

# Women's Studies

2011 Assessment Report



Government  
of South Australia

**SACE**  
Board of SA

# **WOMEN'S STUDIES**

## **2011 ASSESSMENT REPORT**

### **OVERVIEW**

Assessment reports give an overview of how students performed in the school and external assessments in relation to the learning requirements, assessment design criteria, and performance standards set out in the relevant subject outline. They provide information and advice regarding the assessment types, the application of the performance standards in school and external assessments, the quality of student performance, and any relevant statistical information.

Student responses across assessment types generally showed a good understanding of gender construction and the ability to use the tools of gender analysis. Most students were able to use the language of gender construction effectively. It is important that teachers assist their students to be successful by designing tasks that allow them to explicitly discuss gender construction, as well as show their ability to analyse issues, rather than make lists of the ways in which women are disempowered.

### **SCHOOL-BASED ASSESSMENT**

#### **Assessment Type 1: Text Analysis**

The Text Analysis tasks allowed students to analyse such texts as films, fairy tales, advertisements, magazines, lyrics and video games for gender bias and stereotyping. Students were able to show the ways in which our society constructs gender roles where men are portrayed as powerful and dominating, and women as passive and submissive. A wide variety of tasks were designed to illustrate the students' learning: online forums, film reviews, reports on lyrics, and analysis of magazines. These enabled students to achieve the performance standards.

#### **Assessment Type 2: Essay**

In the essay many students wrote fluently and convincingly about a wide range of topics – from the significance of feminism in the 21st century, to the experiences of women in developing countries. The choice of a topic should allow the student to write an essay which attempts to persuade their audience. It would be helpful for students to practice setting a question to be answered, or proposing a hypothesis. Students cannot assume that because they have chosen a topic about women, that they have automatically covered gender analysis. It is important that the student shows explicitly that they have analysed the social implications of gender, and the representations of gender, and how these operate in the context of the topic they are investigating.

## Assessment Type 3: Folio

In the folio, students were able to explore topics such as: Women's Struggles, Achievements and Empowerment, Women and the Law, Health and Well-Being, Development and Globalisation, Women and Work, and Representations of Women in Cultural Texts. While some teachers chose a variety of creative task designs to arouse student interest, there was still a preference for essays or reports. However, it was encouraging to see gender audits, interviews, newspaper articles, and scripted role-plays.

In this assessment type, students were able to investigate diverse groups of women from different cultures, times, and contexts. Unfortunately, students continue to struggle when evaluating strategies for empowerment and ways of effecting change. A strategy used by some teachers to enable students to meet this challenge, was to investigate how feminists/movements/laws have caused changes in society which are either positive or negative for women.

## EXTERNAL ASSESSMENT

### Assessment Type 4: Issues Analysis

There were many interesting and varied Issues Analysis studies this year. Noteworthy topics included: Raising a Genderless Child, Women in Manga, Women are Still Psychologically Dependent on Men, Women Who Kill Their Partners and an analysis of the novel *Lolita*. Perennial favourites like Rape, Beauty Pageants, Pornography and Body Image also enabled students to display their learning.

In most successful issues analyses, students explicitly showed a knowledge and understanding of gender construction; however, simply choosing a topic about women did not necessarily demonstrate this. Students need to be led away from the tendency to complete a 'Society and Culture Investigation' rather than a Women's Studies Issues Analysis, as this limits their chance of meeting the assessment design criteria for this subject. Most students were usually able to list some strategies for empowerment, but many did not evaluate them. Not all topics lend themselves to an easy discussion of diversity; teachers may have to help students to think more broadly about the different groups of women who are affected by a particular issue, or explore a diversity of opinions from different women on the chosen issue.

While most issues analyses were extremely readable, attention needs to be given to word count, student number and school number being prominently displayed on the work. The use of consistent referencing is also important. By posing a question or hypothesis, students have a clearer focus, and are then able to organise their research in an orderly manner.

Overall most students were able to demonstrate the knowledge and understanding they had gained during the year. Many provided well-written, interesting papers that showed depth of research and enthusiasm for the subject.

Women's Studies  
Chief Assessor