Women in Politics, Business, and the Professions

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INTRODUCTION

Women in business, politics, and the professions in South Africa are a driving force in today’s modern economy. They shape and redefine the workplace, business networks, financial institutions and culture. Research shows that the experience of women in business is different from those of men. There are profound gender differences in both women’s experiences of business ownership and the political arena (Carter, 2000).

While South Africa has long recognized the need to support women in business to boost economic growth and job creation, the existing policy interventions and program are not having an anticipated impact. The narrowing of the gap between the growth in women in business and the contextual reality is contingent on skills training and education.

This unit will explore the issues and challenges South African women face in business, industry, and commerce. Further, the unit will examine the factors influencing women progress and entry into male-dominated fields.
Unit 2: Women in business, politics, and the Professions
Sub-Unit Topic 1: Women in business, politics, and the Professions
Scholar: Joann White
Level: Post-secondary/University

I. Unit Overview

This unit is prepared for students in higher education focusing on women, family, children, and social change in South Africa. The methodology used in this study consisted of a qualitative research design using primary data. These data which included interviews (women in a nursing home—retired senior citizens with political first and only female mayor of Alice), educational (teachers) and community (activists—Mandela followers and leaders) with ties to the Alice rural township, research publications, traditional academic lectures and panel discussions at historical black higher education institutions in South Africa (University of Zululand, University of Fort Hare, Western Cape University, campus/school visitations and tours to rural communities, local schools (elementary, intermediate, and high schools). Visit to Reitz (Free State) Township schools. Visits were also made to the Nelson Mandela Apartheid Museum and the Race and Relations Office in downtown Johannesburg, South Africa.

Research Questions:
The research seeks to answer four questions that are vital for women to be successful in business and bring social change to the community:

1. What is the role of South African women in business as it relates to the economy?
2. What factors leads to the success of women in business?
3. What is the level of success South African women have had in entering male-dominated field?
4. How has the role of South African women changed?
II. Unit Objectives

A. Provide information on the changing status role of South Africa women in Business and the professions.

B. Examine the factors affecting South Africa women success in business.

C. Explore the progress of South Africa women entry into traditionally male-dominated fields.

D. Enhance the understanding of South Africa women new and emerging occupational roles in manufacturing and commerce.

III. Unit Content

Objective 1: Provide information on the changing status roles of women in business and the professions.

“Gender and women’s empowerment is at the core of what we need to do in the field of development. Gender development is also smart economics. Research demonstrates that progress in the area of women’s economic empowerment is still far, far too slow. Whether it is the question of empowerment, opportunity, pay, or access to finance, there is a tremendous amount of work to do to level the playing field for women (Zoellick, 2007).

Women in business and other professions have been at the forefront of bringing about change and fighting poverty and underdevelopment. Women in South Africa have been involved in community organizations and non-governmental organizations and have illustrated the power of women activities at the helm of social change and broad-based development.

Women in Business in South Africa remain on the periphery of the national economy. The concentration of activities of women in business in located in the areas of crafts, hawking, personal services ant the retail sector. There are low participation levels of women entrepreneurs in value-adding business opportunities. Some of the chief barriers to promoting women in business include cultural and societal problems, the psychological impact of cultural norms,
employment, legislation, and policy, lack of information, training fiancé, markets, technology
and business infrastructure, absence of vehicle for skills development and capacity building,
fragmented approaches to identifying issues and developing strategy to influence policy affecting
business and government interventions. Accordingly, more and more women are taking the
route to informal sector entrepreneurship (Bolas and Valle, 2003; Erwee, 1987; Mahadea, 2001).

According to Hendricks (2005) women in business have many challenges. Women
generally lack the necessary resources for starting and developing their own

businesses. Research supported the theory that women have been impeded from acquiring
adequate levels of human capital because of social and cultural forces (Chusmir, 1983).

Socio-cultural constraints have limited women’s access to a meaningful business
experience (Cromie and Hayes, 1989), and lead to careers interrupted by family
obligations (Kaplan, 1988). They have less human capitol, in terms of education and
experience, are experience, are specific to the nature of entrepreneurial venture, and hence vary
between industries etc. Additionally, barriers have been seen to impede women’s access to
financial resources (Carter and Allen, 1992).

**Objective 2: Examine the factors affecting South Africa women success in business.**

While South Africa has long recognized the need to support women in business to boost
economic growth and job creation, the existing policy interventions and programs are not having
the anticipated impact. The narrowing of the gap between the growth in women in business and
the contextual reality is contingent on skills training and tertiary education; removal of hidden
and subtle gender discrimination; change in existing prejudices and stereotypes regarding the
role of women in a male-dominated economy; the demand for socio-economic rights; and policy
advocacy. The effective voice of women in business must shift from the survivalist sector to small business ventures and medium to large-scale enterprises (Khosa, 2000 and Miller, 2003).

**Race, gender and geographic location** - Business women in South Africa are affected by a number of factors including race, gender and location. The statistics on gender in the economy reveal large differences between women and men and between black and white women.

Because of the limited opportunities in the formal employment sector, many women, and especially black women, are forced to work in the poorly paid and largely unregulated informal sector. Access and control over resources is still based on ‘race’, gender and class. Consequently South Africa remains characterized by extreme poverty, social disintegration, mass unemployment and the exclusion of the majority of people from socio-economic development and growth (Kehler, 2000). There is still a vast gap between *de jure* and *de facto* equality (du Plessis, and Gouws, 1996).

**Poverty** - A number of factors contribute towards the poverty of women in South Africa. The gendered division of labor in the household, the low value accorded to women’s work with the concomitant clustering of women in low-paid jobs contributes to female poverty.

Although the position of some people from previously disadvantaged groups has improved, this improvement merely seems to indicate that the specific character of inequality is changing from being race-based to being class-based. However, the racial dimension of poverty in South Africa is still profound, with income patterns highly skewed against Africans. The plight of the poor is exacerbated by a lack of basic services, poor housing and inadequate infrastructure. African women have been worst affected by poverty.
**Land** - Historical factors and unequal gender relations continue to hinder women’s access to land and control over resources in a number of ways: Women’s land rights are still limited and insecure (Brohman, 1996; Pose, 1999; World Bank, 1990).

**Family responsibility** - Pressure to run a home, look after children and care for the husband and family limit women. Negative economic development impacts negatively on women as they have to cope with taking care of children, often as single parents (Morris and Brenan, 2003; Ndu, 1997; Paper, 2000; Portes, 1999).

**HIV/AIDS** - HIV/AIDS has a direct effect on women’s entrepreneurship in South Africa. It is imperative that all community/family/business networks be engaged in the process of building the social and cultural capital required to address the problems (Cabinet Memorandum, 1996, unpublished; Gilbert and Walker, 2002).

**Education and training** - Women entrepreneurs are ill-equipped educationally and financially. Training requires preparation of targets, budgets and knowledge of business performance. Communication technologies, in some instances, still contribute towards the negative or degrading portrayal of women (Brohman, 1996; Cabinet Memorandum, 1996, unpublished; Maistry, 1999; Ndu, 1997).

**Access to finance** - Black women in business are denied access to affordable financial services (Brohman, 1996; the dti, 2004; World Bank, 1990).

The nature of the many challenges and obstacles facing women entrepreneurs suggest that their full economic potential is not actualized and women do not feature on the mainstream of the economic agenda.

**Objective 3: Explore the progress of South Africa Women entry into traditionally male-dominated fields.**
Creating a system that provides quality education and training for all – regardless of race, class, or gender – is probably the greatest developmental challenge facing the South African government today. Women (and girls), particularly those of African origin, have been largely excluded from analyses of South Africa (Martineau, 1997).

According to Martineau (1997) many in the international community in South Africa itself are still amazed by that country’s transition from an apartheid regime to a multiparty, democratic state. Local and international leaders agree, however, that the battle has only just begun. South African leaders currently face the challenge of transforming their society into one in which all segments of the population have truly equal access to resources and can fully participate in the democratic process.

Gessler Nkondo, vice chancellor of the historically Black University of Venda, has argued that the process of empowerment for the nation’s African students should occur as a result of changing the content of curricula, rather than on symbolic changes of structures. As he notes, “Only have a few African in positions of power without changing rules of the game would only guarantee frustration” (quoted in Khoas, 1996, p.5). A similar argument must be made for the introduction of curricula that are gender sensitive, particularly in the sciences, where the presence of women’s is minimal. In addition to the inequities created by apartheid, gender-based discrimination has confronted Black women. This represents a trend that bears careful watching, given that it could easily lead a system of gender apartheid (Martineau, 1997).

To counter this trend, three broad areas of research on education for African women in South Africa: (a) primary and secondary education; (b) higher education; and (c) the relationship between gender, education, and occupational opportunities.
From the beginning South Africa schools steered males and females in specific direction and into the different curricula designated for boys and girls. Pell (1970) describes the separate instruction that became the pattern: girls were instructed in domestic duties and boys were taught a trade. Early schools also gave less priority to the education of females. In the mission schools, women were not encouraged, if even allowed, to obtain an academic education or skill training.

Gaitskell (1988) characterizes mission education for girls as “vocational” domestic and subservient suited to Africans, to women and to subordinate classes”. The 19th century, missionaries were concerned with preparing African women to be good Christian wives and mothers, as well as with teaching domestic skills such as sewing, cooking, and laundry work. Indeed several missionary “training institutions” such as Lovedale, Blythswood, Healdtown, and St. Matthew’s were founded specifically to train African girls as domestics.

Swanson (1993) argues that women’s lack of access to higher education, coupled with their concentration in caretaker professions, are important factors in their economic and social subordination; yet as Fennema (1984) asserts, “without mathematical knowledge and skills, women will never be able to achieve equity in society” (p. 138). The lack of female scientists in South of Africa is particularly disquieting given the country’s skills shortages in science and engineering. Thompson (1994) has argued that the reasons for this are many and varied but notes that some of the fault lies at the secondary school level, where girls are often actively discouraged from studying science. Though this is certainly true, Thompson fails to discuss the higher education policies that further help to reduce the number of women in the scientific fields. Scholars inside and outside of South Africa, according to Unterhalter (1992), have argued that
qualitative aspects of education like “curriculum content, the subjects girls study at school the
degree of co-education and the high incidence of sexual harassment, might account for girls’
failure to proceed to higher education” (p. 69). She too, however, fails to examine the impact of
higher education.

If women are to make a contribution, institutional change must occur that will improve
their access to science and technological fields and thereby enable them to participate fully and
significantly in the nation’s development. Unless women presence in these fields increases
significantly, they will remain marginalized within South African society. Of course what is
needed is a fundamental restructuring of South Africa’s societal norms and stereotypes, a process
that will undoubtedly require much time and effort. However, until such change occurs, it will
probably be more productive to advocate change within societal instructions such as education
that are so vitally connected to the progress of the nation’s men and women of all races and
cultures.

Objective 4: Enhance the understanding of women new and emerging occupation roles in
manufacturing and commerce.

There have been some positive developments for women’s employment in
manufacturing. Women’s employment has grown in the more modern and high-tech
manufacturing sectors. In addition, women’s employment has grown in most manufacturing sub-
sectors, including in some sub-sectors construed as male-dominated sectors under the apartheid
regime, such as metals and machinery.

Generally, wholesale, retail, and manufacturing are important sources of employment for
women. In wholesale and retail, both men and women have gained new employment
opportunities—though men are increasingly benefiting relative to women. In manufacturing,
women’s employment growth has been lower than men’s employment growth. Women’s employment in manufacturing remains concentrated in the textiles and clothing and food sub-sectors. Salaries for both men and women in these sub-sectors significantly declined in the early 2000s (USAID Southern Africa Report, 2009).

Women’s employment in large firms has grown; however, men’s employment growth in large firms has been more rapid. A large proportion of women’s work is done in private households or domestic work. After excluding domestic work, 44 percent of women worked in micro or very small firms compared with 37 percent of men. Generally, the importance of the larger firms for both men and women’s employment grew over time. Men’s employment has grown more rapidly than women’s employment in firms with at least 10 employees. Between 2000 and 2005, 63 percent of workers in large firms were men and 37 percent were women. Workers in large firms tend to earn more than workers in smaller firms (USAID Southern Africa Report, 2009).

Women’s ownership of businesses in the formal sector lags behind men’s ownership. In the formal sector, the rate of men’s business ownership is twice that of women’s ownership. Women have higher rates of business ownership in the informal sector compared with men. Women’s ownership is concentrated in a few sub-sectors with typically high female employment, particularly the textiles, clothing, footwear, and related goods sub-sector. This sub-sector has experienced declining salaries and a growing share of female informal workers. Women’s ownership in the informal economy outside of manufacturing has grown, indicating some diversification in the informal sector. Black women fare worse than black men and white women in employment.
The biggest expansion of employment has been in informal self-employment and in the domestic work sector. Black women dominate this sector (USAID Southern Africa Report, 2009).

IV. Instructional Strategies

A. Lecture
B. Focus Groups
C. Role-playing
D. Teamwork
F. Workshops
G. Training
H. Video Conferencing
I. Computer-Assisted Instructions (WebCT)
J. Team teaching
K. Research Project

Objective 1: Provide information on the changing status roles of women in business and the professions.

Students will listen to a lecture on the changing status of women in business and other professions. After the lecture, students will prepare a one-minute paper outlining key points gathered from the lecture. The lecture will utilize handouts and a PowerPoint presentation papered by the teacher.

Lecture
A direct instructional method. The teacher talks with the purpose of transmitting information. Lectures may, but often don't, include visual aids or notes to accompany the talking.

Minute Papers
An end-of-class reflection in which students write briefly to answer the questions: "What did you learn today? and "What questions do you still have?"

Objective 2: Examine the factors affecting South Africa women success in business.

Students will do a group activity (open discussion). Students will be divided into small groups (depending on the number of students in class). Each group will choose a group leader and a recorder. After approximately 25 minutes of discussing factors affecting South Africa women success in business, the class will convene and make a presentation on what was discussed in the group.
Open Discussion

Open discussion is the least structured form of discussion. The teacher sets the boundaries by describing the general topic for the discussion, but the direction of the discussion follows student interests within that topic.

Objective 3: Explore the progress of South Africa Women entry into traditionally male-dominated fields.

Students will listen to a guest speaker (a female international student pursuing a degree in a male-dominated field).

Guest Speakers

Guest speakers come into the classroom to share specialized knowledge about their profession or their hobbies. Guest speakers help to form connections between knowledge acquired in the classroom and real-world applications.

Objective 4: Enhance the understanding of women new and emerging occupation roles in manufacturing and commerce.

Students will do a research paper (5-7) pages. The research paper will focus on new and emerging occupation roles of women in manufacturing and commerce in South Africa. The research paper will utilize recent sources (2005 – present). The research paper will follow the APA format.

Students will do an article review on women in manufacturing of women in commerce. The article will be summarized in class.

V. Unit Activities

A. Identify the influential individuals who have made contributions to research about South African women.

B. Do an analysis of women struggles: USA and South Africa (a minimum of 5-8 women).

C. Develop a time-line of women struggles in South Africa (chronological history).

E. Research other developing and occupational roles of South Africa Women
F. Compare South African women in business with other women in developing countries.

VI. Critical Thinking Activities

A. Round-table discussions (Assigned Books –i.e. Lives of Courage—Women for a New South Africa by Diana E.H. Russell, For Their Triumphs and for Their Tears: Women in Apartheid by Hilda Bernstein)

B. Journal Discussions on a weekly basis

C. Current Events (South Africa women)

VII. Suggested Research Activities

A. Develop research papers in the following areas:
   1. South African Women in Business
   2. South African Women in other professions
   3. South African Women in Manufacturing
   4. South African Women in Commerce
   5. South African Women in Industry

B. Annotated Bibliographies on South Africa women current research

C. Team Research Activity (Development of a symposium focusing on South African Women issues)
Unit 2: Women in business, politics, and the Professions
Sub-Unit Topic 2: South African Women in Science, Technology, Engineering and other Professions
Scholar: Willie Jones III
Level: Post-secondary/University

I. Unit Overview

This course will explore the growing interest in South African women’s leadership on the local and national job markets in non-traditional fields for women such as technology, commerce, and manufacturing. It will consider why their has been a recent demand to have women assume these roles and why leadership positions by South African women has emerged as a major issue in South Africa. Readings and discussions will investigate the current range of themes in South African women studies, including the ways feminist scholarship is addressing the theory and practice of leadership in general, and women’s going into fields of study and work that are traditionally dominated by men.

II. Unit Objectives

The general objectives for this course are to be achieved by students within the semester that the course is taught. Students will:

A. Raise the level of understanding of South African women roles in industry, science, and technology;

B. Strengthen the students knowledge base of South African women role in education, civil service, and high skilled professions; and

C. Have knowledge of the historical roles of South African women in the family, labour force, and political organizations.

III. Unit Content

Introduction

Recent research has found that changing policies and attitudes and improved economic performance have impacted on the labour market dynamics for women and the increased
feminization of the South African labour force since the mid-1990s has been well documented. While employment has increased more rapidly for women than for men over the period, it has been suggested that women are overrepresented in low-income, less secure employment. In addition, insufficient jobs were created to absorb the additional entrants to the labour market and as result women are also overrepresented amongst the unemployed (Van der Weshuizen, Goga, & Oosthizen 2007).

**Historical Roles of South African Women**

Traditionally, women in South Africa were defined by their reproductive roles and by their low-income jobs in the labor market. Women constitute the majority of the poor and the illiterate in both urban and rural areas in Africa and many young women between the ages of 15 and 25 have been pushed into sex work and face the risk of HIV/AIDS infection (T. Manuh, 2003). In general, all racial and ethnic groups in South Africa have long-standing beliefs concerning gender roles, and most are based on the premise that women are less important, or less deserving of power, than men. Most African traditional social organizations are male centered and male dominated. Even in the 1990s, in some rural areas of South Africa, for example, wives walk a few paces behind their husbands in keeping with traditional practices. Afrikaner religious beliefs, too, include a strong emphasis on the theoretically biblically based notion that women's contributions to society should normally be approved by, or be on behalf of, men.

Apartheid imposed new restrictions on African women beginning in the 1950s. Many lived in squalor in the former homelands, where malnutrition, illness, and infant mortality were much higher than in urban areas. Other women who followed their husbands into cities or mining areas lived in inadequate, and often illegal, housing near industrial compounds. Women often left
their own families to commute long distances to low-wage jobs in the domestic work force in white neighborhoods. Substantial numbers were temporary workers in agriculture; and a growing number of women joined the burgeoning industrial work force, as has been carefully researched in Iris Berger's *Threads of Solidarity: Women in South African Industry, 1900-1980*. In 1956, twenty-thousand women all races marched to Victoria to submit a petition against the Urban Act. The petition was formed so that women could carry purses and work in urban areas. The Federation of South African Women organized the march and argued that the place for women is everywhere, not just in the kitchen.

Women continued to join the urban work force, and by the late 1980s, women made up at least 90 percent of the domestic work force and 36 percent of the industrial work force, according to labor union estimates. Women's wages were lower than men's even for the same job, however. In addition, positions normally held by women had long hours and few benefits, such as sick leave; women often were dismissed without advance notice and without any type of termination pay.

**History of South African Women Organizations Role in Promoting Change**

Women became the major source of resistance to many race-related restrictions during the apartheid era, especially the pass laws, which required Africans to carry documents permitting them to be in white-occupied areas. The Women's Defense of the Constitution League, later known as the Black Sash, was formed in 1954, first to demonstrate against such laws and later to assist pass-law violators. Black Sash established pass-law advice centers in many cities and helped reduce sentences or assist violators in other ways.

The African National Congress Women's League (ANCWL), formed in 1943, was able to organize more than 20,000 women to march on government buildings in Pretoria to protest
against the pass laws and other apartheid restrictions in 1955. Their protests eventually failed, however. In the early 1960s, pass-law restrictions were extended to women and new legislation restricted black women without steady employment to stays of no more than seventy-two hours in any urban area. Also in 1964, many senior ANC leaders were arrested, and others fled from South Africa or went underground, and the ANCWl became almost defunct. The ANCWl was resurrected in 1990, after the ban on the ANC was lifted, and women in more than 500 towns and cities organized to press for consideration of gender issues in the upcoming constitutional negotiations. At the insistence of its Women's League, the ANC accepted, in principle, the proposal that women should receive one-third of the political appointments in the new government. Other symbolic gains by the ANCWl have included strong policy stands on women's rights and protection against abuse and exploitation, but translating these standards into enforceable laws proved to be a difficult task.

In 1994, over 3,000 women converged on Dakar to attend the African Women's Preparatory Conference. They came to articulate an African position for the Beijing Fourth Women's World Conference. The resulting African Platform for Action identified several priorities. These included combating the increasing poverty of African women; improving women's access to education and health services, with a special focus on reproductive health; addressing women's relationship to the environment; increasing the involvement of women in the peace process; advancing the legal and human rights of women; highlighting the special concerns of the girl-child; and "mainstreaming" gender concerns within economic and development policy-making by disaggregating data along gender lines. The Dakar conference also noted the emergence of numerous women's groups and NGOs in Africa and the increasingly concrete expression of their organizational potential (T. Manuh, 2003).
Sub-regional and regional affiliations of women also have emerged and have identified key areas for action. They include the African Women's Development and Communication Network (FEMNET), the Association of African Women Entrepreneurs (AFWE), the Federation of African Women Educators (FAWE), and WILDAF. They act as pressure groups, network with each other, form regional and global alliances and aim to direct resources and attention to women and the issues that concern them.

Women's World Banking and AFWE are active in many countries. They address the lack of credit for women entrepreneurs by acting as collateral grantees and providing matching funds to give poor women better credit access. Women's World Banking advocates the establishment of a continental bank for women.

FAWE brings together female ministers in charge of education, university chancellors, permanent secretaries and other influential women to work towards increasing girls' access to education in Africa. It also presses for implementation at national level of the strategies for educators and policy-makers contained in the Ouagadougou Declaration and UNESCO's Priority African Program, which call for a regional consensus on girls' education as a priority for development, outline a regional framework for action to improve girls' educational opportunities and seek to mobilize new resources and partners to support these goals.

**Empowering South African Women in Technology, Science, and Industry**

There is an growing employment trend in South Africa to increase the number of women in engineering, science, and technology jobs. These jobs and degree fields are traditionally held and majored in by men. Issues of culture and gender are still a problem in South Africa and hinder women progression in going into these fields. Currently the numbers of South African women in technology, engineering, and science fields are low. There is a need of strategies to
address women issue. There is a commitment now by government, community business and organizations, and universities to empower South African women to go into the fields of study that are traditionally held by men.

Major businesses in South Africa are starting to recognize the importance of having women to take on these professional jobs and doing their part to increase the number of women in business, technology, and engineering. Vodacom, a major cellular company in South Africa, launched its GPFT (Graduate Program for Females in Technology) after it conducted an analysis of its technical staff complement in 2005, which revealed a shortage of female staff in core business areas. As a result, the company developed the graduate program to encourage and support women to develop the skills needed to work in a technical area in the telecommunications industry. Vodacom offers permanent jobs to those candidates who have successfully gained competence in the core areas of the business after the completion of the first year of the program. Vodacom’s GPFT provides female graduates an opportunity to participate in a three-year program to work and study in the fields of technology and engineering that are needed to contribute effectively to the design, development and maintenance of cellular telecommunications systems. With on-the-job training, candidates also attain business and professional skills to become well-rounded professional business people (Dataweek, 2009).

A community-based group in South Africa called Girls’ Net doing its part to develop women leaders in technology also. Girls’ Net is a South African social and multi-media program that gets girls actively involved in the use of technology for their development. Our aim is to use Information Communication Technologies (ICTs) to help girls realize their full potential. Girls’ Net is a project of Women’s Net and was established in 2003. It builds on Women’s Net’s past experiences of training 12-18 year old girls in rural areas in digital audio
production training during 2002/2003. The training was supported by UNICEF, where girls produced audio spots on themes of their choice, with a view to raise awareness of their gender based experiences. The purpose of the girls' digital audio training was for each training session to generate 3-4 audio spots, produced by the girls, to be disseminated to community radio stations for broadcasting. The training involved basic computer training but the bulk of the time was spent taking the participating girls through a process where they decided which issues they wanted to produce radio spots on, wrote the scripts, recorded the spots, and finally edited the audio material on the computer. The audio spots were disseminated to the members of the National Community Radio Forum. In 2003/2004, Women’s Net implemented the first phase of the Girls Tech Clubs initiative. The first phase of the project targeted girls in 4 provinces: Eastern Cape, Kwa-Zulu Natal, Limpopo and Gauteng.

Lack of access to formal education and training has been identified as a key barrier to women's employment and advancement in society. The public schools and universities in South Africa have to empower young girls in the early stages to see an increase the number women in these male dominated fields. In many African countries, parents still prefer to send boys to school, seeing little need for education for girls. In addition, factors such as adolescent pregnancy, early marriage and girls' greater burden of household labor act as obstacles to their schooling. While most girls do not go beyond primary education, school curricula have not been guided by this reality and their content is not geared to helping girls acquire basic life skills. The female teacher at the primary and foundational levels of education must try to change the traditional culture being taught in these schools. The curriculum also is suffused with gender biases and leads girls into stereotypical "feminine" jobs in teaching, nursing and clerical work. Few women are found in scientific or technical education where they could develop better skills...
to secure better paying jobs (T. Manuh, 2003). In a recent interview, with an instructor at Fort Hare University, about the developing and recruitment of women leaders in science and technology. The faculty member stated that Fort Hare University had a program to recruit young women, from rural areas, to major in fields such science, engineering, and technology. They offer these girls scholarships, and also mentor them why they are in high school by having to experience university life on the weekends. The universities in South Africa are trying to their part in promoting women leaders and to take on more professional and technical jobs and non-nurturing positions such as teaching and social work, even though there is a lack of women in leadership positions on their on campuses.

The trend of having South African women obtain professional jobs will help to decrease some of the overwhelming problems South Africa such as homelessness and child abandonment and increase the economy of South Africa, improve communities, and decrease the percentage of children that have to drop out of school to help out at home.

IV. Instructional Strategies

Instructional delivery formats will include, but are not limited to, guided online instruction, interactive video, off-campus and traditional face-to-face instruction.

A. Lectures will be conducted on the role of South African women roles in industry, science, and technology using multimedia resources and journal articles

B. Lectures on South African women role in education, civil service, and high skilled professions. A classroom debate or discussion to measure what the students have learned during the lecture.

C. Students will complete three journal article reviews.

D. There will be class group discussions on the government, community, schools and universities roles in promoting women leaders in various professions,
E. Case studies will be used to enable students to develop important leadership traits and avoid leadership pitfalls.

F. Other activities will be assigned as deemed appropriate by the instructor.

V. Unit Activities

A. Identify the South African Women Organizations.

The student will utilize the Internet to gather information in order to identify the history and roles the South African Women Organizations have played in gender and race equality. The students will use this information to prepare a presentation of the information.

B. Identify the historical roles and employment opportunities of women in South Africa from the 1950’s- 1990’s.

After viewing and taking notes from teacher made PowerPoint and lecture, the students will write a paper comparing South African women and American women roles and employment opportunities during this time period.

C. Identify cultural barriers that prevent women from taking leadership roles and professional jobs in science, technology and business.

Working as teams of four, the students will identify and research cultural barriers that prevent women from taking roles of leadership. The students will prepare an oral presentation utilizing PowerPoint, Moviemaker, and/or video.

D. Compare and contrast the number of South African women going into the fields of science, engineering, and technology with that of American women.
The students will prepare an Excel spreadsheet reporting the total number of South African college female students who have majored in science, engineering, and technology with that of American female students in the last 10 years. A classroom discussion will center on this report.

VI. Critical Thinking Activities (questions, discussions, brainstorming)


B. Journal Discussions and critiques on a weekly basis

C. Discussion on whether there has really been social change for women in South Africa

D. Debates on how to empower South African women to go into fields such as engineering, science, and technology.

VII. Suggested Research Activities

A. The students will conduct research on the gender equity laws in South Africa and discuss how that affects the number of women in business, engineering, technology and other professions.

B. The students will conduct research and identify a South African women’s organization that has participated in the struggle for gender and race equality.
Unit 2: Women in business, politics, and the Professions  
Sub-Unit Topic 3: The Emerging Role of South African Women in Politics  
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Level: Secondary School

I. Unit Overview

This educational unit is a direct result of the Fulbright Scholars research trip to South Africa in the summer of 2009. The unit deals specifically with the emerging role of South African Women in Politics. Prior to our trip, research indicated that although women in South Africa are considered to be equal with men internationally, the question remains: “Are South African women truly equal with men in the political arena?” Another question which needs to be answered is that of South African women’s involvement in the African National Congress from its conception up to present day. In order to answer those questions, we must first define the African National Congress. Finally, the last question that needs to be answered is “How does the role of South African women and American women in politics compare and how is it different?”. This unit will initially identify the African National Congress and the role of women within this major political party. In addition, this unit will also explain the political struggles South African women have dealt with in the liberation struggle and the current struggles women are dealing with in South Africa. In conclusion, the unit will compare and contrast the role of South African women in politics with the role of American women in politics. This unit is designed for secondary students (grades 9 – 12). The purpose of this unit is to provide students with instruction on the past and current struggles of South African women and their role in politics. Prior to our departure, research was gathered from publications and the African National Congress website. Upon arrival in
South Africa, research was obtained from person interviews with elementary, secondary, and university faculty as well as local leaders within various communities.

II. Unit Objectives

A. Identify the African National Congress.

B. Identify the role of women in the African National Congress from the inception in 1919 through present day.

C. Explain the political struggles that women faced in South Africa before, during and after the liberation struggle.

D. Compare and contrast South African women’s role in politics with that of American women.

III. Unit Content

A. Identify the African National Congress.

April 27, 1994, was a historic day in South Africa. That day marked the end of the apartheid and ushered in a new era for the African National Congress. On that day, the African National Congress won the overwhelming majority in the first ever free election. For the first time blacks and colored were allowed to vote. Although the African National Congress has been around since 1919, this was the first time they had ever had the opportunity to participate in an election.

The African National Congress was the first political party in South Africa established for the rights of non-whites. In January 1912, due to growing concerns about the reduced rights of blacks in South Africa, tribal leaders and religious leaders gathered in Bloemfontein to establish one national organization, the African National Congress.

The 1913 Land Act stripped blacks of the right to own land. As a result, blacks became
migrant workers and were moving into the white areas in order to find employment. Because of this, blacks were required to carry passes in order to work in white areas. In 1919, the ANC began an anti-pass campaign which due to their passiveness was ignored by the British leaders.

The ANC maintained a passive opposition until 1948 when the Afrikaner Nationalist Party was voted in by the white’s electorate. A new wave of militancy and opposition took over the party. The Youth League was formed and in the 1950’s the Defiance Campaign was commenced. This campaign led to the Anti-Pass Campaign. As a result of the Anti-Pass Campaign, which precipitated the Shareville massacre of 1960 where police opened fire on an unarmed crowd killing 69. This massacre received worldwide media coverage and led to even more resistance by the ANC. In 1961, the ANC began an armed struggle against the government.

The armed struggle against the government led to many resistance leaders (Nelson Mandela and Robert Sobukwe to name a couple) being arrested and imprisoned until the 1990’2. The ANC then decided to appeal worldwide for assistance. Because of international pressure and continued defiance, the government introduced reforms to the apartheid system. As a result, the African National Congress is now the political party in power and has been since the first free election in 1994. South Africa just elected ANC member Jacob Zuma as their third freely elected president.

B. Identify the role of women in the African National Congress from the inception in 1919 through present day.

“The beautiful start was made by the ANC (African National Congress) on numbers. The next step is not just to get the numbers but also the quality of the numbers,
not just quality in women numbers, quality broadly with women and men.” (Mtintso, Deputy Secretary-General of the ANC, 1995)

The role of South African women in politics is still being determined. Although women’s position in the political arena has considerably improved since the founding of the South African native National Convention (SANNC/ANC) in 1912, the question of gender equality in politics is still a work in process.

The ANC was founded with the intention to unite the African people with the hope of protecting and expanding African interests and rights. From its conception in 1912 through 1943, women were excluded from full membership in the African National Congress. This is not surprising since the indigenous societies of South Africa tended to be male dominated and patriarchal. Politics were seen strictly as the domain of men, both black and white. All women, regardless of race, were denied the right to vote.

Women, while sharing the same goals as men, did not feel it necessary to comply with the agenda of the ANC. Most women who participated in the resistance chose issues of immediate concern, i.e. unemployment, low wages, housing… African, as well as colored women, were required to carry passes. Opposition to these passes led to the Free State Anti-Pass Campaign. In May 1913, Free State women decided to stop buying passes or permits. The action spread and led to numerous confrontations with the police. Women who refused to carry passes were taken to prison. As the campaign progressed, the SANNC began to admire the women’s achievements. The Secretary General of the SANNC, Sol Plastje, visited the women in prison and tried to publicize the resistance and mobilize support.
By the time the SANNC adopted a constitution in 1919, women had established that they had a role in the political life of the nation. However, the SANNC was not yet ready to admit women with a full membership.

In 1918, at the encouragement of the SANNC, the Bantu Women’s League was organized. The SANNC constitution adopted in 1919 provided that auxiliary membership of the SANNC “should be open to all women of the aboriginal races of Africa over the age of 18 years…” (Constitution of the SANNC, 1918) As the Bantu Women’s League asserted its independence the women’s auxiliary was revived and renamed the Women’s Section. By 1933, women were serving on important conference committees such as the Resolutions and Finance Committee.

In 1937, a national organization was set up called the National Council of African Women (NCAW). The NCAW was not regarded as a political organization, but rather one involved in non-European welfare. The NCAW operated independently of the ANC and the women’s section of the ANC went into decline.

By 1941, the ANC resolved to revive the Women’s Section, and that women are accorded the same status as men. The revival of the Women’s Section was part of the process of reorganization of the ANC. However, the debate of the women’s league continued with the women calling for autonomy and the men wanting greater control. By 1951, Lillian Ngoyi became the first elected female member of the ANC National Executive Committee. In 1984, the ANC placed the term “non-sexist” in their vision for a new South Africa. By 1994, the ANC had enacted several provisions in their constitution in favor of women.
C. Explain the political struggles that women faced in South Africa before, during and after the liberation struggle.

“South Africa is a country of men, by men, for men, rather than a country of the people, by the people, for the people.” (Mrs. Lulu Pinda, 06/09/09)

The quote above sums up the feeling of most of the South African women today. Although there is hope expressed for the future, women’s struggles in the political arena are still ongoing and will continue to be for many years to come.

Since 1901, there have been numerous diverse, ideological women movements. However, the problem with these movements were that there not one powerful, organized women’s movement. Each organization dealt with their own issues, i.e. rising unemployment, poor housing, high rents. Even today, “the ANC Women’s League does not deal with women’s issues. The lack of creative tension is the reason for no overall move for action.” (Mrs. Lulu Pinda, 06/09/09)

Although there was no one powerful organized women’s movement in South Africa, there have been numerous individual women who participated in the liberation struggle as well as gone on toe participate in the political arena. Nontsikelelo Maud Mahluuempu, 68 years old, was the first female mayor of the town of Alice. She participated in the ANC, as well as the PAC. She hid firearms, protected Mandela, as well as others, etc. She participated so much in the liberation struggle, “the political arena was the next logical step.” (Mahluuempu, 06/09/09) She went on to serve six years, (1994 – 2000) as the mayor. While in office, she got electricity for the people of Alice, as well as the first tar (paved) road. After serving as mayor, she went on, along with other activists, to found an old-age home.
Another activist, Joyce Minana, 76 years old, actually spent three years in prison for sitting in a space reserved for European people. After being released from prison, she participated in the 1956 women’s march. This march consisted of some 20,000 women, of all races, marching to the Union Building in Pretoria in a show of women’s unity.

On April 17, 1954, the Women’s Charter was adopted at the Founding Conference of the Federation of South African women in Johannesburg. The purpose of this charter was to declare their aim for removal of all laws that discriminate against women. Today, there are numerous gender equity laws in place. However, the laws appear to be failing at the service level. Women have resisted colonization, formed their own union, and have been pillars for transformation. However, “women are still their own worst enemy. They still feel inferior and see themselves in the nurturing role. Women only organize locally; they must organize nationally.” (Mrs. Lulu Pinda, 06/09/09) Statistics show there are more women than men. However, even when women are in the political arena, they will usually appoint men. The question to be answered is “why?”

“The cultural barriers such as intimidation and negative attitudes hinder women. Also, it is still unacceptable in this culture for women to supervise men. However, there is hope yet. I believe a female president will be in office within the next 10 years and women will be truly liberated.” (Mrs. Lulu Pinda, 06/09/09)

D. Compare and contrast South African women’s role in politics with that of American women.

The struggle of South African women and American women to gain a foothold in politics has been a long one. The right to vote achieved in 1920 was the first major
milestone for American women; the first free election in 1994 for women in South Africa was another. Since those milestones, women have been pushing to gain ground in the political arena.

The cultural barriers of patriarchy have been a problem for both women in America and South Africa. The general notion up until the last few decades has been that women are the “nurturers” and that men are the providers. To this day, there are some that believe a woman has no place in politics. However, that belief is much stronger to overcome in South Africa.

In America, between 1922 – 2006, there have been only 33 women in the Senate. However, American women have had some major milestones. In 1964, Margaret Chase was the first American woman to have her name placed in a national nomination for president. In 1981, Sandra Day O’Connor was the first woman on the Supreme Court. In 1984, Geraldine Ferrarro was the first woman on a major party’s national ticket as vice president. In 2007, Nancy Pelosi became the first woman to lead the House of Representative. And in 2008, Hillary Clinton became the first woman to even come close to becoming a national party’s candidate for president.

In South Africa, women account for approximately 52% of the population however their presence in local, regional and national range from 20 to 40% of the total. The 50/50 Campaign has contributed to an increase of women in politics. Currently women compose 33 percent of the parliament, four of the nation’s provincial leaders are women and the deputy president is a woman.

Women, both in America and South Africa, have made great strides in the political field. However, women in South Africa have a great deal of ground to gain
before they can be on the same level as American women. With the momentum of the women in South Africa, they may just surpass American women in the next decade and have a female president before the United States.

IV. Instructional Strategies

A. Lecture – The teacher will lecture on the history of the African National Congress, the liberation struggle, and the struggle of South African women today to meet all objectives.

B. Role-Play – The students will prepare transcripts based on prior classroom lectures and their own research and role-play the scenarios of the women’s role in the African National Congress and in the liberation struggle to meet objective a and b.

C. Teamwork – As teams of four or less, students will prepare an oral presentation including a PowerPoint and/or video on two influential ladies who were activists and African National Congress members to meet objective c.

D. Spreadsheet – The students will prepare a report listing number of women in politics for South Africa and the United States to meet objective d.

E. Research Project – The students will prepare a ten-page research comparing and contrasting the roles of South African and American women in politics objective d.

F. Technology – The students will use computers, Internet, and software programs for the above strategies to meet objectives a, b, c, and d.

V. Unit Activities

A. Identify the African National Congress.
The student will utilize the Internet to gather information in order to identify key events occurring in the African National Congress. The students will use this information to prepare a synopsis of the information.

B. Identify the role of women in the African National Congress from the inception in 1919 through present day.

After viewing and taking notes from teacher made PowerPoint and lecture, the students will create and perform role-playing activities to demonstrate their understanding of the topic.

C. Explain the political struggles that women faced in South Africa before, during and after the liberation struggle.

Working as teams of four, the students will identify and research two influential South African women who were involved as political activists and were/are African National Congress members. The students will prepare an oral presentation utilizing PowerPoint, Moviemaker, and/or video.

D. Compare and contrast South African women’s role in politics with that of American women.

The students will prepare an Excel spreadsheet reporting the total number of women in parliament for each province of South Africa as well as the number of female senators for each state of the United States. A classroom discussion will center on this report.

VI. Critical Thinking Activities

Students will answer the following questions:
A. How do you think the quotas enforced by the Gender Equality Act for women in South Africa are any different than those enforced by the Equal Employment Opportunities Act in the United States?

B. How does the women’s resistance during the struggle for liberation compare with the civil rights movement of the 1960’s in the US?

C. Why do you think it has been such a struggle for women to gain a place in politics in South Africa?

D. Do you believe a female president will be elected in the United States before South Africa? Why/why not?

VII. Research Activities

A. The students will conduct research on the gender equity laws in South Africa and discuss how that affects the number of women in parliament and other arenas of politics.

B. The students will conduct research and identify at least five women who participated in the struggle and were imprisoned and/or suffered for their resistance.

C. The students will prepare a ten page research paper comparing and contrasting South African women’s role in politics with that of American women.

VIII. Further Reading

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