University of Swaziland

Faculty of Education

(DEPARTMENT OF CURRICULUM AND TEACHING)

EXAMINATION PAPER – MAY 2017

TITLE OF PAPER	:	**THE GENDER-SENSITIVE CURRICULUM**
COURSE CODE	:	**CTE636**
STUDENTS	:	**M.ED 2 – CURRICULUM AND TEACHING**
TIME	:	**THREE (3) HOURS**
INSTRUCTIONS	:	1.There are FOUR (4) questions in this Question paper
		2. Answer ALL QUESTIONS
		3. Marks are indicated against each question

DO NOT OPEN THIS PAPER UNTIL PERMISSION HAS BEEN GRANTED BY THE INVIGILATOR

INSTRUCTION: Read the research article attached as APPENDIX A (Amruthraj R.M

http://www.academia.edu/3861475/Gender_Issues_in_School_and_Class_room_Practice) **to answer the**

questions that follow in QUESTION 1

QUESTION 1

i) What does the author mean by the phrase "Gender bias is insidious because it can be

almost invisible? Use examples from your own practice. (5)

ii) What is the author's main focus in the study? Do you think this focus is still a concern

currently in Swaziland? (6)

iii) Why does the author think that teachers need to be made aware of their gender-biased

tendencies, and the biased messages they unintentionally impart to students every

day? (5)

iv) Identify and explain any two key findings in the study? To what extent would you relate

these findings to your own work setting? (10)   **[26]**

INSTRUCTION: Answer question TWO and Question THREE on the basis of the stated assigned reading attached as APPENDIX B (Sellnow, D. (1993) *Teaching Strategies for a Gender Equitable Classroom).*

QUESTION 2

Explain the following stereotypical traits and discuss their implications for gender inequality perpetuation in the classroom:

i) She is soft-spoken/he dominates the discussion (6)

ii) She is self-effacing (modest)/he is an ineffective listener (6)

iii) She is compliant/he is achievement-oriented (6)

.iv) She is emotional and subjective/he is distant and objective (6)   **[24]**

QUESTION 3

Using the Author's suggestions, discuss any five teaching strategies which may help reduce gender bias in the classroom setting in the Swazi school context. (5x5=25)   **[25]**

QUESTION 4

"...Increasing concern has been expressed about the role of the formal education system in reproducing gender differences and inequalities. Research studies indicate that issues that impact girls' education include discrimination against girls in class rooms, interaction between boys and girls, effect of gender on education and other submerged hidden curriculum..."

In light of the above claim and assigned readings, what suggestions would you make that may be considered for a gender sensitive education in the Swaziland schools? (5x5=25)   [25]

_____**END OF EXAMINATION**_____

Gender Issues in School and Class room Practice

- Amruthraj R.M

Abstract: Increasing concern has been expressed about the role of the formal education system in reproducing gender differences and inequalities. Research studies indicate that issues that impact girls' education include discrimination against girls in class rooms, interaction between boys and girls, effect of gender on education and other submerged hidden curriculum. The present paper focuses on gender issues prevailing in the school settings in Pondicherry (Puducherry). The analysis shows how classroom practices teacher attitudes and classroom structure disaggregate boys and girls. It also put forward few suggestions for a gender sensitive education.

Key words: **Class room practice, Gender inequality, Gender segregation, Gender discrimination, Socialization.**

Research studies indicate that issues that impact girls' education include discrimination against girls in class rooms, interaction between boys and girls, effect of gender on education and other submerged hidden curriculum (Sabbah 2005:15).

Researchers (Longwe 1998, Kimmel 2000, Sadkar 1994 etc.) suggest that schools reflect practices in societies, gender bias and problems are socially and culturally constructed. Cultural and societal practices affect children in schools, especially the way they look at their peers of the opposite sex. Cultural beliefs and societal structures play major roles in how children are raised and how they differentiate between the powers given to men versus those allocated to women.

Increasing concern has been expressed about the role of the formal education system in reproducing gender differences and inequalities particularly since the early 1970s. The present paper focuses on gender issues prevailing in the school settings in Pondicherry (Puducherry).

The Union Territory of Pondicherry

The Union Territory of Pondicherry (Puducherry) comprises the former French establishment Pondicherry, Karaikal, Mahe and Yanam, which lie scattered in South India with a total area of 479 sq km. Pondicherry, the capital of the territory, was once the original headquarters of the French in India. It was under the French rule for 138 years and merged with the Indian Union on 1st November 1954. It is bounded on the east by the Bay of Bengal and on the three sides by Tamil Nadu. About 150 kms south of Pondicherry on the East Coast lies Karaikal. Mahe is situated on the Malabar coast on the Western Ghats surrounded by Kerala.

Territory of Pondicherry has retained its top rank in Educational Development Index (EDI) for primary and upper primary schools in the country (NUEPA 2010).

The qualitative data on gender bias in institutional practices like gender segregation in classroom and playground, gender bias in teacher-student interactions, gender bias in student-student interactions were collected using focus group discussions with students and teachers, observations inside and outside the classroom and interview with head teachers, teachers and students from six schools purposively selected for the study. The names of the schools are not mentioned on request.

Among the six schools selected, two were private schools and four were government schools. School A and B were urban private schools. School C was an urban government school. School D was a rural government school in a predominantly *dalit* (lower caste) area. School E was a rural Smart School, a government school equipped with modern infrastructure facilities including computer and internet facilities. School F was a rural government school.

Gender Bias in Institutional Practices

Gender bias is insidious because it can be almost invisible. But studies points out that the classroom setting reproduces gender inequality. From elementary school through higher education, girl students receive less active instruction, both in the quantity and in the quality of teacher time and attention (Kimmel 2000). Teachers often discriminate against girls, unaware that they are doing so. Discrimination often arises out of ignorance and deeply ingrained way of thinking related to common sense assumptions. Though it is difficult to identify the overt and covert forms of gender discrimination, the researcher tried to give extra care and effort to note invisible and subtle forms of bias in institutional practices. A genuine attempt was made in the present study to analyze the gender bias in class room practices, particularly teacher-student interactions and student-student interactions.

Gender Segregation in Schools

"During the early nineteenth century, many cities began establishing separate high schools for girls. Most communities built one high school, but designated separate entrances for the sexes. The classes were on separate floors in single-sex areas where girls were taught by women and boys by men". Wrote Sherry Lyn Owens et al. in "Are girls victims of gender bias in our nation's schools", while examining the historical struggle fought by women to gain participation in America's school. Matters have not changed much in India even in the 21st century. In all the six schools selected for the study in Pondicherry, there were visible forms of gender segregation inside the class room and school. In five of the schools boys sat on one side of the class room and girls sat on the other side. In the remaining one school girls sit in the front row and boys in the back row. Similarly during school assembly girls and boys are lined up separately. Students remained in the same-sex groups during the breaks and before and after school. Every time students are seated or lined up by gender, teachers are affirming that girls and boys should be treated differently (Chapman 2003). Though not covered under the present study, the researcher found that there are schools in Pondicherry where separate staircases were assigned for

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boys and girls and schools where boys and girls are punished and fined for 'speaking' to each other. Sex segregation both during play and in the classroom polarizes the sexes and contributes to female invisibility. Well-meaning teachers often think they protect girls by this separation when, in fact, they encourage stereotypical pattern of passivity in girls and aggression in boys (Wellesely College Center for Research on Women 1992; Sadkar and Sadkar 1984, 1994). Nonetheless, by separating girls from boys we have to question how they are going to deal with each other when they leave the school. The solution may be to change teaching methodologies, encouraging better involvement of both girls and boys, rather than segregating them. (Teixeira 2008).

Healthy inter gender socialization based on mutual understanding are a crucial aspect in gender equality. Teachers and administrators in schools should ensure that girls and boys are comfortable in each other's company.

Gender Bias in School Practices

Classroom interaction between teachers and students put males in the spot light, and relegate females to the sidelines or to invisibility (Sadkar 1994). In 1992, the American Association of University Women (AAUW) found the females receive less attention from teachers than males, and this attention is often negative or critical, resulting increased self-doubt about their abilities. Dale Spender (1982) believes that sexism is a bias that is practically impossible to eliminate because it is the foundation of education in our male dominated society. Alice Christie states that even in a class room firmly grounded in feminist pedagogy, gender bias was almost impossible to eliminate.

The researcher along with two fellow scholars spent a minimum of three hours for observation in each school where the study was conducted. Along with this, the researcher had conducted purposeful visits and informal interactions with teachers and students in schools which are not included in the study, which contributed further in strengthening the quality of data.

The researcher observed whether boys and girls talk to each other during and after the class hours and also who dominates the physical space of classroom, conversations and discussions during class time and beyond the class hours. Verbal and non-verbal behaviour of the teachers were studied for example whom does the teacher call out more in the class and whether he/she moves around, makes contacts by proximity (to boys or girls) more in the class room were also observed.

Studies reveal that in the early years of their education, girls are equal to or ahead of their male counterparts on standardized and psychological assessments. However upon graduation from high school, girls have often fallen behind their male counterparts. *In Failing at Fairness: How Our Schools Cheat Girls,* which has become a classic work in the field of gender and education, Sadkar and Sadkar (1994) stated that the self esteem of elementary girls remained high even though they received less time, less help and fewer challenges from the teachers. However, the constant reinforcement for passivity results in a decline in their independence and self esteem. Sadkar and Sadkar concluded, as victims of benign neglect, girls are penalized for doing what they should and lose ground as they go through school. (Owens 2003)

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Research has shown that in many developing countries, the onset of puberty results in significant changes in school participation for girls (Bayene, 1989, Herz 1991). Menarche, which is the onset of menstruation and the most dramatic sign of puberty in girls, affects socialization by girls with family and community and may have a significant impact on their education. (Chung et al. 2001) Once a girl has attained puberty she has immediately 'acquired' the capacity to reproduce. So her entire life changes – abruptly, her mobility restricted, she is scolded for jumping or running, she becomes periodically 'impure' and 'untouchable' and many other sex role stereotypes snatch away the few privileges she enjoyed as a child. Since the students included in the study are of pre-puberty age group, it can be concluded that there is no conscious effort to 'protect', 'domesticate', or 'moral police' girls by their parents or teachers.

During interview most of the teachers denied instances of gender discrimination in the classroom. Most of them stated that they did not differentiate between boys and girls in the classroom. They treated both sexes equally and saw them all as students. This approach minimized the researcher's chances for further enquiry. Teachers need to be made aware of their gender-biased tendencies, and the biased messages they unintentionally impart to students every day. Unless teachers are made aware of the gender-role socialization and of the methods and resources necessary to eliminate gender-bias in their class rooms, girls will continue to receive an inequitable education.

In the course of the observation the researcher found that both boys and girls talk equally loudly during class time in all the schools selected. Since the class room is segregated, conversations and interactions often happened between same sex. Inter-gender interactions were minimal both during class time and after class hours. Change in space made no difference, same was inside the class room and outside the class room. Even the sharing for pencil and erasers occurred in the same sex group. In a class room, when a boy didn't have a pencil, the teacher asked other boys to lend one, and when none of them had an extra to lend the teacher enquired the girls and got one for him. In another class room when a boy was in need of an eraser, he asked other boys around him and when he was not able to get one, he asked the girl sitting in the other row, who had kept her eraser in the desk. These instances show that getting the help of the other sex is the 'last resort' and not the norm.

It is interesting to note that boys dominated the physical space of class room and playground. As soon as the bell rang all the boys rushed out to the door and ran to the play ground and started playing with a rubber ball. The play group was large. Many girls never even moved from the bench when the bell rang. Some of them just sat in the class room. Some went out in small groups and played in the verandah with stones or simply ran near the classroom, not to the playground. It was also found during play many boys fell down, but resumed playing as if nothing had happened. It is very much visible that boys are active and aggressive during play time, reflecting socialization patterns that demands aggressiveness from boys. On the other hand girls are socialized towards a feminine ideal. Girls are praised for being neat, quiet and calm, whereas boys are encouraged to be active. The behaviour of boys and girls in the school show the different socialization models in their upbringing. Moreover,

schools accept and also validate ideas about 'boys nature' (masculine identity) and 'girls nature' (feminine identity), 'positioning' boys and girls in different social spaces. Nevertheless, the acceptance of male indiscipline as 'boy nature' and 'good behaviour' as 'girls nature' has been responsible for unequal schooling, social conditions and opportunities for both sexes, limiting their full achievements during their lives (Teixeira 2008:388).

Equality in teaching challenges educators to treat all students equally and to recognize and accommodate different learning styles. Consequently, today's teachers must be sensitized about the damage gender inequity can cause not only to students but also to society as a whole. Qualified educators should be able to recognize and correct the patterns of gender inequity. Schools must strive to assist female, as well as male students by providing a broad and thorough education that is gender sensitive. While educators cannot magically erase all gender inequalities or resolve all of the problems created as traditional gender roles disintegrate, they can achieve significant results by making a conscious and concerted effort to not only avoid gender inequities in the class room, but also by actively encouraging the reverse of such inequities (Davidson 2002).

While discussing about institutional practices, it have to be emphasised that Pondicherry have many positive factors and indicators that are friendly towards girls' education such as presence of more women teachers, separate toilet facilities for girls, boundary walls for schools and travelling facilities. In Pondicherry 64.78 percent of teachers are women. Pondicherry is one among the few states where the percentages of women teachers are above 50 percent of the total strength of teachers. 88.58 percent schools of Pondicherry have separate toilet facilities for girls, while the national average is 53.60. Perimeter walls have been found to increase girl's sense of safety and security. 84.25 percent of schools in Pondicherry have boundary walls while the national average is 51.02. (Source: DISE 2008-09 Flash Statistics NUEPA 2010.). Transporting girls to school and back safely, especially where schools are far away from their homes, is a critical policy measure that has received scant attention. "Students Special Buses" of Pondicherry is one among the best practices in this regard. These statistics are encouraging, since the stage is already set for gender sensitive and qualified educators to recognize and correct the patterns of gender inequality through conscious efforts.

These are few suggestions that may be considered for a gender sensitive education.

Gender Sensitization Training for Teachers

Emphasis must be placed on sensitizing people in the education system to the importance of gender issues and on the fact that it is a long and painful process requiring not only learning of new perspectives but also the unlearning of old ones. Teachers and administrators need to undergo gender sensitive courses in class room behaviour and interaction with students. Teachers should empower students with critical thinking by considering their attitudes and school text books from multiple perspectives and alternative dimensions. For this purpose both female and male teachers have to be trained on these lines.

Eliminating Gender Bias from Text Book and Learning Materials

Studies reveal that reduction in the intensity of gender bias in text book would be considered as a useful indicator of gender equity in society, and in order to attain that, textbooks should present positive role models for both men and women which present men and women participating in a variety of roles and activities, including women in leadership and other positive roles with which they are not traditionally identified. Textbooks should portray fair sharing of domestic work among family members regardless of sex. Textbooks should depict realistic portrayal of life where women and men share the same responsibilities. Non sexist text book should depict professional and technical equity among men and women. Along with this it is imperative that while preparing gender sensitive material for school text books, inputs from gender experts and those who have struggled to bring women's voices and worldview into the academic mainstream to be included.

Impact Study of Gender Bias in Students

It is time to move beyond studies that describe gender bias in school textbooks and gender stereotypical attitude of students and teachers to research that evaluates the level and type of impact of such bias on girls and boys. It is also time to institutionalize the problem by addressing it by paid educators and women's studies professionals rather than activist volunteers and research scholars.

Promoting Common Sports and Physical Education in Schools for both Boys and Girls

Physical education, sports and games have a major role in developing not only sound health but also create a healthy spirit of competition and cooperation and qualities of endurance, hard work and sporting spirit to win and lose with grace. Participation in games and other recreational activities as equals would go a long way in developing a positive self image among girls. It may be pointed out that there are not any remarkable differences in physical abilities or competencies in children of both sexes. As far as possible, boys and girls should be made to participate in all games and physical exercises together.

A Common Curriculum Including Gender, Sexuality, Human Rights and Life Skills Education

A common curriculum for topics that directly affect students' life including gender, sexuality, human rights, and life skills education which uses participatory teaching approaches should be included from the primary school level itself. Such a curriculum which is region specific and cultural specific should empower both girls and boys with unique tools for making informed decisions across several areas of living such as career and vocational choices, marriage, health, nutrition safety and leadership.

Day Care Centre attached to Schools

Day care community centres for children under six can relieve girls from looking after their siblings, there by allowing them to go to school. Along with this all children, girls and boys in the school can be given training in child care in the centre – so that the stereotyping that children must be cared for only by the females in the family, would go.

Providing Safe Transport Facilities for Students

Lack of safe transport facilities to school continues to be a deciding factor for girls' education. Transporting girls to school and back safely, especially where schools are far away from their homes, is a critical policy measure that has received scant attention. "Students Special Buses" of Pondicherry is one among the best practices in this regard. Smaller vehicles should also be arranged for children who live in interior residential areas where bus services are not available. Measures also should be taken to prevent bullying and sexual harassment in school buses.

Training in Self Defence for Girls

Boys and girls are often susceptible to psychological and physical violence in different ways and adolescents in particular can find themselves especially vulnerable to violations of their safety. Along with making sure that children are secure inside and outside schools, self-defence taught from an early stage for all children particularly girls will build confidence in them.

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Teaching Strategies for a Gender Equitable Classroom

Deanna Sellnow
http://www2.edutech.nodak.edu/ndsta/dsellnow1.htm

Introduction

One of the most prominent "buzz words" for educators in the 1990's is teaching for diversity. One component of teaching for diversity concerns the need to reduce gender bias and discrimination in the classroom. North Dakota educators may or may not teach in classrooms comprised of students coming from diverse racial, ethnic, or even religious backgrounds; yet, we all teach students of both genders. The question this paper explores is: How might teachers enhance their classroom strategies to foster gender equity? To answer this question, I begin by identifying several prominent gender stereotypes which continue to pervade our culture and our classrooms. After detailing these stereotypical characteristics and their negative effects on students, I offer several teaching strategies which may help reduce gender bias in the classroom setting. Thus, it is my hope that readers will use this paper as an instructional resource to promote gender equity in their classrooms.

The Stereotypes

Although we might like to believe that gender stereotypes no longer exist in the 1990's, gender stereotypes continue to pervade our society (Borisoff and Merrill,1992). Specifically, we might choose to believe that sexism is no longer an issue in educational institutions. However, Sadker, Sadker, and Klein (1986) discovered that most of the gains in equality achieved in the 1970's have gradually eroded during the 1980's and schools are again becoming more sex-role stereotyped.

Gender stereotypes hurt young women by gradually destroying self-confidence and self-esteem. In a 1990 nationwide poll conducted by the American Association of University Women (AAUW), for example, it was, discovered that:

When elementary-school children were presented with the statement "I'm happy the way I am"--a basic indicator of self-esteem--67 percent of the boys and 60 percent of the girls strongly agreed. But by the time the children reached middle school, 56 percent of the boys but only 37 percent of the girls strongly agreed. By high school, only 29 percent of the girls strongly agreed [compared to about half of the boys]. (Kopecky, 1992, p. 47).

Studies also indicate that these young women are more likely to develop a negative body image, doubt their intellectual abilities, suffer a decline in academic performance, and fall into depression as a result of gender stereotypes (Kopecky,1992,p.47; Levine and Havighurst, 1989, p.457; Pearson, Tumerand and Todd-Mancillas, 1991, p. 71). Why? Jane Quinn, Project Director for the Carnegie Council on Adolescent Development, claims, "It's an awakening process.... And not necessarily a pleasant one. Girls this age are becoming much more realistic about their place in the world" (cited in Kopecky, p. 47). The stereotypes that intelligent girls are less popular, girls should be less adept at math and science, and girls should develop skills involved with sensitivity and relationship-building rather than achievement and autonomy, continue to pervade many American schools.

It is important to note that young men, as well as young women, suffer from the reinforcement of these gender stereotypes. Gender stereotypes hurt young men by persuading them that it is not "manly" to be emotional or sensitive, that there is only one right way to win, and that bigger and stronger is always better. Rice (1987) writes that, especially during the adolescent years, boys strive to be defined in terms of "maleness," including such traits as "ruthless, aggressive, positively sexed, with maternal cherishing aspects of personality at a minimum" (p.405). As a consequence of these gender stereotypes, young men are less likely to feel comfortable expressing emotion. Further, because they have been conditioned into believing there is only one "right" or "best" way, they may learn only to tolerate other perspectives (i.e., races, religions, cultures, and so forth) rather than learning to value them. These boys, then, may grow into unfeeling, uncaring, narrow-minded, and intolerant adults.

Interestingly, each of the stereotypical feminine traits being fostered today also has an enabling masculine stereotype. Since these correlating stereotypes tend to perpetuate each other, teaching strategies which reduce negative effects for one gender also do so for its counterpart. For purposes of clarity, then, these stereotypical traits and the teaching strategies to help foster gender equity are grouped as follows: (1) she is soft-spoken/he dominates the discussion; (2) she is self-effacing/he is an ineffective listener, (3) she is compliant/he is achievement-oriented; and (4) she is emotional and subjective/he is distant and objective.

Obviously, these stereotypical characteristics are not born in the classroom. Rather, they are deeply embedded in our historical roots, our cultural norms, and our families. Moreover, education is not to blame. In fact, educators are very often unaware of how their teaching style may be perpetuating the problems (Sadker and Sadker, 1986). However, educators can employ teaching strategies which encourage movement toward gender equality in our classrooms and, perhaps, beyond them.

First, in terms of the stereotypical characteristics that she is soft-spoken and he dominates the discussion, research indicates that young women learn to be soft-spoken in an attempt to avoid criticism by male counterparts and superiors. Tannen (1990) writes:

Women are believed to talk too much. Yet study after study funds that it is men who talk more--at meetings, in mixed group discussions, and in classrooms where girls or young women sit next to boys or young men.... The men's turns ranged from 10.66 to 17.07 seconds, while the women's turns ranged from 3 to 10 seconds. In other words, the women's longest turns were still shorter than the men's shortest turns (p. 75).

Why do men dominate discussions? Spender (1980) claims that most people feel instinctively that women, like children, should be seen and not heard, so any amount of talk from them seems like too much. In fact, studies show that even when men and women talk equally in a group, people think women talked more. Some of the terms our society uses to describe outspoken female speakers include "...carping, brassy, nagging, shrill, strident or grating. Conversing may be referred to as babbling, blabbing, gabbing or chattering" (Borisoff and Merrill, 1992, p.9). Duberman (1975) explains that young women learn to internalize this socially imposed stereotype and, in an attempt not to be described in these derogatory ways, avoid expressing themselves in any public setting including the classroom.

The stereotypical traits that she is self-effacing and he is an ineffective listener are also deeply rooted in American culture. Lakoff (1975) suggests that part of the reason women's messages are ignored and interrupted is due to the fact that women are taught to use disclaimers and tag questions which reflect uncertainty. Women who choose not to use these disclaimers are often considered unfeminine and brash. The paradox, of course, is that using them is to be considered insecure and weak. Moreover, young women in the classroom are very concerned with making favorable impressions on both male and female peers:

Girls and women feel it is crucial that they be liked by their peers, a form of involvement that focuses on symmetrical connections. Boys and men feel it is crucial that they be respected by their peers, a form of involvement that focuses on asymmetrical status. (Tannen, 1990, p. 108)

Further, Goodwin (1987) discovered in her study of preteen and teenaged boys and girls that, "when a girl's behavior was strongly disapproved, the other girls ostracized her for a month and a half--the ultimate means of social control. In contrast, Goodwin did not find boys excluded for an extended period of time" (cited in Tannen, p. 108).

Young boys are also socialized to be ineffective listeners due, in part, to the cultural notion that speaking is active, powerful, and masculine, whereas listening is passive, weak, and feminine. Tannen (1990) describes a situation where a young boy shares his experience of falling on his bike at the dinner table. When his sister attempts to share her similar experience, she is cut off, interrupted, and ignored. Tannen explains what this teaches to children of both genders:

The net effect is that the boys in the family are learning to hold center stage by talking; the girl in the family is learning to listen.... The act of giving information by definition frames one in a position of higher status, while the act of listening frames one as lower. Children instinctively sense this--as do most men (pp.138-139).

The combination of these stereotypical traits played out in the classroom paints a scene where girls typically don't speak up, and if called upon will likely hedge their comments with disclaimers reflecting uncertainty. This classroom scene is also one where boys dominate discussions and interrupt or ignore any female counterparts who may actually attempt to express their ideas. Young women who do attempt to express themselves do so at the risk of becoming ostracized by their female peers and considered "unladylike" and unpopular by

their male classmates. During a period in life where friends, connections, and relationships seem to be some of the most sought-after goals, behaving in these "unfeminine" ways could be devastating rather than bolstering to self-esteem.

She is compliant/he is achievement-oriented is also a culturally bound stereotypical trait. For girls who have already decided they need to be soft-spoken and uncertain to be perceived as feminine and, thus, desirable by their peers; demonstrating compliant, self-trivializing behavior is a natural outgrowth. These young women allow themselves to be interrupted, smile often, maintain eye contact when listening to others so as to appear attentive and respectful, and avert their eyes when they are the focus of attention so as to avoid appearing brash or conceited.

While these young women are being taught to show respect, foster relationships, and be demure and feminine; their male counterparts are being encouraged to join sports teams, compete, win, take risks, and achieve. Kopecky (1992) clarifies the paradox this fosters in the minds of young women:

At the same time girls are told that pleasing other people--especially men--is key, they're also beginning to realize they've been duped. They begin to see that the real rewards in this adult world go not to those who are "good at relationships" but to those who achieve. They see that the most successful people--usually boys--are the ones who are self-sufficient and autonomous, the ones who take on challenges and risk expressing their opinions.

It is easy to see how these mixed messages can hurt a young woman's self-confidence and self-esteem. Studies have also been conducted, however, which demonstrate how overemphasis on achievement and success can be detrimental to young men (Greene, 1988; Highwater, 1981; Pearson, Turner, and Todd-Mancillas,1991). Boys suffer from this overemphasis on achievement, domination, and control at the expense of learning to value other perspectives, cooperation, and choices. For these young boys, the concept of hearing and valuing other perspectives may never be developed.

Finally, the stereotypical characteristics that she is emotional and subjective/he is distant and objective seem some.. .hat obsolete. Unfortunately, however, most adolescents continue to believe that people who show their emotions are weaker than those who do not. Adolescents continue to believe that women are more empathetic than males and that showing emotion is a sign of weakness (Pearson, Turner, and Todd-Mancillas, 1991).

Strategies for Fostering Gender Equity in the Classroom
Clearly, many negative gender stereotypes continue to shape adolescents' beliefs and behaviors. What, then, can teachers do to begin undermining these negative stereotypes? What can teachers do to encourage women to express themselves in the classroom? And, what can teachers do to foster empathy and listening skills in young men so they will learn to value other perspectives? In short, teachers must create an environment which gives women permission to speak. Teachers can begin to do so by including all students, promoting respect, encouraging different learning styles, and broadening the curriculum.

The most important thing teachers can do to foster gender equity in the classroom is to include all students in the discussion. Including all students can help destroy the stereotypes that she is soft-spoken/he dominates the discussion and she is self-effacing/he is an ineffective listener. While this concept might sound like common sense, Sadker and Sadker (1985) found that "at all grade levels, in all communities and in all subject areas, boys dominated classroom communication...and their participation became greater as the year went on" (p. 54). Further, teachers are usually unaware of this imbalance:

When we showed teachers and administrators a film of a classroom discussion and asked who was talking more, the teachers overwhelmingly said the girls were. But in reality, the boys in the film were out-talking the girls at a ratio of three to one. Even educators who are active in feminist issues were unable to spot the sex bias until they counted and coded who was talking and who was just watching (p. 54).

As one teacher, also an active member of the National Organization for Women (NOW), discovered, even in her classroom discussions evidence of sex bias was irrefutable. She was "stunned" (Sadker and Sadker, 1986, p. 513). College professors who had received awards for their teaching skills, "were surprised to see videotapes showing that half of their students didn't receive a fair share of teacher time" (pp. 513-514). To effectively include all students, teachers must put extra effort into encouraging young women to participate in discussions and, when they do, verbally and observably respect the comments offered.

In order to include all students, teachers need to know their students. This means learning names, backgrounds, and goals. One method for doing so is by using an information sheet on the first day of class. Students can complete such a questionnaire in less than ten minutes' time. Teachers can use it to learn more about each student than a name and a face, and can draw from that data when posing questions during class discussions.

While it is important that teachers know their students, it is also imperative that students know each other and address each other by name in order to foster a gender equal environment. Implement activities where students get to know each other. Icebreakers work well on the first day of class. but they can be offered throughout the first several class sessions to foster an even greater impact. Whenever possible, arrange seating in a way which allows students to see the faces of their classmates. Finally, set a precedent by addressing students by name during class discussions. Then, require students to also address each other by name during class discussions.

Including everyone also means "plate spinning" during lectures and discussions. Too often, a handful of students seem to dominate class discussions. Most teachers would like to hear from all students during class discussions. However, it is often easier and somewhat comforting to know that at least those few domineering individuals will talk during class. Since many young women may be operating under the stereotypically feminine characteristics of being soft-spoken, or compliant, or self-effacing, or any combination of these; it is the teacher's responsibility to ask them specifically, by name, for their opinions. When one person or a group of persons begins to dominate the discussion, the teacher must take the "plate" away from that individual or group and "toss" it to someone who hasn't been heard.

In addition to "plate spinning," some young women may be afraid of sounding silly or stupid. Teachers can try to incorporate one-minute essays at the beginning and end of class to let these students formulate their responses on paper before being asked to share with the entire group. Using a "thought-for-the day" approach at the outset of class is another means by which to let students form their thoughts before speaking them. Finally, distributing "questions for discussion" one day prior to the actual discussion affords soft-spoken, self-effacing students a chance to formulate their thoughts based on the readings in advance.

Promoting respect also means using inclusive language in the classroom. First, teachers must adhere to this rule. Subsequently, it must be expected of students at all times. Masculine pronouns a not neutral or generic. Rather, they help make women feel invisible (Pearson, Turner, and Todd-Mancillas, 1991, pp. 76-102). Offensive comments made by members of either sex toward members of either sex must be addressed. To ignore them is to ignore their existence as well as their offensiveness. Further, to promote respect for all students of both genders, teachers must offer direct and precise feedback--be it praise or criticism--to young women as well as to young men. Studies show that, "at all grade levels, boys get more attention from teachers and receive more 'precise feedback' (praise, criticism, help) than do girls, to whom teachers more often respond with a vague 'uh-huh' or 'OK.' If a boy has difficulty answering a question or completing a task, a teacher will work with him until he gets it right" (Kopecky, p. 47). To foster gender equity, teachers need to offer similar precise feedback as well as encouragement to work through problems themselves to students of both genders. Even precise criticism sends a message of "I know you can do it." All students deserve this kind of support and respect.

Including all students and promoting respect are paramount responsibilities of the teacher who is attempting to foster a gender-equitable classroom Another effective means by which to promote such a classroom is by recognizing and encouraging different learning styles. Reading a chapter, hearing a lecture, and taking a test on the material is only one way of learning. Further, this method promotes individualism and autonomy at the expense of cooperation and diversity of perspectives (Greene, 1988). Consequently, relying heavily on this teaching method actually serves to reinforce the stereotypes of she is compliant/ he is achievement-oriented. To refute this stereotype, teachers might create assignments which force students to work together in dyads or groups to solve problems and meet coursework expectations. By working in small groups (two to five students each) to achieve goals, students may begin to respect other perspectives and approaches to one problem, case study, or scenario. Teachers can also present textbook material in a discussion format, or through role plays, or even through games and simulations rather than relying on a straight lecture style. In doing so, self-effacing and soft-spoken students may feel more compelled to contribute to the group; and achievement-oriented students might begin to discover there is more than one way to solve a problem.

Teachers also need to value the "gifts" students bring to the classroom via their unique life experiences (Lightfoot, 1989). By connecting curriculum content to the real life experiences of the students, students may be more inclined to see the value in what they are learning. Moreover, they may begin to realize that teachers value them and respect the knowledge they bring with them to the group. Life experiences are invariably emotional. By valuing students who contribute to the discussion with emotional life experience examples, teachers can begin to refute the stereotype that she is emotional/he is distant and objective and being emotional is a sign of weakness. When students are aware of the connections between school and real life, real learning takes place. Lightfoot (1989) explains:

For many students, high school stands uncomfortably between intellectual play and real work, and the no man's land stretching between them ends up not to be very appealing. Adolescents are inspired by the immediacy and practicality of work and the adventure and intrigue of intellectual play. One requires tenacity and responsibility; the other invites imagination, analysis and fantasy. Both reward different aspects of their being. Good high schools try to respond to the inevitable tensions that these adolescent needs produce and seek to create environments that will connect their students to the wider world and protect them from it (p. 368)

Connecting learning within the classroom to the world outside helps make sense of the educational experience for students. And, at the same time, it fosters respect for life experiences as a valuable and valid part of the educational process. Further, just as students vary in learning style with regard to lecture, discussion, and small group settings, they also vary in terms of processing information which is read by them, talked about by some "expert," discussed with peers, diagrammed, outlined, or pictorially produced. For example, when students view the model of communication (i.e., sender, receiver, message, feedback, noise, etc.) it may appear to be irrelevant to their real lives outside the classroom. Perhaps, however, they can draw a picture of a real life communication transaction complete with labels from the model. Better yet, they could even do this activity in small groups and present their picture to the entire class. Or, perhaps, each group could role play a hypothetical life scenario demonstrating the communication model in action. In doing so, not only would abstract theory be connected to a real life experience, but also students would work in groups to foster cooperation and valuing alternative perspectives.

In terms of evaluation, testing is still the most accepted format for assessing student learning. Thus, teachers are probably best advised to continue to test students in their courses. However, teachers can create questions which value different perspectives and integrate learning with life experience so as to reduce the risk of gender discrimination. For example, students could be allowed to adjust the wording on true and false questions if necessary in order to make sense of the question. Teachers may need to evaluate students' answers based on the comments they make in the margins. Likewise, multiple choice questions should be flexible. If students need to make comments in the margin as to how they interpreted the wording and why they chose the answer they did, they should be allowed to do so. Again, teachers need to read those comments and award credit where students make a good case for themselves. Using case study scenarios in multiple choice and short answer questions can also help students to apply theoretical concepts to actual life experiences and deepen critical thinking skills. Moreover, students learn that emotional life experiences can be appropriate places for applying theoretical concepts. Regurgitating material is not learning material. Applying concepts to real life examples promotes lifelong learning for students, and offers them proof that their teachers respect and value different perspectives and ways of knowing.

Finally, teachers can expand the curriculum to include discussion of important women to help young girls develop positive role models. In any academic discipline, significant accomplishments have been achieved by women as well as by men. Teachers must take the time to expand the curriculum to discuss the merits of individuals of both genders. Perhaps teachers can even invite female guest speakers of different professions into the classroom. Perhaps teachers can create assignments where students research and respond on a particular woman's work in the field. Perhaps teachers can focus on the history of women in the

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discipline, and generate some conclusions as to why their voices weren't/aren't heard. The curriculum opportunities are endless. It is up to educators to incorporate them into the existing curriculum if gender equity is to be fostered in the classrooms.

The strategies mentioned in these paragraphs are only a sample of what teachers can do to foster gender equity in the classroom. Other strategies exist and more can and should be developed to help include all students, promote respect, recognize different ways of learning, and expand curriculum. The important point is that teachers take the initiative to begin incorporating these and similar strategies to reduce gender discrimination in classrooms.

Summary
While many individuals in our country have taken steps to reduce gender discrimination, it continues to pervade most areas of our culture, including our classrooms. I believe that, more often than not, teachers are simply unaware of how their teaching styles may be reinforcing gender inequities. The goal of this article has been to clarify some of the characteristics of stereotypically feminine and masculine speakers, explain how and why students may be behaving in accordance with such stereotypes, reveal some of the consequences of perpetuating such stereotypes, and propose several strategies teachers can employ to reduce gender bias in the classroom. By clarifying these concepts to educators, more attention can be directed toward developing teaching strategies which foster gender equity. Classrooms teaching styles are not the cause of gender discrimination; however, they may be perpetuating the problem. This article offers readers a first step, or another step, toward creating classrooms free from gender bias.

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