What value should our society put on “reproductive” work: bearing & raising children, caring for the ill & elderly, maintaining a home & responding to the physical & psychological needs of families?
What are the implications for education of your answer?

Essentialism - the view that man & women have essential natures, natures that are essentially different
• What is the evidence for this view?
• What might be the social implications?
• What might be the educational implications?

Two Versions of Essentialism:
• That men and women are essentially different by nature, and that women are inferior.
• That men and women are essentially different by nature, and that (especially in the moral sphere) women are superior.

Alternatives to Essentialism:
• That men and women are essentially different but only because they have been socialized differently for ages.
• That the differences within genders are so great and the differences between genders are by comparison so small, that it is not helpful to make gender-based contrasts.

Feminist critiques of foundationalist epistemologies:
• The emphasis on rationalism and one acceptable method of arriving at truth excludes many who have legitimate claims to knowledge.
• The emphasis on empiricism ignores the possibility that observation is theory-laden.

Feminist interest in “standpoint” epistemologies:
• These views deny that personal aims and interests weaken claims to knowledge.
• In fact, insiders may have better understanding because of their personal involvement.
  –Women have privileged knowledge of gender issues
  –The poor of poverty
  –Minorities with regard to race and perhaps
  –Students with respect to schooling
In evaluating the validity of someone’s knowledge, how much emphasis should we place on someone’s “experiential credentials”? In other words, we ask, “How do you know?” & judge the force of the argument partly by the passion of expression & the commitment of the speaker.

Standpoint Epistemologies
- What might the implications be for teaching?
- What might the implications be for educational research?
- What might the drawbacks be?

Compare & contrast varieties of feminism to postmodernism:
- Rejection of claims to universality,
- Rejection of objectivity,
- Rejection of “Grand Narratives,”
- Rejection of the subject.

There may be six feminine perspectives on science:
1. Research must avoid objectifying its subjects.
2. Research must have goals other than control.
3. Research must be conducted within a relationship of trust and cooperation.
4. Objectivity may not be the criterion of research.
5. Replicability may not be the criterion of acceptable method.
6. Perhaps we should not discount the importance of anomalies and outliers.

If there is a feminist perspective on science, to what is it due?
- To an essentially different “less rational” female nature?
- To an essentially different “more holistic and humane” female nature?
- To different socialization of males and females?
- Or to something else?

What are the strengths of feminist critiques of epistemology in general and science in particular?
- What are the weaknesses?

Varied feminist approaches to ethics:
- The liberal agenda focusing on rights and justice
- The socialist position of working to eliminate oppression
- Separatists
- The ethics of care

Noddings’ “Ethics of Care”:
• The root of ethics is not in a rational principle but in the universal human experience of having been cared for oneself.
• Kant was right to distinguish between ethics motivated by a sense of duty and ethics motivated by devotion.
• He was wrong to elevate the first over the second.
• Care cannot be separated from dialogue with the cared-for:
  – What does s/he need?
  – Will my help here harm others in the network of caring?
  – Am I competent to fill this need?
  – Will I sacrifice too much of myself?
  – Is the expressed need really in the best interest of the cared-for?
  – How do I care for strangers?
• What does such an approach to ethics do to the possibility of rational considerations in the solitude of an ivory tower?

What does Noddings’ “Ethics of Care” do to the possibility of calculating the proportion of good to harm?

What does Noddings’ “Ethics of Care” do to the possibility of deriving ethics from a view of the “good society”?

How does Nodding’s “Ethics of Care” distinguish between ethics and traditional “women’s work”?

Education for Noddings’ “Ethics of Care”:
• Four components:
  – Modeling
  – Dialogue
  – Practice
  – Confirmation

Compare and contrast Noddings’ view of character education with Denis Doyle’s.