Gender Bias in the Classroom

Sitting in the same classroom, reading the same textbook, listening to the same teacher, boys and girls receive very different educations.

(Sadker & Sadker & Zittleman, 2009)

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Classroom

- Hierarchy
- Arranged by the Teacher First.
- Then Men
- And Women Last.
Gender Stereotypes:
Boys:
- Boisterous
- Unruly
- Academically Able
- Rational
- Socially Uncommunicative
- Better in Math and Science
- Success = Natural Talent

Gender Stereotypes for Girls:
- Quiet
- Polite
- Studious
- Better Social Skills
- Success = Hard Work Not Intelligence
What is Happening to Females?

- Girls are being socialized in ways that work against gender equality.
- Academic success = hard work, not intelligence. Leads to lower expectations for girls as compared to boys.
  - People pleasers, follow directions = better grades in the early schooling years.
  - Girls perceive subjects as science, math or technology as cold, impersonal with little clear application to their live or to society.

- Being shortchanged in the classroom:
  Girls are praised for being neat, quiet, and calm.
  - While Boys encouraged to think independently, be active and speak up.

- Single Sex schools?
  - Freeing voices from girls that are often silenced.
  - Higher self-esteem and more interest in nontraditional subjects.
  - Less likely to pursue stereotypical jobs and or careers.

- College:
  - Girls are still leaning towards stereotypical careers for women: teaching, social work, and nursing.
  - Men are still dominating the fields of engineering, computer science and physics.
What is Happening to Males?

- Boys have a tendency to dominate the pages of textbooks.

- Award winning medals for children’s literature are going to twice as many male authors than female.

- Boys are expected to do better in math and science, sends the message to girls that math is hard and difficult for them.

- Higher proportion receiving diagnoses to Special Education and ADD.
  - 2/3 are labeled Learning Disabled
  - Boys are given greater opportunity to expand on their ideas.
  - Boys are asked harder questions
What Teachers are Doing Without Realizing

- **Target Students = boys**
  - These students usually answer most of the questions, sometimes blurting out the answers.
  - Denies all other student the opportunity to answer.

- **Wait Time:**
  - All Students are not given enough “wait time”.
  - Produces a lack in processing time.
  - By waiting 3 – 5 seconds, more students become engaged and wait time will improve everyone's understanding of the content instruction.
  - Teachers can ask more cognitively challenging questions.

- **Feedback on Assignments:**
  - Girls are given less meaningful and less critical praise on work. Boys are deemed as brilliant, while the girl’s work is praised for its appearance mainly.
  - Girls need feedback to develop deeper understanding of content.

- **Textbook Fairness:**
  - We need to highlight girl’s and women’s achievements and there needs to be a more active participation role within textbooks.
Teachers Need To.....

• 1. Examine their own classroom behavior.
• 2. Be sensitive to ways they provide feedback to their students.
• 3. Pay attention to the time variable. Wait time needs to be implemented.
• 4. Monitor the language they use.
• 5. Be an appropriate role model.
**Title IX**

- Equal Opportunity in Education Act

No person, on the basis of sex, be excluded from participation in any educational program or activity.

Also states that Male and Females will have equal participation in these programs or activities.

- There has been an increase in school participation rates for females in academics and athletics.
- As well as encouraging males to pursue nontraditional courses and career paths.
References


