

POSITIONING WOMEN'S NARRATIVES IN CANADIAN HISTORY COURSE MATERIALS

Rose Fine-Meyer, University of Toronto instructor, author, doctoral student and recipient of the Governor General's Award for Excellence in Teaching Canadian History in 2007. Rose is currently completing her dissertation in history education at the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education/University of Toronto. Her thesis, titled: "Including women: the establishment and integration of Canadian women's history narratives into Toronto, Ontario, classrooms and historic sites 1965-1995", examines the ways in which women's narratives entered into history curriculum in Ontario. The study traces the work of historians, educators, women's organizations, historical site workers and small publishers to include the narratives of women in history courses and the overall impact it had on history education in Ontario. In 2005, Rose developed a senior level secondary school interdisciplinary course entitled "Archives and Local History" linking students to communities and organizations engaged in maintaining and preserving local history. Rose has published a number of supplementary materials for secondary school history courses, and has contributed to articles, workshops and panels on Canadian women's history, archives and local history.

ABSTRACT

Historical narratives about and by women have been predominantly absent from history courses in Ontario. School textbooks and supplementary course materials, developed in the 19th century as part of state goals related to nation building and good citizenship, dominate history course narratives. The women's movement, affirmative action and equal opportunity policies helped bring issues of gender inequity to the forefront of education beginning in the 1970s, but it did little to alter history curriculum, which remained androcentric. Most history textbooks and course materials either marginalized women's narratives or presented women through a series of women's "firsts." Recent discussions about history education in Canada have focused on the purpose and the methods of effective history teaching. This discussion must also include a re-examination of traditional historical frameworks and the inclusion of women in history course narratives.

RÉSUMÉ

Les récits historiques à propos et par des femmes ont été majoritairement absents des cours d'histoire en Ontario. Les manuels scolaires et le matériel de classe supplémentaire, développés au 19^e siècle dans le cadre des objectifs gouvernementaux reliés à la construction de la nation et de la citoyenneté, dominent les récits historiques des cours d'histoire. Le mouvement des femmes, l'action positive et les politiques d'égalité des chances ont contribué à porter ces questions d'inégalité des sexes au devant de l'enseignement, débutant dans les années 1970, mais ceci n'a pas beaucoup changé le curriculum d'histoire, qui est demeuré androcentrique. La plupart des manuels d'histoire et du matériel de cours ont soit marginalisé les récits de femmes, soit présenté les femmes par l'entremise d'une série de « premières » pour les femmes. Les discussions récentes portant sur l'enseignement de l'histoire au Canada ont mis l'accent sur les objectifs et les méthodes de l'enseignement efficace de l'histoire. Cette discussion doit aussi inclure un réexamen des cadres traditionnels historiques et l'inclusion des femmes dans les récits historiques des cours d'histoire.

The experiences of Canadian women were absent from nation building narratives that embraced the achievements of elite and public men. Political and military leaders, lawmakers and industrial giants helped shape the national polity. Restricted by legislation that deprived them of rights and privileges, women were

denied access to government, academic and economic positions of authority, removing them from national narratives or restricting them to supportive roles that validated the public discourse. Canadian history taught in schools has been shaped by the development of the country as a whole. Nation building narratives, centered