learned masculinity largely to adolescent peers (e.g., Martino, 1999). Martino examined the dynamics of adolescent boys in the creation of personal masculinity and demonstrated that the forms of masculinity found in school-age males is largely peer taught with minimal input from fathers, grandfathers, and other significant males with whom the adolescent has had meaningful personal contact.

Related to the concept of hegemonic masculinity is Pollack’s (1998) “boy code” which he described as an unwritten list of social beliefs guiding masculine behaviour. While relics of the “boy code” may still be alluded to over family dinner conversations, it must be realized that *hegemonic* masculinity may not be as much a familial as a peer and entertainment/sport media construct. Others, whether writers of the popular-rhetorical genre such as Nathanson and Young (2001) or some pro-feminist theorists such as Connell (1996), ascribe adolescent masculine constructs to shallow and cartoon-like media representations of fictional masculine characters. What should be a parental responsibility has been left void with the media seizing the opportunity to create unrealistic expectations and role models in

its attempt to advertise and sell product (Nathanson & Young, 2001). Like other social dysfunctions, it may be up to the public school system to create culturally-appropriate alternatives.

Statistical disaggregation. While ethnographic theorists have contributed much to the gender issues in public schools, their research tends to be entirely qualitative, often trivializing quantitative evidence as too generalized. Despite statistical samples which approach one hundred percent of the total population from multiple continents which indicate similar gender disparities in a growing variety of educational categories, many ethnographic researchers reveal their bias towards a pro-feminist position without addressing the growing and readily available quantitative data. Rather than deal with macro-level analyses, dominant ethnographic gender researchers (e.g., Martino and Kehler, 2007; Weaver-Hightower, 2003a) often resort to a demand for disaggregation of gender data by factors such as socio-economic status and ethnicity rather than gender. While ethnic and economic disaggregation may be useful for some types of analysis, the disregard for gender analysis seems politically motivated to general readers.

As early as 2003, Martino and Berrill recognized the need for the synthesis of qualitative and quantitative methodological approaches:

Those of us who are interested in teaching for social justice might do well to more consciously employ types of data which are compelling to those we wish to convince. This does not mean abandoning qualitative approaches to research but it does mean attesting to the validities of sound quantitative approaches. (p.113)

However, these researchers continued as late as 2007 to produce research from exclusively ethnographic approaches informed heavily by each researcher's common pro-feminist framework (Charlton, Mills, Martino, & Beckett, 2007).

In a more local context, Schaefer's (2000) report, sponsored by the British Columbia Teachers' Federation, while critical of Ministry of Education statistical data, suggested in her concluding remarks that more data collection be supported. While socio-economic data would prove useful in the "which boys" debate, to date this information has not been made available.

It would appear that the political misuse of data obtained through standardized testing by conservative groups has perhaps poisoned the research environment regarding the use of data collected by this process (Weaver-Hightower, 2003b). While ethnographic approaches to educational research attempt to examine particular settings to draw conclusions about more general concepts, researchers must begin to accept the validity of quantitative methods which examine general trends in an attempt to theorize the specific.

Ethnographic hegemony. Social construction theory is currently the dominant gender theory (Weaver-Hightower, 2003a); however, ethnographic research often fails to recognize its own limitations. For example, Martino's (1999) study of the construction of masculinity in an Australian sports-oriented high school presupposed relevance to other geographical, political, social, or economic settings (Creswell, 2005). The construction of masculinity in a culture of sports fanaticism may be relevant in some American football obsessed states, but to draw inferences to international constructs of masculinity limits the study's credibility. The limited usefulness of exclusively ethnographic research approaches becomes obvious as the specific cultural nuances of one site may not be transferable to another site on another continent.

Weaver-Hightower (2003b) posited three weaknesses in exclusive use of theory-oriented literature and associated ethnographic research. He described the "myopic focus on

‘problem’ masculinity” (p.417) as ethnographies tend to examine dominant individuals or subgroups rather than the larger population from which these subjects were chosen. This researcher also observed that ethnographical research tends to ignore practice literature demonstrating academic connections between curriculum and gender particularly in literacy development. Lastly, Weaver-Hightower points to the failure of theoretical literature to address the worries and concerns of non-academics about boys disengagement resulting in a policy and information vacuum that is eagerly colonized by conservative interest groups.

The research literature developed by ethnographic studies downplays, avoids, or ignores biological differences of gender (Kitchenham, 2002; Martino & Keller, 2006) often labelling such as *essentialist* (Martino & Kehler, 2007). Biological differences, popularized by Gurian (1998, 2005) and Sax (2005) in the modern gender and educational debate are, however, increasingly supported by brain research and biological psychiatry (Cosgrove, Mazure, & Staley, 2007). Other recent studies indicate gender-specific anomalies in auditory processing capacity and describe links to literacy and behaviour (Rowe & Rowe, 2006).

The myth of political conspiracy. Within the genre of pro-feminist ethnographic research, there is a tendency to blame neo-conservative *and* neo-liberal New Right agendas for the perceived shift in focus within the gender equity debate. Martino and Berrill (2003) placed the current concern over boys’ academic achievement within the context of a global upsurge of the right and the Right’s tendency to colonize the boys’ educational agenda. The tendency towards political name-calling results in the creation of new adjectives such as “post-Fordist” and “Thatcher-era” (Weaver-Hightower, 2003a) ascribing long-term global significance to short term political leadership.

Some researchers demonstrate causal links between standardized testing and the ‘moral panic’ over boys’ under-achievement and the resulting reallocation of educational funds (e.g., Froese-Germain, 2006; Weaver-Hightower, 2003a). Likewise, psychological studies of brain sex differences are seen as propaganda tools of the above mentioned political ideology (Martino & Berrill, 2003; Martino and Kehler, 2006).

Any truth to the political influence of the interest in male-gender inequalities seems to be sidetracked by the theorists themselves through excessive ‘blame the government’ rhetoric and name calling. Educational theorists must come to the realization that any perceived anomaly within the discipline is worthy of examination and study and that excessive negative terminology may be counterproductive.

The flexible benchmarks for gender equality. Weaver-Hightower (2003a) identified the pro-feminist tendency to change criteria in the identification of disadvantaged gender groups as a significant challenge to the establishment of a working relationship between pro-feminist and practice-oriented stakeholders. By using standardized test scores, high school course and post-secondary training enrolment figures and other quantitative data in making the argument for affirmative action for female students in the 1980s, pro-feminist researchers seem reluctant to use these same benchmarks now to identify male underachievement.

Similarly, early calls for more female teachers in high schools and currently the call for more indigenous teachers throughout the public school system to act as role-models has been viewed as affirmative action, yet calls for more male teachers at the elementary level results in accusations of recuperative politics (Martino & Kehler, 2006).

To parents and others concerned with boys’ achievement, the feminist stance seems non self-reflective in that it does not see its own arguments mirrored in the “boy turn”.

Weaver-Hightower (2003a) dismissed such concerns of flexible benchmarks as “an evolving realization of the nuances of gender’s effects” (p.476).

Synthesis and Conclusions of Literature Review

The overview of current literature results in a number of themes which may be useful in the proposed blending of pro-feminist theoretical research and practice-oriented literature.

While the call for more research is common in the literature (Kehler & Martino, 2007; Lingard, Martino, Mills, & Bahr, 2002; Schaeffer, 2000; Weaver-Hightower, 2003a), research must begin to inform teaching practice and not mire in the stalemate of research for its own sake (Weaver-Hightower, 2003b). Ultimately, the issues of effective schooling and appropriate constructions of masculinity are battles for the hearts and minds of students, parents, and teachers. If research does not inform teaching practice through accessibility, relevance, and practicality, teachers and parents will uncritically accept the popular-rhetorical literature that may lack the rigor and review processes of academic research.

The Canadian Teachers’ Federation supports participatory action research in synthesizing a research base with practical classroom applications (Froese-Germain, 2006). Lingard (2003) called for pro-feminist stakeholders “to critically work together the (pro)feminist literature on masculinities and schooling with the often un-theorized tips for teachers literature on boys’ underachievement” (p.52). Weaver-Hightower (2003b) suggested the pursuit of practice and theory simultaneously.

The public school, Connell (1996) suggested, is a place for reforming the present “hodgepodge of practices impacting boys” to “addressing issues to make a real contribution to a future of more civilized, and more just, gender relations” (p.230). Finally, Weaver-Hightower (2003a) suggested that:

careful thought should be given to constructing curriculum and materials that simultaneously meet the needs of girls and of children of differing races, religions, sexualities, and other subjectivities. Such an approach would include making masculinity a subject in the curriculum so that students could deconstruct and interrogate it as a way to accomplish goals of social justice. (p. 489)

It has been over a decade since Connell's (1996) observations and five years since Weaver-Hightower's (2003a) suggestions yet there has been only marginal research available to date on the application of high school curriculum to overtly teach boys' constructions of masculinity appropriate for the 21st century. Therefore, based on the review of available theoretical research literature, practice-oriented literature, and practical experience teaching to the needs of at-risk youth, I have proposed a course in Men's Studies 12, designed to complement the Women's Studies course already available, that is grounded predominantly in social construction theory, replicates with cultural modifications the Irish Emerging Masculinities course in scope, and is framed upon the productive pedagogies approach pioneered in Australia.

Chapter Four: Framework for Men's Studies 12 Course

The design of Men's Studies 12 followed the seven-step procedure outlined by the British Columbia Ministry of Education for developing a Board/Authority Authorized (BAA) Course to meet provincial requirements. The course is presented in the approved BAA format as Appendix A.

The proposed framework for the course suggests seven units of study plus a final project and reflection. In keeping with Ministry of Education guidelines for senior level courses worth four credits, each unit is given an estimated time for completion with the course itself scheduled for approximately 120 hours for instructional and interactional time. As little research is available on the particulars of curricular content, the thematic units are a result of my own experiences teaching young men and reflect the sequence of the Women's Studies program. The planned units are: Historical Perspectives of Gender, Global Issues in Masculinity, Men's Health, Statistical Overview of Men's Issues, Literature of Masculine Identity, Gender Relations in the Modern Context, and Contemporary Issues. Each unit will consist of readings and/or audio-visual materials of social and cultural gender significance and students will be guided through critical analysis, reflection, and response to each lesson. Ideally, each unit will culminate in a student-selected project and reflective journal. The final project will be student selected but will need approval from the supervising teacher to ensure appropriate nature of format and that learning outcomes are demonstrated.

Course Synopsis

This course provides a student with an interdisciplinary study of historical, cultural, and contemporary issues related to manhood and masculinity as a reflection of current Canadian social norms. While students will be encouraged to explore areas of personal interest, the focus of the classroom portion will be on investigating constructs of masculinity

from a gender-specific yet pro-feminist perspective. Assessment for the course consists primarily of a student's completion of personal reflection journals and mastery of student initiated unit project.

Rationale

Public school statistical disaggregation by gender indicates a substantial oversubscription by boys of most special education categories, disciplinary suspensions and referrals, and a general lack of connectedness with formal schooling (Weaver-Hightower, 2003a). A synthesis of recent academic and popular-rhetorical literatures indicates the importance of masculinity as a learned behaviour (Connell, 1996). In response to perceived need and the call to such in the academic literature (Connell, 1996; Mills & Keddie, 2005; Weaver-Hightower, 2003a), this course has been developed to support and encourage students to explore the historical, cultural, and biological constructions of masculinity and how these themes might blend into dynamic, contemporary, and culturally appropriate personal growth. As such, it will mirror BAA Women's Studies 12 in some learning outcomes.

Students will explore curricula themes and develop project/research topics of personal interest or community value. This course will support School District goals in literacy and social responsibility. While this course is intended to be taught in a distributed learning context, it is readily adaptable to a traditional classroom environment. Each unit will be divided into four curriculum organizers: social and cultural issues, analysis, reflections, and response. Social and cultural issues and the analysis of each unit will be specific to the thematic content: reflections and responses will be replicated within each unit.

Reflection will form a substantive portion of a student's evaluation. It is expected that students will write and maintain a reflective journal of assigned readings and classroom discussions. They will use the journal to articulate creative and emergent ideas and opinions. Students will be taught specific strategies to fulfill this requirement and be guided through the process to ensure appropriateness of content. Teacher competence in Socratic questioning technique and similar skills will require development as it is the instructor's professional obligation to ensure the appropriateness of content and to guide a student through social justice outcomes. Likewise, individual teachers will need to develop and have access to school counselling resources and local community resource agencies to assist in dealing with emergent issues that may be encountered in this type of educational venue.

The major evaluative component will consist of a student generated project that demonstrates mastery of a curricular area of personal interest. Students will have a high degree of autonomy on the topic and format of this area but will be required to submit a brief proposal to the instructor for approval. While the default genre for this project will be a research essay, alternative formats will be encouraged. Some units will have teacher-prescribed projects.

Unit Descriptors

Historical perspectives. Students will become familiar with the historical antecedents to modern constructs of masculinity and practice methods of critical analysis they will use in the course as they explore the various themes and topics. The central theme for the unit will be "We were once warriors" and students will examine, among other minor themes, the role of gender in various historical/cultural contexts. Resources for this unit will be developed as the program is being piloted and will follow school district protocol for such development.

It is estimated that this unit will require 15 hours of instruction and student task time. In a distance delivery format, this unit would consist of 15 individual lesson packages each requiring research and/or assigned reading and journaling. The students will read, critically analyze, reflect, and respond to the reading assignments.

Within the social and cultural curriculum organizer it is expected that students will be able to identify and discuss social and cultural elements that contribute to historical diversity in masculine identity and, conversely, identify and discuss social and cultural elements that contribute to historical homogeneity in masculine identity. This unit will support the research of Connell (1996) in which he posited knowledge of masculinities as a major social justice outcome.

The students will be taught and be required to demonstrate the use of a variety of critical methodologies to their reading. Students will be able to understand the concept of personal and cultural bias and begin to identify such in given texts. In addition, students will be required to explain personal interpretations of selected reading.

Global issues in masculinity. Drawing from information acquired in Unit 1, students will continue to examine contemporary issues which influence men and related social justice issues in a global perspective. Students will be encouraged to critically examine personal cultural constructs of masculinity and explore through guided internet research and teacher generated materials non-hegemonic forms of masculinity. Students will research various cultures with particular emphasis on sensitivity to diversity and issues of current interest in various popular news media. Students will continue their reflective journals in this unit. This unit draws on the conclusions drawn by Greig (2003) who concluded that boys need

alternative visions of being boys. This unit will provide the opportunity to explore these alternative visions.

In this unit, it is expected that students will examine the role that culture plays in the development of meaningful masculinity through the use of case studies and guided independent research. As well, students will research and evaluate the role of governments and media in global gender issues. It is expected that this unit will require 15 hours of instructional and contact time.

Throughout this unit, students will be expected to learn and demonstrate competent use of internet technology for subject searches and be able to gather relevant information from appropriate sources. Students will also be expected to develop focused inquiry questions related to increasingly complex topics and use appropriate documentation and citation of sources and resources in their research. Students will be introduced to the basic structure of the American Psychological Association writing style.

Men's health and fitness. While not mentioned in the research literature, anecdotal comments from educators and public health practitioners suggest that this unit include various lifeskills sub-topics such as: drug and alcohol harm reduction, healthy eating, medical concerns affecting late adolescence especially young men, emotional health, and lifelong physical fitness. While this agenda may not directly address the social justice goals intended in the course, I believe that the content of this unit will indirectly affect social justice learning outcomes.

With the use of Internet research and teacher-generated materials, students will examine biological systems and physical and emotional health issues unique to or of special

interest to men. As well as the continued use of reflective journaling, students will be expected to complete a long-term wellness plan as a prescribed unit culminating project.

Throughout this unit, students will be expected to demonstrate an emerging understanding of male biology, physiology, and psychology and explain how this knowledge might catalyze personal wellness. As well, it is expected that students will evaluate the role of culture in men's health issues and examine the biological process of addictions and effects of substance abuse.

Students will accomplish these goals through the guided analyze and interpretation of technical reports and the interpretation, synthesis, and reporting on information from more than one source. Students will explore the relationships between biological, physical, emotional, and relational health.

Through the journaling process students will be encouraged to identify and explain connections and emergent ideas between what they have read, heard, and viewed with their own personal beliefs.

As a unit culminating activity, students will be expected to complete a long-term wellness plan. Students will receive information, instruction, and marking rubrics to facilitate this project.

Statistical overview of social issues. Students will examine numerical data from a variety of sources, particularly Statistics Canada and provincial government publications. Students will be introduced to statistical data descriptive of the status of women and men and examine how gender disparity issues affect culture. Within the Canadian context, students will study a variety of issues including population distribution, aboriginal issues, gender inequities, education, and economic trends.

It is expected that students will demonstrate a knowledge and understanding of social and cultural patterns of gender issues in Canada through the examination of statistical data. This will be accomplished through the analysis and interpretation of statistical data and the exploration of relationships of various sociological disciplines as they relate to gender in a statistical context. Finally, students will be able to identify and explain connections between what they have read, heard, and viewed with their own personal beliefs.

As with other units, except as noted, it is expected that students will write and maintain a reflective journal of reading and classroom activities and be able to articulate creative and emergent ideas and opinions through such journaling. Similarly, students are expected to apply their knowledge of a specific area of personal interest by writing a research paper or developing a project which demonstrates mastery of a chosen curricular area within the topic of gender disparity.

Literature of masculine identity. Students will read and become familiar with a variety of literary-critical methodologies with primary focus on Marxist literary criticism. While students will examine English literature in prose, poetry, and drama from a variety of cultures, the primary emphasis in this unit will be on Canadian literary content. This unit draws on the work of Martino (1995) in which he described the English classroom as a site for introducing students to alternatives to traditional masculine gender roles in and through literature. Resources for this unit may include Martino's *Gendered Fictions* (2000) as a possible text pending school board approval.

It is expected that students will demonstrate, through discussion and journal activities, their awareness of how language used in various literatures can be used to influence perceptions of gender and masculinity. For example, they might describe how the tone and

mood of a literary piece might affect the cultural biases as these relate to gender construction. Throughout the unit, students will be actively encouraged to demonstrate openness to a variety of divergent ideas and opinions.

It is expected that students will explore and analyze various writing genres and styles to discover gender/voice relationships in literature. Students should become familiar with the concept of literary criticism in various forms and begin to apply appropriate basic literary critical methodologies. In addition, students should develop skills in interpretation of main ideas and themes from poetry, prose, and drama as these themes relate to gender issues. Reflective journaling and project form the evaluative component of this unit.

Gender relations. Students will examine and analyze cultural patterns of gender interaction with an emphasis on identifying those patterns which contribute to social dysfunction. Students will explore cultural constructs which may result in misogyny, violence, bullying/harassment, and homophobia. It is envisioned that this unit will contain lessons addressing anger management and conflict resolution amongst other things. Possible resources include the Frederick Marx (2004) video “Boys to Men” and perhaps excerpts from the book Tarrant’s (2007) *Men Speak Out*.

Students will identify and research community resources pertinent to this unit’s themes. Students will examine how dominant and/or micro cultures interact in gender relationships and apply concepts from previous course materials to introspect a variety of relationship issues in different situations.

Journal responses will be guided towards reflection and possibilities for personal remediation. The students will be required to complete an assigned project to complete this unit which will consist of compiling a personal community resource handbook.

Media literacy. This unit will introduce the students to the critical analysis of media and mediated images of masculinity prevalent today. Resources for this unit include the Jackson Katz video series which includes *Tough Guise* (1999), *Spin the Bottle: Sex, Lies, and Alcohol* (2004), and *Dreamworlds 3: Desire, Sex, and Power in Music Video* (2007) all directed by Sut Jhally. This unit builds on research concepts presented by Ging (2005) on mediated images of masculinity

It is expected that students will use the skills and knowledge developed so far in this course, identify and analyze key issues of relevance from a variety of media sources current issues of primary interest to the study of men's issues including gender bias and reinforcement of hegemonic ideals of masculinity.

Students will be able to articulate knowledge-based opinions on a variety of media literacy issues through written response, visual art, or other appropriate mediums. Students will be expected to maintain their reflective journal for basic written responses.

Final project. Students will interview a senior citizen, preferably a community or cultural leader or former leader, with a set of student-generated (but teacher-approved) open-ended questions. The interview will be recorded and transcribed in a format outlined by the teacher. Reflection and response to the project will be contained in the concluding remarks within the text of the project rather than in the course journal.

Students will be required to identify and contact an appropriate senior citizen with whom to conduct the interview. They will develop interview skills which are sensitive to the social/cultural paradigm of the respondent and they will develop a set of open ended questions that reflect the changing cultural constructs of masculinity in our society. Students will be expected to assess the impact of social change in recent history and analyze the

quality of that change from a cultural perspective. Using the reflective journal, students will discuss the relevance of historical constructs of masculinity with modern cultural expectations.

The students will be evaluated on the verbatim transcription of a ten-minute segment of the recorded interview and through demonstration of the relevance of the experience through written response in the journal.

Final reflection/final response. This unit will serve as a concluding evaluative tool in lieu of a final exam. The unit will consist of a series of four or five open-ended questions/starters to which the student will respond in paragraph form. It is hoped that students will demonstrate ongoing social and cultural sensitivity to diverse expression of gender and gender issues and demonstrate a personal synthesis of knowledge and life experience. It is also hoped that the students will develop and articulate an understanding of the balance between culturally appropriate and personal constructs of masculinity through the responses to the open-ended questions/starters supplied by the teacher.

Assessment and Evaluation

As with BAA Women's Studies 12, sixty percent (60%) of the unit assessment and final course grade will consist of teacher evaluation of student demonstrated mastery of response element of each unit (project or essay). Forty percent (40%) of the unit assessment and final course grade will be evaluated on depth of introspection and completion of the reflection element of each unit.

Rubrics and criteria will be provided to students upon enrolment in the course. Assessment and evaluation practices will include: daily or contact assessment by the teacher with immediate feedback and ongoing assessment of performance by students; ongoing

reflective responses to each theoretical and practical assignment in written format; collaborative assessment of unit response projects (teacher and student collaborate to define mastery of creative content); and, completion of the major research project with the marking rubric supplied by teacher at project commencement.

Units one to seven will each be converted to 12.5% of the final course mark. Units eight and nine will combine to form 12.5% of the final grade for a total of 100%.

In summary, the Men's Studies 12 course will be designed with the needs of male learners in mind (but open to both genders). The course will be grounded in the professional literature and will draw on resources popular in men's studies curricula.

Chapter Five: Research Findings

Methodology

This project was originally intended as a phenomenological research study (Van Manen, 1997) into the perceived impetus and barriers to the implementation of Men's Studies 12 by the school district leadership team. These participants received a short executive summary of the project and the BAA formatted framework for the proposed course (Appendix A). The participants were asked to sign participant consent letter (Appendix B) and then to respond in writing to six questions regarding their perceptions of the impetus and barriers to the implementation of the course (Appendix C). While these individuals were not, to my knowledge, experts on men's studies or even curriculum design, each of these people had a professional interest in ideas that had potential to remediate underachievement as indicated by statistical data. They were to provide feedback from a practical perspective on the potential of Men's Studies 12 to accomplish the social justice and educational goals described in this document. However, 30 days after the suggested deadline only two of six possible participants responded. Personal communication with three of the four remaining potential participants resulted in their assurance that the information would be forthcoming. No replacement participants were found. Coincidentally and ironically, both respondents were female; the four non-respondents were male.

Emergent Themes

Support of concept of Men's Studies 12. Although the participants were not given the statistical rationale for implementing the course responding school district leaders confirm evidence from other jurisdictions demonstrating oversubscription of males in indices

of school disengagement within the local catchment area, thereby validating the initial premise of the project.

Both participants' responses were similar: "there are more male students whose attendance/behaviour/suspensions give evidence of the lack of engagement" (Respondent 1) and "it is our young men that we are seeing in ever-increasing numbers struggling with these life issues (negative behaviours- aggression, school behaviour issues, drugs, alcohol, etc)" (Respondent 2).

Support was also expressed for the present project as a promising practice as one of the participants described the potential benefit of the proposed curriculum: "I see great benefit in teaching our young men about themselves, their past, their present, and to provide skills and understanding for their future that could help them to be more successful" (Respondent 1).

Transferability of the program. One participant brought forward the question of teacher threshold knowledge for the transferability of the program: "a teacher beyond the person who created this course would need an extensive teacher guide (and resources, reference materials, materials for student assignments) to have the background necessary to successful implementation" (Respondent 2).

The scope of this project was to offer a synthesis of relevant literature and present a course framework for Men's Studies 12. Resource materials such as a teacher's guide, suggested lesson plans, resource lists are an immense undertaking usually completed by a group or committee after the initial concept is authorized. The framework provided in this project provides a substantial start to the compilation of this material.

Teacher threshold knowledge has been identified as a key for the successful teaching of social justice outcomes (Martino & Berrill, 2003). The depth of knowledge required by individual teachers is not substantially different than the threshold knowledge to teach other social justice courses. Like social justice courses, the instructor's personal philosophy of culture and gender framed in a pro-feminist perspective is paramount. Teacher autonomy and the availability of local resources would take precedent over a prescriptive resource guide.

Delivery format. One participant presented valid criticism of the intended delivery method of the course:

much of the power of this type of course is in the group learning and sharing and that would be missed in an individualized presentation... Perhaps group presentations/workshops of some of the course components where students got to experience the power of the learning might help build course acceptance.
(Respondent 2)

At the time of this writing, motivational aspects of Women's Studies 12 need to be addressed and correspond to the participant's observations. Within my present program, some overlapping learning outcomes for Men's Studies 12 and Women's Studies could be delivered through co-ed seminar. Other learning outcomes are gender specific for each course but some could still be delivered through gender specific seminars and workshops. Much of the curriculum could still be delivered through self-paced independently directed programming.

Alternate programs in this school district are mandated to teach a non-credit program specific lifeskills component. These lifeskills courses could evolve into credit Women's Studies 12 and Men's Studies 12 with weekly seminars and substantial self-paced, self-directed activities.

Seminar formats may also be the optimal venue to deconstruct hegemonic forms of subconscious masculinity rather than relying solely on individually directed, albeit teacher guided, research. In the same theme, group activities, especially guided discussion, may be the best venue to re-construct modern masculinity keeping intact hegemonic aspects that, in themselves, are beneficial to culture.

The shortcoming to this delivery is that it limits course delivery to classroom orientation minimizing its effectiveness for pure distance delivery such as productive long-term suspension packages or homebound/remote applications.

External indicators of success. Both participants pointed to the need for longitudinal quantitative follow-up to ascertain the success of the program. For instance, Respondent 1 indicated that “follow up of students over time in terms of engagement... improved attendance, healthier choices..., reduced bullying and increased tolerance of others”. As well, Respondent 2 argued that “I would expect rigorous standards transferred to other course work and students who have more ability to set goals and meet them”.

For any social justice course the definition of success would need to be identified. Most senior high school courses define success as a student’s ability to complete significant learning outcomes to justify a minimal passing mark resulting in up to four credits towards high school graduation. While the intent of Men’s Studies 12 is culturally more significant, one must remember that a single course, targeting a student clientele already identified as at-risk, may have variable and complex indicators of success.

Examination of Key Barriers

The key barrier identified through the review of academic and practice-oriented literature to effective and innovative educational strategies for underachieving boys is the

reaction of both feminist and public stakeholders. The key to successful implementation is sensitivity to each group's perceived needs.

Feminist reaction. Feminist reaction to public school gender analysis generally has an initial denial of the school disengagement issue by males (Schaefer, 2000) changing to a more defensive stance calling for further statistical disaggregation (Martino & Kehler, 2007; Weaver-Hightower, 2003a) to a further dismissal of results because of perceived economic inequalities later in life (Schaefer, 2000). Feminist and pro-feminist angst is generally dissipated upon examination of literature and the scope and sequence of the proposed course.

A related barrier to the long-term viability of the course is the current teacher job posting requirements that often put tenure and seniority before applicant suitability even though research has indicated teacher quality as a key to student engagement regardless of the gender of the teacher or student (Darling-Hammond, 2000). Essential to the course is the maintenance of a pro-feminist perspective by teachers who may have differing philosophical paradigms. Also at issue is the long-term sustainability of the course through teacher and administrative changes at the local and district levels. This may be an issue with any social justice course.

Public reaction. Public reaction was the primary barrier in the Irish *Emerging Masculinities* course (Mac an Ghaill, Hanafin, & Conway, 2002). These researchers indicated that the public, in a culture viewed as religiously conservative, saw the course as overtly feminist. This proposed course differs in that it may be piloted at a local level and it hopes to provide material in a culturally sensitive manner.

Student reaction and motivation. One of the respondents identified as a possible barrier the issue of student recruitment into such a course of studies. If left purely to their

own choice, my experience with at-risk youth would concur with the respondent's observation. However, if the gender studies are synthesized with and seen as a natural evolution of the present required but non-credit lifeskills program the offering of four credits towards graduation will extrinsically motivate initially reluctant participants. It must also be recognized that within a program for at-risk youth, a high level of trust is developed between individual students and the teacher-mentor. This may result in a high level of recruitment as the students may be more amenable to teacher suggestion and encouragement.

Identification of Scope and Sequence

The identification of the scope and sequence of this course relied primarily upon my personal experiences with at-risk youth. While the learning outcomes should maintain consistency, the course itself must be revised and re-evaluated on a continuous basis to ensure cultural and social relevance based on emergent needs. This is a field that is rapidly changing and evolving and the course content, its learning outcomes, and resources must maintain fluidity to be relevant in the future.

Chapter Six: Future Research and Recommendations

It has been approximately three years since this project began taking shape. In that time, the academic literature on the subject of male gender studies has increased dramatically. With this expanding canon of literature, it has been gratifying to be affirmed by both the academic research literature and the research participants that potential may exist in Men's Studies 12 to achieve both educational and social justice goals with identified at-risk adolescent males. Especially with such a relatively new field of research, such as a pro-feminist Men's Studies at the high school level, once implemented, the project must become reiterative with constant review and revision as pertinent research becomes available.

Four themes have emerged as possible future directions for personal research and the proposed course. First, there will be a need for constant review of this Men's Studies 12 as it is piloted for urban, rural, aboriginal, and multi-cultural needs. Revisions to the course must be sensitive to changing local needs and the constant re-identification of "which boys?" (Martino & Berrill, 2003; Martino & Kehler, 2007; Mills and Keddie, 2005; Schaeffer, 2000). Educators interested in the educational and social success for boys must keep up to date on relevant research and be able to translate this research into practical applications in the classroom (Weaver-Hightower, 2003b).

Secondly, future directions include the review and research of gender studies and social justice courses as they may become available in other jurisdictions including other schools, school districts, provinces, and international contexts. Researchers have suggested blending academic research with practical application (Weaver-Hightower, 2003b), utilizing gender-related social justice themes in regular classes (Martino, 1995), and explicitly teaching boys democratic ideals of gender and diversity (Mills & Keddie, 2005) for some

time and more courses may be available in the future. An examination of these courses may reveal if similar educational outcomes (i.e., retention, lower suspension rates, and graduation rates of identified at-risk students) are realized in provincially authorized Social Justice courses.

Thirdly, in the current educational gender debate, certain seminal research studies and meta-analyses are in need of update. In the local context, research reports such as Schaefer (2000), if updated and combined with current Statistics Canada data and reports such as Frenette and Coulombe (2007) and McMullen (2008), may predict a more egalitarian future for Canadians.

Finally, as interest and legitimacy in gender differences in public school experiences grows, a wide range of research possibilities arise. These research possibilities include examination of school-related phenomena dealing with all genders and sexual orientations.

Recommendations

Based on the research submitted in this project, the following recommendations are put forth.

1. That the Men's Studies 12 course be implemented immediately through the Board/Authority Authorization process within school district;
2. That the course be piloted at one Alternate program in the school district through a combination of self-directed and seminar formats;
3. That school district personnel gather and disaggregate statistical indicators of success of the Men's Studies 12 including the creation of a pre- and post-course questionnaire (quantitative) for students taking Men's Studies to aggregate self-disclosed data on agreed upon indicators of success;

4. That school district personnel collect qualitative information from teachers and students involved in the course through focus groups and in self-review/evaluations; and
5. That school district personnel attempt to track students longitudinally through secondary school experiences and early adult transitions.

Furthermore, it is recommended that the University of Northern British Columbia demonstrate leadership in the field of gender equity by requesting that the Board of Governors examine the viability of developing and offering Men's Studies courses within the Gender Studies Program, and that UNBC provide an environment for the synthesis of promising practices in inclusionary gender studies in a broad range of academic disciplines minimizing any binary divisions of gender politic. Additionally, the UNBC should actively encourage and recruit post-graduate students interested in further research in male gender studies.

Through the implementation of Men's Studies 12 to the target group at the high school level and actively engaging pro-feminist men's studies as a logical outcome of the feminist agenda, the pilot school district and the University of Northern British Columbia could become exemplars of effective social justice initiatives.

Chapter Seven: Personal Reflections and Conclusion

This project marks a five-year milestone since the inception of the Board-Authority Authorized course, Women's Studies 12 in this school district. At the time, I thought that this course development, authorization process, and piloting of the course was the culmination of my interest in gender studies and youth. However, comments, conversations, and even heated debates with colleagues, friends, and university professors soon piqued my interest in further explorations.

The concept of teaching boys to be culturally-appropriate men is not new. What I offer is a synthesis of information demonstrating both the need and apparent absence of an effective teaching tool to accomplish this goal. Then this project, combining theoretical research with practical application, takes the step of suggesting a framework and venue for possible initial implementation.

Through the development of the proposed Men's Studies 12, several prevalent themes emerged.

First, the brief literature review highlighted the lack of cohesive discourse in the area of modern masculinity. While this project focuses on the issue of gender achievement differences within a single public school district in British Columbia in particular, it drew from remarkably similar cultural phenomena in the United Kingdom, Ireland, Australia, and the United States. It is time for stakeholders in this issue to get beyond questioning the existence of a problem, and focus upon action without adversely affecting programs, funding, and research attention which have recently benefited girls (Weaver-Hightower, 2003a). This project is such an attempt.

Secondly, however glaring the evidences of school disengagement seem to parents, teachers, and the public, relatively little academic research has focused upon student-focussed solutions to the issue of helping boys reconstruct a masculinity that is meaningful in a post-modern world. Analysis of modern masculinity seems primarily the domain of non-academic practice-oriented and popular-rhetorical literature. Theoretical academic literature, often relying heavily on qualitative ethnographic studies and social constructionist theories, seems reticent to acknowledge significant validity to other methodologies and theoretical paradigms. Therefore, at the research level, there needs to be a synthesis of social construction theories with other academic disciplines such as brain research, psychology, and anthropology (Weaver-Hightower, 2003b, 2008).

Thirdly, the concept of a Men's Studies 12 may be perceived by some interest groups as an adversarial position with feminist discourse; however, to reiterate Brod (1987a), "men's studies is essential to fulfilling the feminist project which underlies women's studies, and that feminist scholarship cannot reach its fullest, most radical potential without the addition of men's studies" (p.180). Social justice goals of a more egalitarian society cannot be realized if the individuals most vulnerable to culturally non-productive behaviour have not been taught to critically analyze the past and present situation and know that effective options exist for the future (Mills and Keddie, 2005). This is the crisis in masculinity.

Fourthly, from my experience and knowledge of both Ontario and British Columbia ministries of education, both ministries put institutional needs such as class size before learning needs of at-risk students. These jurisdictions have favoured broad range courses, under the umbrella of social justice, designed to appeal to a wide heterogeneous audience. While the scope of social justice curriculum is noble, there appears to be no research

indicating that these courses are re-engaging disengaged youth as seen through the indices of discipline, graduation, and standardized test scores.

Conclusion

The genesis of Men's Studies 12 was in the development of Women's Studies 12 in 2004. Observing interest and behavioural changes in young women and engaging in informal conversations with a school and university educators, a common theme arose, "What about the boys?" This project was my response.

Within this project I have sought to answer the research question "Grounded in the professional literature, what characteristics might be the scope and sequence of a curriculum of Men's Studies 12, designed for identified at-risk youth?" Through the intricacies of the peer-reviewed theoretical literature to the untheorized practical literature and the solicitation of opinions from the school district leadership team, all affirmed that social justice outcomes including culturally appropriate constructions of masculinity must be overtly taught and that negatively skewed statistics of educational engagement might be remediated by such a specific course. Although grounded in theoretical constructs, the scope and sequence of the proposed course became a personal judgement call based upon my experience with at-risk students and my perception of their needs in the limited time and resources available for the delivery of such.

In the end, this project served two purposes. The first purpose was that of providing a meaningful academic high school course for at-risk youth. The second purpose was to provide a starting point for further studies and dialogue on social justice and gender issues and how the public school system might respond to these challenges. I believe that I have accomplished these goals.

References

- Alloway, N., Freebody, P., Gilbert, P., & Muspratt, S. (2002). *Boys, literacy and schooling: Expanding the repertoires of practice*. Canberra: Department of Education, Science and Training.
- Alloway, N., & Gilbert, P. (1997). *Boys and Literacy: lessons from Australia (Vol.9)*. Carlton, Australia: Curriculum Corporation.
- American Association of University Women (AAUW). (1992). *How schools shortchange girls*. New York: Marlowe.
- Biddulph, S. (1997). *Raising Boys*, Sydney: Finch.
- British Columbia Ministry of Education (BCED). (2008a). *Foundation Skills Assessment, Province – public and independent schools*. Retrieved May 8, 2009, <http://www.bced.gov.bc.ca/reports/pdfs/fsa/prov.pdf>.
- British Columbia Ministry of Education (BCED). (2008b). *Foundation Skills Assessment, disaggregation by school district*. Retrieved May 8, 2009, <http://www.bced.gov.bc.ca/reports/pdfs/fsa/027.pdf>.
- British Columbia Ministry of Education (BCED). (2006a), *Students with Special Needs – How Are We Doing?*. Retrieved April 27, 2009, <http://www.bced.gov.bc.ca/specialized/performance.pdf>.
- British Columbia Ministry of Education (BCED). (2006b). *Course Information*. Retrieved November 14, 2006, <http://www.bced.gov.bc.ca/graduation/courseinfo/cid.pdf>.
- Brod, H. (1987a). The new men's studies: from feminist theory to gender scholarship. *Hypatia*, 2(1), 179-196.

- Brod, H. (1987b). Does manning men's studies emasculate women's studies?. *Hypatia*, 2(2), 153-156.
- Charlton, E., Mills, M., Martino, W., & Beckett, L. (2007). Sacrificial girls: a case study of the impact of streaming and setting on gender reform. *British Educational Research Journal*, 33(4), 459-478.
- Collins, C., Kenway, J., & McLeod, J. (2000). *Factors influencing the educational performance of males and females in school and their initial destinations after leaving school*. Canberra, Australia: Department of Education, Training and Youth Affairs, Commonwealth of Australia.
- Connell, R. (1996). Teaching the boys: new research on masculinity, and gender strategies for schools. *Teacher College Record*, 98(2), 206-235.
- Cosgrove, K., Mazure, C., & Staley, J. (2007). Evolving knowledge of sex differences in brain structure, function, and chemistry. *The Journal of Biological Psychiatry*, 62, 847-855.
- Cresswell, J.W. (2005). *Educational Research: planning, conducting, and evaluating quantitative and qualitative research* (2nd edition). Upper Saddle River, NJ: Pearson.
- Darling-Hammond, L. (2000). Teacher quality and student achievement: A review of state policy evidence. *Education Policy Analysis Archives*, 8(1).
- Department of Education, Science and Training (DEST). (2003). *Meeting the Challenge: Guiding Principles for Success from the Boys' Education Lighthouse Schools Programme, Stage One 2003*. Canberra: DEST.
- Department of Education, Science and Training (DEST). (2005). *Motivation and Engagement of Boys: Evidence-based Teaching Practices*. Canberra: DEST.

- Dudley-Marling, C. (2004). The Social Construction of Learning Disabilities. *Journal of Learning Disabilities*, 37(6), 482-489.
- Education Queensland (2001), *Queensland School Reform Longitudinal Study* (Brisbane, Queensland Government). Retrieved May 9, 2009 at: <http://education.qld.gov.au/corporate/newbasics/html/pedagogies/pedagog.html>
- Frenette, M. & Coulombe, S. (2007). Has higher education among young women substantially reduced the gender gap in employment and earnings? *Analytic Studies Branch Research Paper Series*. Statistics Canada, June 12, 2007.
- Froese-Germain, B. (2006). Educating boys: Tempering rhetoric with research. *McGill Journal of Education*, 41(2), 145-154.
- Ging, D. (2005). A "Manual on Masculinity"? The consumption and use of mediated images of masculinity among teenage boys in Ireland. *Irish Journal of Sociology*, 14(2), 29-52.
- Gosine, A. (2007). Marginalization Myths and the Complexity of "Men". *Men and Masculinities*. 9(3), 337-357.
- Greig, C. (2003). Masculinities, Reading and the "Boy Problem": A critique of Ontario polices. *Journal of Educational Administration and Foundations*, 17(1), 33.
- Gunzelmann, B. & Connell, D. (2006). The new gender gap: Social, psychological, neuro-biological, and educational perspectives. *Educational Horizons*, 84(2), 94-101.
- Gurian, M. (1998). *A Fine Young Man: What parents, mentors and educators can do to shape adolescent boys into exceptional men*. New York: Penguin Putnam.
- Gurian, M. (2005). *The Minds of Boys: Saving our sons from falling behind in school and life*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.

- House of Representatives Standing Committee on Education and Training. (2002). *Boys' education: Getting it right*. Canberra, AU: Commonwealth Government.
- Justad, M. (2000). Women's studies and men's studies: Friends or foes? *The Journal of Men's Studies*, 8(3), 401-406.
- Keddie, A., & Mills, M. (2007). Teaching for gender justice. *Australian Journal of Education*, 51(2), 205-219.
- Kehler, M., & Martino, W. (2007). Questioning masculinities: Interrogating boys' capacities for self-problemization in schools. *Canadian Journal of Education*, 30(1), 90-112.
- Kitchenham, A., (2002). Vive la difference: Gender, motivation and achievement. *School libraries in Canada*, 22(2), 34-37, 44.
- Lerner, G., (1993). *The creation of feminist consciousness*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Libertin, M. (1987). The politics of women's studies and men's studies. *Hypatia*, 2(2), 143-152.
- Lingard, B. (2003). Where to in gender policy in education after recuperative masculinity politics? *International Journal of Inclusive Education*, 7(1), 33-56.
- Lingard, B., Martino, W., Mills, M. & Bahr, M. (2002). *Addressing the educational needs of boys*. Canberra, Australia: Commonwealth Department of Education, Science and Training.
- Mac an Ghaill, M., Hanafin, J., & Conway, P. (2002). *Gender Politics and Exploring Masculinities in Irish Education*. Research Report No. 3, Ireland: Department of Education and Science.

- MacDonald, B., (2005). *Boy Smarts: mentoring boys for success at school*. Surrey, BC: Mentoring Press.
- Martino, W. (1999). 'Cool boys', 'party animals', 'squids' and 'poofers': interrogating the dynamics and politics of adolescent masculinities in school. *British Journal of Sociology of Education*, 20(2), 239-263.
- Martino, W. (1995). Deconstructing masculinity in the English classroom: A site for reconstructing gendered subjectivity, *Gender and Education*, 7(2), 205-221.
- Martino, W. & Berrill, D. (2003). Boys, schooling and masculinities: interrogating the 'right' way to educate boys. *Educational Review*, 55(2), 99-117.
- Martino, W. & Kehler, M. (2007). Gender-based literacy reform: A question of challenging or recuperating gender binaries. *Canadian Journal of Education*, 30(2), 406-431.
- Martino, W. & Kehler, M. (2006). Male teachers and the "boy problem": An issue of recuperative masculinity politics. *McGill Journal of Education*, 41(2), 113-131.
- McMullen, K. (2008). Why are the majority of university students women? *Education Matters: Insights on Education, Learning and Training in Canada*. Statistics Canada, vol. 5, no. 1, April 29, 2008.
- Mead, S. (2006). *The evidence suggests otherwise: The truth about boys and girls*, Education Sector Organization, Washington, DC. Retrieved November 24, 2008. http://www.educationsector.org/usr_doc/ESO_BoysAndGirls.pdf.
- Mills, M. & Keddie, A., (2005, November). *Boys, productive pedagogies and social justice*. Paper presented at the AARE Conference, University of Western Sydney, AU.
- Ministère de l'Éducation Québec (MEQ). (2004). *Boys' Academic Achievement: Putting the findings into perspective*. Ministry of Education, Province of Québec.

Nathanson, P. & Young, K. (2001). *Spreading Misandry: The teaching of contempt for men in popular culture*. Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press.

Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), (2008), *Higher education to 2030*. Retrieved May 23, 2009 from: <http://www.oecd.org/dataoecd/48/28/41939699.pdf>.

Pipher, M. (1994). *Reviving Ophelia: Saving the selves of adolescent girls*. New York: Random House.

Pollack, W. (1998). *Real boys: Rescuing our sons from the myths of boyhood*. New York: Henry Holt & Co.

Reinharz, S. (1992). *Feminist methods in social research*. New York: Oxford University Press.

Rowe, K.J. & Rowe, K.S. (2006). Big issues in boys' education: Auditory processing capacity, literacy and behaviour. Paper presented at Boys in Education Conference, Massey University, Auckland, NZ. Retrieved May 08, 2006 from http://research.acer.edu.au/boys_edu/2.

Sax, L. (2005). *Why gender matters: What parents and teachers need to know about the emerging science of sex differences*. New York: Broadway.

Schaefer, A. (2000). *G.I. Joe meets Barbie, software engineer meets caregiver: Males and females in B.C.'s public schools and beyond* [Research Report]. Vancouver, BC: B.C. Teachers' Federation. Retrieved May 24, 2009 at: http://www.eric.ed.gov/ERICDocs/data/ericdocs2sql/content_storage_01/0000019b/80/19/d9/4c.pdf.

- Sommer, V. (2000). Men's studies and women's studies: Should they be wed? *The Journal of Men's Studies*, 8(3), 395-400.
- Sommers, C. (2000). *The war against boys: How misguided feminism is harming our young men*. New York: Simon and Schuster.
- Tannen, D. (1990). *You just don't understand: Women and men in conversation*. New York: Harper Collins.
- Teese, R. (1997). Who wins at school: Which boys, which girls?' In J. Kenway (Ed.), *Will boys be boys? Boys education in the context of gender reform* (pp. 126-139). Act, Australia: Australian Curriculum Studies Association.
- Titus, J. (2004). Boy trouble: Rhetorical framing of boys' underachievement. *Discourse: studies in the cultural politics of education*, 25(2), 145-169.
- Trent, F., & Slade, M. (2001). *Declining rates of achievement and retention: The perceptions of adolescent males*. Canberra, AU: Department of Education, Training and Youth Affairs, Commonwealth of Australia.
- Van Manen, M. (1997). *Researching the Lived Experience: Human science for an action sensitive pedagogy*. London, ON: University of Western Ontario.
- Weaver-Hightower, M. (2003a). The "boy turn" in research on gender and education. *Review of Educational Research*, 73(4), 471-498.
- Weaver-Hightower, M. (2003b). Crossing the divide: bridging the disjunctures between theoretically oriented and practice-oriented literature about masculinity and boys at school. *Gender and Education*, 15(4), 407-423.
- Weaver-Hightower, M. (2008). Inventing the "All-American Boy": A case study of the capture of boys' issues by conservative groups. *Men and Masculinities*, 10(3), 15-22.

West, P. (1999). 'Boys' underachievement in school: Some persistent problems and some current research. *Issues in Educational Research*, 9(1), 33-54.

Appendix A

BAA Course Framework

District Name:

District Number:

Developed by:

Date Developed: November 2008

School Name:

Principal's Name:

Board/Authority Approval Date:

Board/Authority Signature:

Course Name: Men's Studies

Grade Level of Course: 12

Number of Course Credits: 4

Number of Hours of Instruction: 120

Prerequisite(s): None (Social Studies 11 & English 10 recommended)

Special Training, Facilities, or Equipment Required: access to computer with internet, audio recording device (transcriber, digital or cassette recorder), TV monitor and DVD player.

Course Synopsis:

This course provides a student with an interdisciplinary study of historical, cultural, and contemporary issues related to manhood and masculinity as a reflection of current Canadian social norms. While students will be encouraged to explore areas of personal interest, the focus of the classroom portion will be on investigating constructs of masculinity from a gender-specific yet pro-feminist perspective. Assessment for the course consists primarily of a student's completion of personal reflection journals and mastery of student initiated unit project.

Rationale:

Public school statistical disaggregation by gender indicates a substantial oversubscription by boys of most special education categories, disciplinary suspensions and referrals, and a general lack of connectedness with formal schooling. A synthesis of recent academic and popular-rhetorical literatures indicates the importance of masculinity as a learned behaviour. This course has been developed to support and encourage students to explore the historical, cultural, and biological constructions of masculinity and how these themes might blend into dynamic, contemporary, and culturally appropriate personal growth. As such, it will mirror BAA Women's Studies 12 in some learning outcomes.

Students will explore curricula themes and develop project/research topics of personal interest or community value. This course will support School District goals in literacy and social responsibility. While this course is intended to be taught in a distributed learning context, it is readily adaptable to a traditional classroom environment.

Organizational Structure:

Unit	Title	Time
Unit 1	Historical Perspectives	15 hours
Unit 2	Global Issues in Masculinity	15 hours
Unit 3	Men's Health	15 hours
Unit 4	Statistical Overview of Men's Issues	15 hours
Unit 5	Literature of Masculine Identity	15 hours
Unit 6	Gender Relations	15 hours
Unit 7	Media Literacy	15 hours
Unit 8	Final Project	10 hours
Unit 9	Reflection/Final Response	5 hours
Total Hours		120 hours

Unit Descriptions:

Unit 1: Historical Perspectives Time: 15 hours

Students will become familiar with the historical antecedents to modern constructs of masculinity and practice methods of critical analysis they will use in the course as they explore the various themes and topics. The central theme for the unit will be "We were once warriors" and students will examine, among other minor themes, the role of gender in various historical/cultural contexts. The students will read, critically analyze, reflect, and respond to the reading assignments.

Social and Cultural Issues:

It is expected that students will:

- Identify and discuss social and cultural elements that contribute to historical diversity in masculine identity

- Identify and discuss social and cultural elements that contribute to historical homogeneity in masculine identity

Analysis:

It is expected that students will:

- Identify and use a variety of critical methodologies to their reading
- Explain personal interpretations of selected reading

Reflection:

It is expected that students will:

- Write and maintain a reflective journal of reading and classroom activities
- Articulate creative and emergent ideas and opinions through reflective journals

Response:

It is expected that students will:

- Apply their knowledge of a specific area of interest by writing a research paper or developing a project which demonstrates mastery of a curricular area of personal interest

Unit 2: Global Issues in Masculinity Time: 15 hours

With the use of Internet research and teacher-generated materials, students will examine the cultural factors which influence men in a global perspective. Students will continue their reflective journals in this unit.

Social and Cultural Issues:

It is expected that students will:

- Examine the role that culture plays in the development of meaningful masculinity through the use of case studies and independent research
- Research and evaluate the role of governments and media in global gender issues

Analysis:

It is expected that students will:

- Demonstrate competent use of Internet technology for subject searches
- Gather relevant information from appropriate sources
- Develop focused inquiry questions related to increasingly complex topics
- Use appropriate documentation of sources and resources in their research

Reflection:

It is expected that students will:

- Write and maintain a reflective journal of reading and classroom activities
- Articulate creative and emergent ideas and opinions through reflective journals

Response:

It is expected that students will:

- Apply their knowledge of a specific area of interest by writing a research paper or developing a project which demonstrates mastery of a curricular area of personal interest

Unit 3:

Men's Health and Fitness

Time: 15 hours

With the use of Internet research and teacher-generated materials, students will examine biological systems and physical and emotional health issues unique to or of special interest to men. As well as the continued use of reflective journaling, students will be expected to complete a long-term wellness plan as a unit culminating project.

Social and Cultural Issues:

It is expected that students will:

- Demonstrate an emerging understanding of male biology, physiology, and psychology and how this knowledge might catalyze personal wellness

- Evaluate the role of culture in men's health issues
- Examine the biological precursors and effects of substance abuse

Analysis:

It is expected that students will:

- Analyze and interpret technical reports
- Explore the relationships between biological, physical, emotional, and relational health
- Interpret, synthesize, and report on information from more than one source
- Identify and explain connections between what they have read, heard, and viewed with their own personal beliefs

Reflection:

It is expected that students will:

- Write and maintain a reflective journal of reading and classroom activities
- Articulate creative and emergent ideas and opinions through reflective journals

Response:

It is expected that students will:

- Apply their knowledge of a specific area of interest by writing a research paper or developing a project which demonstrates mastery of a curricular area of personal interest

Unit 4: Statistical Overview of Men's Social Issues Time: 15 hours

Students will examine numerical data from a variety of sources, particularly Statistics Canada and provincial government publications. Within the Canadian context, students will study a variety of issues including population distribution, aboriginal issues, gender inequities, and education.

Social and Cultural Issues:

It is expected that students will:

- Demonstrate a knowledge and understanding of social and cultural patterns of gender issues in Canada

Analysis:

It is expected that students will:

- Analyze and interpret statistical data
- Explore the relationships of various sociological disciplines as they relate to gender in a Canadian context
- Interpret, synthesize, and report on information from an interdisciplinary perspective
- Identify and explain connections between what they have read, heard, and viewed with their own personal beliefs

Reflection:

It is expected that students will:

- Write and maintain a reflective journal of reading and classroom activities
- Articulate creative and emergent ideas and opinions through reflective journals

Response:

It is expected that students will:

- Apply their knowledge of a specific area of interest by writing a research paper or developing a project which demonstrates mastery of a curricular area of personal interest

Unit 5: Literature of Masculine Identity

Time: 15 hours

Students will read and become familiar with a variety of literary-critical methodologies with primary focus on Marxist literary criticism. While students will examine English literature in

prose, poetry, and drama from a variety of cultures, the primary emphasis in this unit will be on Canadian literary content.

Social and Cultural Issues:

It is expected that students will:

- Demonstrate their awareness of how language used in various literatures can be used to influence others
- Describe how tone and mood affect the interpretation of various genres
- Demonstrate openness to a variety of divergent ideas and opinions

Analysis:

It is expected that students will:

- Explore and analyze various writing styles to discover gender/voice relationships in literature
- Become familiar with the concept of literary criticism in various forms
- Interpret main ideas and themes from poetry, prose, and drama
- Interpret literary techniques such as symbolism as they pertain to gender issues
- Show ability to apply appropriate basic literary-critical methodologies

Reflection:

It is expected that students will:

- Write and maintain a reflective journal of reading and classroom activities
- Articulate creative and emergent ideas and opinions through reflective journals

Response:

It is expected that students will:

- Apply their knowledge of a specific area of interest by writing a research paper or developing a project which demonstrates mastery of a curricular area of personal interest

Unit 6: Gender Relations

Time: 15 hours

Students will examine and analyze cultural patterns of gender interaction with an emphasis on identifying those patterns which contribute to social dysfunction. Journal responses will be guided towards reflection and possibilities for remediation.

Social and Cultural Issues:

It is expected that students will:

- Explore cultural constructs which may result in misogyny, violence, bullying/harassment, and homophobia
- Identify resources available in one's community for further exploration

Analysis:

It is expected that students will:

- Examine how dominant and/or micro cultures interact in gender relationships
- Apply concepts from course materials to introspect a variety of relationships in different situations

Reflection:

It is expected that students will:

- Write and maintain a reflective journal of reading and classroom activities
- Articulate creative and emergent ideas and opinions through reflective journals

Response:

It is expected that students will:

- Apply their knowledge of a specific area of interest by writing a research paper or developing a project which demonstrates mastery of a curricular area of personal interest

Unit 7: Media Literacy

Time: 15 hours

This unit will introduce the student to the critical analysis of media and mediated images of masculinity prevalent today. This unit builds on research concepts presented by Ging (2005) on mediated images of masculinity.

Students will be able to articulate knowledge-based opinions on a variety of media literacy issues through written response, visual art, or other appropriate mediums

Students will be expected to maintain their reflective journal for basic written responses.

Social and Cultural Issues:

It is expected that students will:

- use the skills and knowledge developed so far in this course to identify and analyze key issues of relevance from a variety of media sources current issues of primary interest to the study of men's issues including gender bias and reinforcement of hegemonic ideals of masculinity.

Analysis:

It is expected that students will:

- use the skills and knowledge developed so far in this course to identify and analyze gender bias and non-constructive portrayals of masculinity in the entertainment media.
- Describe how gender portrayal in entertainment media contributes to cultural definitions of masculinity.
- Articulate knowledge-based opinions on mediated images of masculinity through written response, essay, visual art, or other appropriate mediums

Reflection:

It is expected that students will:

- Write and maintain a reflective journal of reading and classroom activities
- Articulate creative and emergent ideas and opinions through reflective journals

Response:

It is expected that students will:

- Apply their knowledge of a specific area of interest by writing a research paper or developing a project which demonstrates mastery of a curricular area of personal interest

Unit 8: Final Project

Time: 10 hours

Students will interview a senior citizen, preferably a community or cultural leader or former leader, with a set of student-generated (but teacher approved) open ended questions. The interview will be recorded and transcribed in a format outlined by the teacher. Reflection and response to the project will be contained in the concluding remarks within the text of the project rather than in the course journal.

Social and Cultural Issues:

It is expected that students will:

- Identify and contact an appropriate senior citizen with whom to conduct the interview
- Develop interview skills which are sensitive to the social/cultural paradigm of the respondent

Analysis:

It is expected that students will:

- Assess the impact of social change in recent history
- Analyze the quality of that change from a cultural perspective

Reflection:

It is expected that students will:

- discuss the relevance of historical constructs of masculinity with modern cultural expectations

Response:

It is expected that students will:

- Transcribe verbatim a ten minute segment of the recorded interview
- Demonstrate the relevance of the experience through written response in the conclusion of the project

Unit 9: Final Reflection/Final Response

Time: 5 hours

This unit will serve as a concluding evaluative tool in lieu of a final exam. The unit will consist of a series of four or five open-ended questions/starters to which the student will respond in paragraph form.

Social and Cultural Issues:

It is expected that students will:

- Demonstrate ongoing social and cultural sensitivity to diverse expression of gender and gender issues

Analysis:

It is expected that students will:

- Demonstrate a personal synthesis of knowledge and life experience

Reflection:

It is expected that students will:

- Develop an understanding of the balance between cultural and personal constructs of masculinity

Response:

It is expected that students will:

- Articulate personal growth through the responses to the open-ended questions/starters supplied by the teacher

Instructional Components:

- teacher availability (direct instruction)
- distance delivery capability (indirect instruction)
- discussion (interactive instruction)
- research (independent instruction)
- practical creativity
- videotape
- analysis of written and video materials
- expert presentations
- experiential activities
- analysis of own audio recorded interview and transcription

Assessment and Evaluation:

As with BAA Women's Studies 12, sixty percent (60%) of the unit assessment and final course grade will consist of teacher evaluation of student demonstrated mastery of response element of each unit. Forty percent (40%) of the unit assessment and final course grade will be evaluated on depth of introspection and completion of the reflection element of each unit.

Rubrics and criteria will be provided to students upon enrolment in the course.

- Daily or contact assessment by the teacher with immediate feedback and ongoing assessment of performance by students is critical to the success of students in this course.

- Ongoing reflective responses to each theoretical and practical assignment in written format.
- Collaborative assessment of unit response projects: teacher and student collaborate to define mastery of creative content.
- Major research project: rubric supplied by teacher at project commencement.

Units one to seven will each be converted to 12.5% of the final course mark. Units eight and nine will combine to form 12.5% of the final grade.

Appendix B
Participant Consent Letter

I understand that Gordon Weber, who is a graduate student at the University of Northern British Columbia, is conducting a research study in gender studies and at-risk youth as part of his Master of Education Project. The purpose of the research study is to determine the receptivity of a Men's Studies course, designed by Mr. Weber, by selected District and/or school-based leaders. The study will be conducted through a brief interview process or written submission during the 2008-2009 school year.

I understand that I will be supplied a brief overview of the research study and the Board/Authority Authorized curriculum framework for the proposed Men's Studies program. I also understand that Mr. Weber will supply the set of six open-ended questions soliciting my ideas and opinions regarding the impetus and barriers to implementing such a course. As well, Mr. Weber will analyze the information provided to glean reoccurring themes. Information from this study will be used to enhance future revisions and individual lesson units of this course.

1. Consent for my inclusion is given on the understanding that Mr. Weber will ensure that my identity will be protected and my confidentiality maintained both directly and indirectly. This will be done by:
 - a. removing all references to the particular school district, names of geographic localities, and names of participants. Leadership positions and generic job titles may be used at the discretion of Mr. Weber and myself.
 - b. giving the me the opportunity to member-check the final draft of the project document to ensure anonymity.

The personal opinions and ideas expressed by the participants will not in any way represent the opinions and ideas of School District No. 27.

2. I understand that participation in the study is completely voluntary and that I may choose to withdraw at any time prior to publication. If I withdraw from the study, my information will be withdrawn automatically as well.
3. I understand that the data will be collected in the 2008-2009 school year.
4. I understand that the data collection process will not increase my workload.
5. I understand that the interview process will consist of the questions provided and that the responses to these questions may be audio-recorded or written at my discretion.
6. I understand that the data collected will be treated in the following manner:
 - a. The data will be stored in a secure area by Mr. Weber in a secure area of Mr. Weber's private residence.

- b. The data will be used only by Mr. Weber, and only for his MEd project or presentation at learned conferences or published in learned journals and books.
- c. The participants will be given the opportunity to member-check the final draft of the Results and Analysis of the study to ensure contextual integrity.
- d. The data will be shredded at the end of the study personally by Mr. Weber.

7. I understand that if I have any comments or concerns that I may contact Mr. Gordon Weber at 250-395-3101, Dr. Andrew Kitchenham at 250-960-6707, or the Vice President Research, UNBC at 250-960-5820.

I hereby give my consent to take part in the study conducted by Mr. Weber.

Name: _____

Signed: _____

Date: _____

Researcher: _____

Signed: _____

Date: _____

(A copy of this agreement will be retained by all parties listed on this agreement)

Appendix C
Research Questions:

Question 1:

Using your years of experience as an administrator in this school district, what impetus/needs do you see in the male student population of the school district in regards to a men's program?

Question 2:

What barriers do you see existing for the implementation of a men's program in our school district?

Question 3:

What aspects of the men's program do you as an administrator find important for the male students of our district?

Question 4:

If a men's program was initiated, what outcomes would you find important in the initial implementation?

Question 5:

What outcomes would you as an administrator want to see for ongoing support (over 5 years) for a men's program?

Question 6:

As an administrator, would you support the implementation of a men's program? Why/Why not?