

Gender Equity in the Classroom

Viewing Guide





© 1999, GPN

All rights reserved. No part of this book may be reproduced in any form by any electronic or mechanical means, including information storage and retrieval systems, without written permission from GPN, P.O. Box 80669, Lincoln, NE 68501-0669

*Gender Equity
in the
Classroom*

**Viewer Audience: Educators K-12,
Pre-Service Programs, Staff Development**

Contents

INTRODUCTION	6
VIEWING PREPARATION	7
PRE-VIEWING ACTIVITY	7
VIEWING ACTIVITIES & PROGRAM OVERVIEW	8
Segment 1: Interactions Between Student and Teacher	8-9
Segment 2: Teacher Planning and Management	10
Segment 3: Curricular Bias	11-12
CONTENT SUMMARIES	12-13
KEY FINDINGS	14
ADDITIONAL RESOURCES	15

INTRODUCTION

While the past few decades have seen an improvement in the treatment of females in classroom methods and curricular materials, it would be premature to declare victory and dismiss issues of gender bias. Today, our girls and boys remain the victims of gender stereotypes in text and resource materials. They are also victims of unintended or sexist behaviors by educators. Often teachers reflect varied expectations for children, based on a student's gender, class, race and ethnicity.

Most teachers care deeply about the youngsters in their rooms. They are confident that they treat all their students the same. However, many teachers who analyze their own attitudes and behaviors, discover the subtle and pervasive nature of gender inequity in the classroom.

This program is one tool for that self-observation, analysis and reflection. The program is based around three scripted classroom scenes, each demonstrating significant gender bias. The scenes are then rewritten to show more equitable and effective teaching. This viewing guide provides suggestions on how to effectively use the video in staff development or education classes. At the end of the guide, you will find key background information and additional resources to better prepare you to teach gender equity issues.

VIEWING PREPARATION

- ✓ Preview the video and review several of the support materials in the resource section at the end of this guide.
- ✓ At several points in the video, you will see a graphic: “**STOP TAPE**”. Plan to use these pauses for conversation and activities so that the viewer is engaged and the content (subtle and overt) encourages interaction. You may want to pause the tape for discussion after the content summaries (recapped at the end of this guide) that appear on “chalkboards” during the program. Feel free to stop the video at other points you feel necessary or use only appropriate sections of the video if your audience already has some knowledge of the issues.
- ✓ Be prepared for questions about your school’s policies and practices regarding Title IX (1972) of the Education Amendments which prohibits sex discrimination in educational programs. Discussion may range from gender segregated lines in the hallways to gender dominated classes in math, science, technology, fine arts or special education.
- ✓ Conversations about diversity (sexism, racism, and similar topics) reflect personal, as well as professional experiences. Meaningful discussions are too often avoided with denial (“I treat everyone the same;” “I don’t see color when I see my students.”) or resistance (“It’s the boys who are the victims, not the girls.”) Facilitators are encouraged to skillfully expand meaningful conversations or guide participants towards classroom expectations and interactions. The classroom is where our beliefs and actions must reinforce achievement for all students.
- ✓ If your VCR has a minute/seconds counter, make sure the tape is rewound and reset the counter. The times referred to in each segment give approximate starting times.

PRE-VIEWING ACTIVITY

Before beginning the video, have your students take five minutes to write down an answer and discuss the following question:

- How would your life be different if you were the other sex? Think about your entire day, your home and school life, your interests and careers, your past and your future.

Discussion following this activity often reveals unconscious and unintended expectations or internalized and affirming understandings of gender equity. In any case, the quality of the discussion can help faculty and staff understand the potency of gender bias by focusing on how they have been personally affected (or not) by it.

VIEWING ACTIVITIES & PROGRAM OVERVIEW

note: times refer to approximate starting times of each segment

Segment 1: Interactions Between Student and Teacher

	<u>Time</u>
Program Open	
Dr. Sadker's Introduction	1:42

Suggested Activity

Pause the tape briefly and ask viewers to write down all the biased behaviors they notice during the following scene.

BIASED Elementary Language Arts Class	3:58
STOP TAPE	7:46

Viewer Activity

Stop the tape and have viewers make a list and discuss biased behaviors they found.

The following are possible findings:

- Jesse (female) holds the picture like a prop, unable to see photos herself.
- Teacher remains in front of room.
- Minimal wait time.
- Frequent follow-up probing with males.
- Ashley (shy female) is not drawn out.
- Jesse - Greg: male speaks over female.
- Uneven ration of student/teacher interactions:
Number of responses - male: female - 7:3

Types of feedback:

Acceptance (m:f) - 3:3

Praise (m:f) - 4:0

Discuss any items from the preceding list that were not noticed by the group.

Dr. Sadker:	Wait Time (Before and After)	7:54
	Opportunities to Respond (Before and After)	11:00
	Teacher Feedback (Before and After)	14:07

Suggested Activity

Pause the tape briefly. Ask viewers to write down everything they notice about the following lesson that might be considered more equitable and effective instruction.

FAIR Elementary Language Arts Class Scene
STOP TAPE

18:27
25:44

Viewer Activity

Stop the tape and have viewers make a list and discuss what has changed from the biased classroom.

The following possible findings:

- Teacher holds picture and moves close to all students.
- Provides extended wait time before and after questions.
- Manages enthusiastic hand raisers and “stays” with Kim for higher level questioning.
- Teacher changes positions around classroom.
- Teacher requires alternating reporter task between partners.
- Frequent follow-up probing with many students.
- Brings gender related content “into” the lesson with Noah.
- Ashley (shy female) is drawn out.
- Jesse speaks her turn as reporter.
- Even ratio of student/teacher interactions:
Responses male:female - 9:9

Types of feedback:

Acceptance (m:f) - 2:2
Praise (m:f) - 5:5
Remediation (m:f) 2:2

Discuss any items from the preceding list that were not noticed by the group.

Segment 2: Teacher Planning and Management

Dr. Sadker Introduction

25:48

BIASED Middle School Science Lab

26:22

Suggested Activity

Pause the tape briefly and ask viewers to consider the following questions during the next scene: What are the ways male and female students get different messages about science and achievement? How does the teacher's organizational planning and behavior management support these messages?

STOP TAPE

29:21

Viewer Activity

Stop the tape and have viewers make a list and discuss the biased behaviors they found.

The following are possible findings:

- First group not working as "a group".
- Michelle stereotyped into clerical role because of neat notes.
- Takes the litmus paper from a female and "does" it for her.
- Toby's behavior is "managed" by the teacher.
- Questions (low and high level) consistently asked to males.
- Talks Toby through correct use of litmus paper.
- More positive feedback and remediation to males.

Discuss any items from the preceding list that were not noticed by the group.

Dr. Sadker: Management & On and Off-Task Attention

29:21

Suggested Activity

Pause the tape briefly. Ask viewers to write down everything they notice about the following lesson that might be considered more equitable and effective instruction.

FAIR Middle School Science Lab

36:42

STOP TAPE

40:50

Viewer Activity

Stop the tape and list findings from previous lesson. Discuss the following questions: What were the ways all students got a message regarding equitable expectations and achievement in science? How did the teacher's organizational planning and behavior management support these positive messages?

The following are possible findings:

- Rotation of jobs in group and team work (process) is reinforced.
- Toby must describe and correct safety rules.
- Questions (low and high level) asked to many students, not just volunteers, students asked to provide evidence for answers.
- Provides cues so that students can refocus on tasks.
- Positive feedback, remediation and "deep thinking" questions to all students.

Discuss any items from the preceding list that were not noticed by the group.

Segment 3: Curricular Bias

Dr. Sadker: Introduction of forms of curricular bias

40:55

Suggested Activity

Pause the tape briefly and ask viewers to write down all the forms of curriculum bias they notice during the following scene.

BIASED High School Social Studies lecture

44:14

STOP TAPE

48:24

Viewer Activity

Stop the tape and list findings.

The following are possible findings:

- Invisibility: Lack of women and people of color integrated into lesson.
- Stereotyping: “Edward, you’re into this war stuff?” ... “Julia, instead of silk stockings, what could you make?”
- Imbalance: Male role plays sole point of view.
- Unreality: Absence of diverse and accurate scholarship.
- Linguistic: Consistent use of male terms.
- Fragmentation: Rosie the Riveter assignment isolated from class content.
- Cosmetic: Posters are positive but not evidences within lesson content.

Discuss any items from the preceding list that were not noticed by the group.

Discuss the following questions:

What were the ways the curriculum excluded women and people of color? How did the teacher’s lesson reinforce traditional views of history and the singular importance of males?

Dr. Sadker: Linguistic Bias (*Biased and Fair*)

48:30

Fragmentation (Isolation to Integration)

Content Diversity

FAIR High School Social Studies Lecture

53:25

Dr. Sadker: Summary Suggestions & Conclusion

55:00

Post-Viewing Activity

In order to bring equity and effectiveness to the classroom (and therefore greater achievement to students), it is important to analyze how issues of bias have been a part of one’s own past and present. Then, it will be possible to overcome bias in the future. Integrating gender equity research with education is an ongoing and difficult task. Doing it well, for one’s students, will require vigilant diagnosis, persistent positive actions and collegial support. The final tasks are suggested as beginning steps in a commitment to teach with fairness.

Conduct a brief discussion of the following questions:

- Regarding the experiences of females and males in schools, how are things different today than when you were a K-12 student?
- How are things different for males and females on your campus, than at other schools?
- What might your students say when asked the same questions?
- How have you experienced gender bias in work or school environment?

Help colleagues begin to develop action plans toward a more equitable and effective classroom climate.

- What have you already done to overcome gender bias in the classroom and curriculum?
- As a result of the program and interactions, what will you do within the next two weeks?
- What will you do within the next year?
- What additional information and support do you need from our learning community?
- What further questions do you have?

CONTENT SUMMARIES

Student/Teacher Interaction

Wait Time

Allow 3-5 seconds before calling on or responding to a student.

Teacher Expectations

Hold high expectations for all students.

Quality of Feedback

Use precise, clear feedback and distribute it fairly.

Lesson Planning/Classroom Management

Cooperative Groups

*Assign students to groups
Establish ground rules for participation
Require job rotation*

Learned Helplessness

Avoid short-circuiting students

Curriculum

FORMS OF CURRICULAR BIAS

Invisibility:	<i>certain groups are underrepresented or omitted</i>
Stereotyping:	<i>assigning often traditional roles</i>
Imbalance:	<i>presenting only one interpretation of a people's history or culture</i>
Unreality:	<i>glossing over the problems that plague our society</i>
Linguistic:	<i>using masculine terms instead of gender neutral terms</i>
Fragmentation:	<i>isolating issues related to females and people of color from the main content of the curriculum</i>
Cosmetic:	<i>creating a superficial impression that equality is present</i>

Concluding Teacher Tips

Student/Teacher Interactions

*Allow 3-5 seconds of wait time
Hold high expectations of students
Use quality feedback, distribute it fairly
Analyze interactions with students
Videotape a lesson*

Lesson Planning/Management

*Allow students to learn tasks themselves
Assign students to groups
Establish rules for participation
Rotate jobs within each group
Apply classroom rules fairly
Create a safe classroom environment*

Curriculum

*Use gender inclusive language
Encourage students to take higher level courses
Analyze curricular materials for bias and supplement as needed
Diversify classroom resources*

KEY FINDINGS¹

- The typical classroom can be divided into three groups:
 - Salient students:* Typically only one or two students receiving twice or three times their fair share of attention (both positive and negative behaviors can create a salient student).
 - Silent students:* These students have no interactions with the teachers and become passive spectators (about 20% of the typical class).
 - Nominal students:* Typically interact once, or at best, twice with the teacher. They are nominally participating.
- Usually males receive more teacher questions than females.
- Males are more likely to call out or act out, demanding and receiving teacher attention.
- Segregated seating patterns reinforce unequal teacher attention. About half of America's classrooms are characterized by gender segregated classrooms.
- Boys are more likely to be called up to the front of the room to do demonstrations (e.g. science demonstrations).
- Boys are more likely to be disciplined than girls, even when the misbehavior is identical.
- Girls are more likely to be praised for the appearance and neatness of their work.
- Teachers are more likely to offer boys specific feedback on their work, including praise, criticism and remediation.
- Boys are more likely to receive attributions to effort and ability, teacher comments giving them confidence that success and competence is simply a matter of applying themselves. Girls are often told, "It's okay, as long as you try."
- School textbooks and supplemental resource materials tend to be filled with male protagonists and stories. Teachers suggest that boys will not be interested in the lives or experiences of girls; males are the *fathers* of our history; it's hard to find sources of curriculum that are inclusive. These beliefs fuel curriculum bias and reinforce gender disparities.

¹ For a comprehensive summary of this research, see *Failing at Fairness: How Our Schools Cheat Girls*. New York: Sadker, M. and Sadker, D. (1995). Touchstone Press; David Sadker, *Gender Equity: Still Knocking at the Classroom Door, Educational Leadership*, Vol. 56 No. 7, April 1999; Myra Sadker, David Sadker, and Susan Klein, *The Issues of Gender Bias in Elementary and Secondary Education, The Review of Research in Education*, Vol. 17, No. 7, 1991.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

- **RESEARCH AND PUBLICATIONS**

American Association of University Women

111 16th Street, NW
Washington, DC 20036
202-785-7700
email: info@mail.AAUW.org

- **CURRICULAR MATERIALS**

National Women's History Project

Director: Molly MacGregor
7738 Bell Road
Windsor, CA 95492
707-838-6000
email: NWHP@aol.com

Women's Educational Equity Act

Director: Katherine Hanson
Equity Resource Center
EDC 55 Chapel St.
Newton, MA 02158
617-969-7100
email: katherinh@edu.org

- **VIDEOS**

Dateline

NBC News Audience Services
P.O. Box 2284
S. Burlington, VT 05407
800-420-2626

Failing in Fairness Part 1 and 2

MD Statewide Equity Resource Center

University of Maryland
J.M. Patterson Bldg., Rm. 3106
Rockville, MD 20852
301-738-7113
www.sadker.org

Notes

Notes

Notes

Notes



P.O. Box 80669
Lincoln, NE 68501-0669
PH: 800-228-4630
FAX: 800-306-2330