School Sexism and its Educational Implications

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SCHOOL SEXISM AND ITS EDUCATIONAL IMPLICATIONS

Michelle Ann Frantz

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ABSTRACT

Despite American education's claim that it is an equalizing force, a body of research documents that females do not receive equitable experiences in school when compared to the same experiences of boys. This study investigates many of the forces that have contributed to the persistence of gender inequity.

This study then examines feminist theory, the history of female education, and current research on school sexism. Next, the results of surveys given to a group of secondary educators and another given to a random sampling of high school students do show that gender inequities still occur even though claims to the contrary exist.

This study recommends that educators pursue in-service training to recondition themselves so that they may more equitably present material in the classroom and thus avoid promoting cultural gender bias.
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CHAPTER ONE

Problem Statement

The educational system in America does not adequately or equitably prepare girls to take a formidable position in society once they graduate or leave school. Girls matriculate or drop out with a much lower self-concept than do boys, and they are therefore less likely to be productive in life (Gollnick & Chinn, 1990). Recent studies document the negative learning experiences girls encounter during and after twelve years of attending public schools (AAUW, 1992). Educators, however, need not accept full responsibility for such circumstances; other forces in society both subtly and blatantly foster gender inequity and sexism (Appendix A). But in order for people to change, schools must accept a civic duty to re-educate all citizens (Gollnick & Chinn, 1990). Schools and communities must work to address and correct this inequity.

Importance and Rationale of the Study

All Americans have the opportunity to participate in the constitutional promise of justice for all. Equity, however, does not yet exist for all people. Women have predominantly found themselves barred from more successful or productive lives outside the traditional home due simply to their gender.
School Sexism

Society and education have steered women away from courses that would bring them prosperity and greater self-esteem. In essence, society, and thereby education, have fostered stereotypical lifestyles for American females, currently 45% of the workforce (Fullerton, 1989). The most recent statistics from the Bureau of Labor Statistics on median income in the United States, 1987, stated that male managers and administrators earned $667 per week, yet by comparison, female executives, administrators, and managers earned $475 per week (French, 1992). Further, recent studies by the AAUW (1992) clearly show that the current system denies half of our population the opportunity to improve themselves for the next century.

In areas of science, mathematics, and technology, females have not been receiving equal attention and instruction (Women, 1990; Flam, 1991). A successful educational process must not give more attention to one part of the population versus another. For educators, the proper place to begin addressing the problem is through teacher education courses at both the undergraduate and graduate levels, plus through intensive in-service teacher workshops (Mckune & Matthews, 1978). It is also necessary to continually monitor current classroom practices in order to root out sexist teaching methods, whether they be blatant or subtle (Podesta, 1991). A school's curriculum must promote gender fairness both in its written and hidden agendas. Schools can no longer avoid the
intent of Title IX by affording female students a second-class status (AAUW, 1992).

Background of the Study

Debate concerning gender status is assuredly not a new issue. Currently, society still fosters a patriarchal make-up that encourages male dominance and female submission. Women, 53% of America's population, are becoming much more vocal and militant (French, 1992) in their agenda to be recognized as equal to men in life's opportunities. Systematically denied access to higher paying jobs done by men, women even find themselves working for 75 cents to each dollar earned by a man in a similar job. Cultural and gender bias have promoted such inequities (AAUW, 1992).

American women began their protest prior to the Civil War, which resulted in the Seneca Falls Convention in 1848, where women "first organized to fight against their oppression" (Gollnick & Chinn, 1990, p. 115). Later in the nineteenth century, feminists fought for protective legislation; unfortunately it provided little equity. Suffragettes then secured the voting rights in 1919. Not until the 1960's, though, did women raise Americans' consciousness to the point where the Congress approved the Civil Rights Act of 1964 which prohibited discrimination based on race, color, national origin, or sex. Since that moment, huge changes for women's rightful status have occurred, yet
much more work is necessary to establish parity of the genders.

Change virtually never happens without pain. For women, moving from an historically housebound existence into the world of work has brought to light the many disparities that exist for them. For those who entered the 70s full of hopes for a better life, they experienced the growing pains of an emerging self-esteem that is necessary in order to succeed in their work. Women also ran into the proverbial brick wall...now supporting a glass ceiling. Thus, they recognized the need for more education to ensure and improve their situation, but education has failed them. It, too, reflects the inequities of society as a whole. Female students are not receiving fair treatment in the academic arena, a place where nothing should matter but the desire to learn. They should not be content with the status quo.

The inception of Title IX in 1972 clearly made it illegal to treat students differently or separately on the basis of sex. Title IX reads, "No person shall, on the basis of sex, be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any education program or activity receiving federal financial assistance" (Gollnick & Chinn, 1990, p. 140). Yet, studies show that males receive up to three times more teacher attention in the classroom than do females (Miller, 1993). Such sexism reduces female self-esteem and motivation.
Congress is currently promoting the Gender Equity in Education Act (HR 1743) that would set up an Office of Gender Equity at the Department of Education. Among other concerns, "It would create teacher training programs to identify and eliminate inequitable classroom practices...and encourage the recruitment of women math and science teachers as role models" (Zuckman, 1993, p. 1028). In the meantime, all educators should continue to improve the learning climate so as to maintain a non-sexist framework toward curriculum materials and attitudes (King, 1990). Achievement scores, curriculum design, self-esteem levels, or staffing patterns all show evidence of gender disparity (AAUW, 1992). Since women's demonstration of their potential decreases throughout the schooling process and by junior high self-esteem declines (Sadker, 1976), educators must address the problem and re-evaluate classroom practices and attitudes.

Statement of Purpose

The purpose of this study is twofold: first, to investigate the current literature on gender equity in the classroom, and second, to assemble materials that will assist educators in becoming more gender aware and fair in their treatment of students. More specifically, this study will enhance understanding of teaching methods that can improve the classroom climate so that all students receive an equal education.
Limitations

This study will not attempt to assess all curricula to evaluate any or all gender inequities contained therein.
CHAPTER TWO

Literature Review

Feminist Theory

American culture is a derivative and an amalgamation primarily of western European thought. The initial laws and theories of this country have their roots in the patriarchal societies of the "Old World" (O'Reilly & Frankel, 1982). Those men who framed the constitution of the United States based their revolutionary ideas on male needs and wants of the Enlightenment Era. The Declaration of Independence states, "All men are created equal," a conscious exclusion, thereby, of half of this country's population. No legal, governing body in the United States, most importantly the Supreme Court, has ever seen fit to reword or amend such an important document in order to include the rights of females (Cohen, 1988). Thus, it has been a constant struggle for women to assert, defend, and implement their status throughout all elements of society.

Colonial Standards

The revolutionary fervor felt in France and Europe emerged in female written discourse. Mary Wollstonecraft (1792) of England wrote a landmark essay, "A Vindication of the Rights of Woman," whose "central argument is that women
remain enslaved because of a corrupt process of socialization which stunts their intellect and teaches them that their proper purpose in life is to serve men" (Donovan, 1985, p. 8). Her essay served as one of the earliest feminist treatises, and it greatly influenced all later arguments. Her ideas found an audience in America where some colonial women were also not content with their non-person status. Abigail Adams, for example, in 1776 wrote a letter to her husband where she urged him to "remember the ladies" and "put it out of the power of the vicious and the lawless to use us with cruelty and indignity" (Adams, 1986). Thus, even during the birth of America, some women recognized that their status would not change even though politicians were promising a new world for all.

**Post-Revolutionary Standards**

The continued growth of the colonial population and its emphasis on supposed equality brought new thoughts on the concept of female equity. Sarah Grimke's *Letters on Equality* (1838) and Frances Wright's *The Course of Popular Lectures* (1834) showed the terrible waste of female talent in society. They pointed out that women have great abilities to be critical thinkers—a concept denied by almost all men—yet men had consigned them to the home with its domestic chores and limited freedom of personal expression. In essence, then, husbands were overbearing, unfeeling tyrants and wives were
their mute, obedient subjects. Both women found this concept detestable (Donovan, 1985).

Not all post-revolutionary women, however, were totally dependant upon male support. For example, the industrial revolution offered women jobs in woolen mills. The work was backbreaking and the wages were poor, but Cott (1972) points out the "women's entry into the realm of paid labor pointed a way out of women's economic dependence on men" (p. 13). This eventual capitalistic exploitation of women, though, did offer them an alternative to the home. As one young mill girl said, "To be able to earn one's own living by laboring with the hands should be reckoned among female accomplishments" (cited in Cott, 1972, p. 13).

The domestic sphere of women also underwent some changes. They, by dint of a yet pioneering country, worked to sustain male efforts on farms and in trades in order to maintain the family's existence. Marriage meant to become a co-worker beside a husband—if necessary, learning new trade skills in butchering, silversmithing, printing, or upholstering—employing whatever special skills the husband's work required (Rossi, 1973). The continuing westward expansion also relied heavily on women's skills and determination, especially if she found herself widowed, for then she had to do the work required to keep her family alive (Cott, 1972). Men, however, did not always greet such independence with approval.
Nineteenth Century Standards

So during the early nineteenth century, thoughtful, crusading women began a serious fight to control their persons, property, earnings—and to achieve the right to vote. They also closely allied themselves to the emerging anti-slavery movement, a social stance that taught them "corporate expression of their political will" (Rossi, 1973, p. 263), hitherto a domain entered only by men. Elizabeth Cady Stanton's "Declaration of Rights and Sentiments" (1848) established a blueprint for the awareness and inception of such goals (Foxe-Genovese, 1992). She, Susan Anthony, Lucretia Mott, and other crusading women convened the Seneca Falls Convention in 1848, which proved to be a watershed for the emerging feminist cause in this country. Their group of over 100 people signed the document that included the following: "The history of mankind is a history of repeated injuries and usurpations on the part of man toward women, having in direct object the establishment of an absolute tyranny over her" (cited in Rossi, 1973, p. 416). The true "battle of the sexes" in America heard its first shot at that church in a small town in New York.

As the fervor, debate, and setbacks continued, the remainder of feminist activities in the nineteenth and early twentieth century continued to focus on suffrage, temperance, education, and the social evils of industrialization. Florence Kelley and Jane Addams were among those concerned for the working class, while another branch of feminist theory,
espoused by Emma Goldman, Charlotte Gilman, and Margaret Sanger, promoted a radical socialism (Rossi, 1993) that would forever alter a woman's perception of her role in society.

Twentieth Century Feminist Responses

The twentieth century has seen great advancements for the causes of women in all spheres of life. The passage of the Nineteenth Amendment in 1919 finally secured the dreams of suffragettes who had won the right for all American women to vote. The struggle, to many, seemed to be over.

Some theorists, however, began to analyze the "place" of woman against certain new concepts that tried to define life in the twentieth century. Two influential philosophers, Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, challenged the existing class system in the *Communist Manifesto* (1848), *Capital* (1867), and *Private Property and the State* (1884). Their brand of socialism showed that culture and society find root in material or economic conditions (Donovan, 1985). With that in mind, that status of women found a new voice through the theorists' belief in class consciousness. In essence, class members could understand their conditions when viewed against the capitalist powers and proletariat struggles. This concept spoke directly to the man/woman conflict of determining a woman's "place": she was a tool of unfeeling rulers.

Engel's *Origin of the Family* (1884) developed an interesting theory. He believed that, historically, a
matriarchate once controlled ancient households, yet a patriarchy overthrew it in order to assume the more dominant, productive role. Once accomplished, this denigrated women to a subservient social role. Engel's solution to the problem of the new "women's oppression is to urge that women fully enter the public work force, thus eliminating their confinement to 'private, domestic labor'" (Donovan, 1985, p. 75).

Feminine theorist and contemporary anthropologist Karen Sacks agrees that he is correct: "The spouse who owns the property rules the household" (cited in Donovan, 1985, p. 75). Thus, Engels believed that women needed to enter the workforce in large numbers and engage in a creative pursuit of personal self-esteem in order to make society more equitable.

Another powerful male voice, Sigmund Freud, both helped and hindered the sustainment of a twentieth century female consciousness. In one respect, Freud's work raised interesting and shocking theories about the development of women, but they were ultimately patriarchal (Klein, 1946). His narcissistic tunnel vision emphasized the Oedipal connection, much to the detriment of women's status. While trying to show woman as a purely biological creature, he, in effect, relegated her to a life of home and family, versus the civilization of men's public world. This is nothing less than female misogyny (Donovan, 1985).

Karen Horney, an influential psychotherapist, revised Freud's theories by "stressing security needs over sexual and
aggressive drives, by calling for alteration in what she considered a male-biased view of feminine psychology" (Mcwilliams, 1992). Hannah Lerman (1985) says that because assumptions about the inherent inferiority of women are at the core of the structure of psychoanalytic theory, Freud's concepts have little clinical usefulness. He fails to form a psychodynamic theory of personality that views women positively as a central force in the external world. Other feminists such as Kate Millet, Viola Klein, Shulamith Firestone, and Clara Thompson believe sexist ideology is at the root of Freud's theories (Donovan, 1985).

A third theory developed by a male that has provoked critical twentieth century analysis of feminist thought is existentialism. This concept found root in the thinking of Georg Hegel. He viewed the psyche as a self-alienated spirit from which all consciousness derives (Moore, 1992). Martin Heidegger, a later advocate, conceived of the self as torn between two modes, the inauthentic and the authentic (Donovan, 1985). Jean Paul Sartre, however, developed the idea of the collective "Other" as a "scapegoat or repository of the dominant group in society" (Donovan, 1985, p. 121). Sartre's companion, Simone de Beauvoir (1949), classified women as the "Other," a reference to their non-status in the eyes of men. She proposed for women to enter creative careers outside the home in order to feel whole and secure with themselves. True liberation and a positive self-esteem will then evolve.
Helen Peters (1983) sees the existential philosophy with its themes of freedom, choice, and decision as positive since it recognizes woman as a being in control of her social role. Donovan (1985) cites many feminine existential advocates, among them Susan Griffin, Rosemary Ruether, Meredith Tax, Sandra Bartky, and Dana Densmore, who find the concept a validation of women's right to become witnesses for their own body of feminine expression.

The Women's Movement

Feminist viewpoints literally took off after the publication of Betty Friedan's (1963) *The Feminine Mystique*. Most feminists credit her with launching the Women's Liberation Movement which began with her establishment of the National Organization of Women (NOW). Together with authors and activists such as Kate Millet, Susan Brownmiller, Germaine Greer, and Gloria Steinem, she focused national attention on gender inequities that existed throughout all of America's social system (Cohen, 1988). The Equal Rights Amendment failed to pass, yet the Civil Rights Act of 1964 legislated that no one would face discrimination based on religion, race, or sex. Unfortunately, Susan Faludi's (1991) *Backlash* shows a concerted attempt by the media, the New Right, and Reaganomics to thwart contemporary feminism and women's quest for equal treatment. Likewise, Marilyn French (1992) cites many
instances of a national and global effort to keep women poor in both money and spirit. The fight goes on.

Summary

From those early protests in the sixties to the current time, women have secured rights that Mary Wollstonecraft, Elizabeth Cady Stanton, and Jane Addams would barely have been able to imagine. Women are now actively engaged in most aspects of society. Two women sit on the Supreme Court: two women, respectively, serve as the Surgeon General and Attorney General; women astronauts circle the earth; a woman was a candidate for vice-presidential.

Women do not, however, enjoy equity with men in many important areas. The AAUW (1992) cites statistics that show "60 percent of all women working outside the home are working in clerical, service or professional positions, and more than 60 percent of these professional women are in female-intensive fields such as school teaching and nursing... occupational segregation has meant disproportionate employment." And, as for women's wages, "Women with eight or fewer years of education earn only 66 percent of the wages of similarly educated men; even women with five or more years of college make only 69 cents for every dollar earned by their male colleagues with an equal number of years of education" (p. 4).

These statistics show that in order for women to be a success both in and out of the home, it is imperative for them
to have access to educational opportunities that will provide them with the necessary background to be competitive in the workplace.
CHAPTER THREE

Project Components

This study has five components. First, it looks at the historical standards of female education in the United States. Secondly, the study describes the presence of educational gender inequity as it exists in society and the classroom.

Third, the study examines the effects of sexual bias on female students.

Next, the study presents the results of a survey this research gave to a group of secondary teachers to assess their attitudes concerning the presence of gender inequities in their educational milieu.

Finally, the study concludes with the results of a survey concerning gender bias on the part of teachers given to a sampling of high school students.

The expected outcome of this study is to corroborate the results of the surveys to the available literature discussed herein on school sexism.
Part One

Standards of Female Education

America's colonial society needed people with strong backs, diehard wills, and a sense of loyalty to God and family. To merely survive in the harsh, new land required a stoicism rarely seen today. Men and women worked side by side to hold their families together, yet in many aspects of their lives not all women experienced equality.

Men assumed the traditional roles of head of household and primary wage earner—whether as a farmer, tradesperson, or professional. It was up to the women to organize and run the domicile, take care of the children, and ensure that the instillation and maintenance of Christian thought should thrive within the home. It thus became her domain to learn rudimentary reading so that Biblical passages could serve as the primary learning tool for her young charges. Protestantism, then, was the impetus for this earliest educational experience (Sklar, 1971).

Once children learned to read, social mores determined their continuing education. Both boys and girls could find themselves apprenticed for the purpose of assuming their relegated positions in life. Boys learned trades; girls learned domestic duties; they all learned Christian morality.
(Gordon, 1990). Most communities saw no necessity to educate women beyond the basics (Stock-Morton, 1990). In later colonial days, boys who showed an intellectual bent could eventually go on to study the classics, yet women had only home, marriage, and children as life options.

In the South, only the children of wealthy landowners could expect any advanced learning. Private tutors hired for the male children often also taught the females--but only up to a point. Social dictates did not allow women access to Greek, Latin, and advanced mathematics; only young men could engage in such elevated subjects. Most people simply thought women were far too delicate intellectually and emotionally to grasp higher learning. Again, women could learn the basics, but the only additional curricular offerings were painting, French, literature, writing, music, needlework, and other "becoming" social graces (Kerber, 1983).

During the eighteenth century, however, social forces began to evoke change in the educational status of women. Some ambitious women began "dame schools," giving private instruction in their homes (Kerber, 1983). These schools often provided very rudimentary content and were more likely to be on the par of fashionable boarding schools, but their impact continued to expand. They started the first institutions that women would attend for the purpose of attaining an education outside of the home. They also allowed women to leave the home and begin careers.
Personages such as Catherine Beecher, Lucretia Mott, and Emma Willard, educated at such establishments, lobbied state legislatures to form private female seminaries in the early nineteenth century (Kerber, 1983). They were educational pioneers for advocating female literacy beyond the kitchens and the drawing rooms. Their students then went on to found their own chartered schools in all areas of the country (Sklar, 1971).

American men had mixed feelings about the emerging presence of educated females and women teachers. On one hand, people still continued to sanctify and elevate the woman's moral role as wife and mother, yet on the other side the burgeoning industrialization of America allowed some social aberrations. After all, women, still not viewed as intellectually or morally equal to men, could not expect wages to be equal to men's. Thus, a female teacher, by law required to be unmarried, could expect to earn far less than a male teacher. Sklar (1990) says that in the 1840's in Maine a man received a monthly salary of $15, compared to a woman's of $5. By 1890, two-thirds of American teachers were women, and although wages had increased, their financial equity had not much improved.

American females also began to enroll in high schools during the nineteenth century. Sklar (1971) states, "Separate high schools for girls were economically wasteful [so] as the number of public high schools increased, girls were generally admitted and given the same course of study as boys" (p. 560),
thus female attendance in coeducational institutions increased. In fact, "by 1890 twice as many girls as boys graduated from high schools" (Ibid.).

Kerber (1983) discusses the advent of women's colleges, specifically Vassar, Smith and Wellsley, and Bryn Mawr in the latter part of the nineteenth century. Yet, women continued to face strong social resistance to such an educational track. Gordon (1990) refers to the number of private and state institutions that began admitting women between 1860 and 1890. The women who attended such schools found themselves still barred from many curricula such as medicine and law, yet they continued to make inroads into the patriarchal halls of academia.

As the twentieth century has progressed, compulsory education laws have prompted schools to develop courses that appeal to women, or what the male-dominated powers have determined they should take. High schools and colleges began to offer vocational courses such as home economics, nursing, and typing to accommodate the growing enrollment of female students. Essentially, however, such programs still fostered stereotypical roles for women as mothers and helpmates. Stock-Morton (1990) believes these classes help foster educational inequalities.

Since the Women's Movement of the 1960's began, women have become much more visible in non-traditional courses. Females study to become scientists, doctors, and lawyers, once the sole milieu of men. Studies show "that the subjects women
study in school make a difference. Wage differentials favoring men are considerably less—or disappear altogether—for women in their early thirties who have earned eight or more mathematics credits in college" (AAUW, 1992, pp. 13-14).

Even though the horizon appears rosy for the contemporary female student, all is not entirely well. Despite increased opportunities, the age-old tradition of male dominance and female inferiority continues to exist in American schools. It is tempting to speculate what the next 100 years might bring to females in schools, but the reality of gender bias still exists in America's educational system. The next section will address some of those inequities.

Part Two

Educational Gender Inequity

The Woman's Liberation Movement of the sixties and seventies affected all areas of female life. It brought legislation that ensured women in the workplace a standard of equality on par with men. No longer, for example, could newspapers advertise a job solely open to "males" or "females" (Cohen, 1988). The patriarchal makeup of American society now had to listen and adapt—not always done accommodatingly—to the emerging strength of the female's social power.

The growing strength also surfaced in new educational legislation. The passage of Title IX forced educational
institutions to reevaluate and change outdated practices that limit the opportunities they offered women. Since "education is seen by many people as a key to upward mobility and success in adulthood...the occupational roles that individuals pursue in adulthood are greatly influenced by their education in elementary and secondary schools" (Gollnick & Chinn, 1990, p. 136). Thus, without a gender fair educational opportunity, women will find themselves confined to sterotypical, low-paying jobs that offer little career advancement or financial security. Gollnick & Chinn (1990) further believe that equal treatment of students from kindergarten through college will more adequately encourage all children to explore available career options.

Despite the laws (Stromquist, 1993), studies conducted by many educational researchers (AAUW, 1992; Sadker, M. & Sadker, D., 1982, 1985) clearly show that sexist teaching still pervades the nation's schools. King (1990) sees this sexism as based in tradition and as a result of unexamined actions and practices. "Negative effects of differential treatment on women include lowered self-esteem, limited educational career goals, inadequate vocational and career training, physical and intellectual underdevelopment, and ambivalence about success and leadership" (Sadker, M., & Sadker, D., 1982, p. 54).

Research also demonstrates that even though educators are aware of Title IX's mandate, sexist teaching still continues to "grind away, steering girls forcefully into outdated female roles" (Schrof, 1993, p. 42). Women, for example,
predominantly still nurse; men continue to dominate engineering. Nelson (1990) believes educators "must help provide students with the ability to choose their lifestyles free from sex-role expectations" (p. 61).

King (1990) cites six areas wherein students encounter gender bias in the schools:

1) linguistic or language usage;
2) stereotyping of roles, attitudes, values, behavior;
3) omitting women's contributions by systematically excluding any mention of them;
4) presenting only the male perspective;
5) portraying an unrealistic American life— one with only two-parent, untroubled families; and,
6) fragmenting contributions of women into special sections vs. total inclusion.

Language usage can often be sexist. Teachers need to look for texts that are gender balanced (Nelson, 1990). Most works of fiction, for example, contain a majority of male characters and animals (cited in Mader, 1994). The message sent, then, is that boys are the "doers" in life; girls are to simply sit and watch. "What students read affects their attitudes, personality development, academic achievement, and career aspirations and attainment" (Wirtenberg, 1980, p. 3).

By displaying stereotypes in a classroom, teachers do not serve their students well or exemplify the positive values necessary for young people to assimilate gender fairness. It is necessary for educators to avoid student expectations based
solely on gender. The AAUW (1992) believes "unless we encourage girls and young women to take nontraditional courses and help place them in jobs or post-secondary institutions requiring the skills learned, any training they receive will have little effect on their labor-market opportunities" (p. 44).

Textbooks and other curricular materials have often been negligent in presenting women's contributions while presenting only a male version of life. History texts exclude the achievements of women as important producers of social change and benefits (Council, 1977; Young, 1993). In addition, science and math books show men as the vanguard and downplay the efforts of women in scientific and technological fields (Nilsen, 1977). Such exclusion clearly sends the message to students that women are unimportant and only men can be successes in fields that require brainpower.

The educational tools teachers employ in a classroom can influence their students. Literature textbooks, for example, often send unreal images about the real world. A recent masters thesis cites a survey conducted for the National Council of Teachers of English done by Barbara Price which showed that in a five-textbook survey, only 25 percent of the authors and main characters were women (Gripton, 1993). Stories children read need to accurately reflect the society in which they live. Washburn (1978) believes "stereotypes appear in literature in the language, in the depiction of the patterns of daily life, in pictures, and by implication" (p.
24). In order to teach positively and enthusiastically, teachers should use non-sexist materials to reduce or eliminate children's sex role stereotypes (Gollnick et. al., 1983).

Finally, curricular materials often exclude women from mainstream consideration within textbooks. Instead, women find themselves relegated to footnotes, sidebars, or total exclusion. The AAUW (1992) cites a 1990 conference in California that determined textbooks show "subtle language bias, neglect of scholarship on women, omission of women as developers of history and initiators of events, and absence of women from accounts of technological developments" (p. 63). Thus, the messages students receive are crystal clear, and erroneous: boys/men matter more than do girls/women.

All Americans, educators most importantly, must eradicate sexual bias from the lives of children (Podesta, 1991). Exclusionary practices clearly tell young people that a hierarchy of social acceptance already determines their life roles. Miller (1993) refers to a positive, inclusionary statement of President Bill Clinton: "We don't have a single person to waste in this country. When girls are denied the same educational opportunities as their male classmates, valuable untapped resources are being wasted and our country's economic future will suffer as a result" (p. 1). Jane Daniels, head of the National Science Foundation, concurs: "How can we imagine, in this highly technical world, that our
economy won't collapse if we fail to fully develop half our nation's brainpower?" (cited in Schrof, 1993, p. 43).

The concept that an androcentric and misogynist educational experience exists for American children has become a "hot" topic of discussion for educators and the media. Leading the fray was the AAUW's (1992) report which presented a compilation of data from leading researchers for the past 30 years. Some reviewers, however, despite accepting its recommendations, disparagingly said that feminist ideas pervaded the research (Leo, 1992; Sewall, 1993). Such comments show that is apparently OK to say that inequities exist, but it is not OK to be a predominantly female group who is saying it. Such patronization alludes to the Catch 22 syndrome that keeps going...and going...and....

Sexual discrimination in the classroom must desist. Otherwise, we will be educating 50 percent of a population to be less than its best. Educators must look very closely at classroom techniques that have a derogatory effect upon their female students. The next section will discuss what happens to females who experience the pervasive, negative consequences of a biased education.
Part Three

Effects of Gender Bias

Few people would disagree that the future of America depends upon an educated citizenry. The learning experiences of America's school children will, of course, shape their responses to all stimuli they later encounter. As children pass through the grades, parents expect and teachers hope that their charges will have developed a maturing outlook, one that enables eventual graduates to achieve and excel in life. As previous research has shown, however, an equal educational opportunity does not exist for women, so this hope for excellence can be an unfounded one.

As a result of discriminatory learning experiences, girls consistently leave school worse than when they began. Further, gender bias in the classroom discourages ambition and achievement in girls (Podesta, 1991), so their educational training in effect negates many positive life decisions they might encounter after leaving school.

The AAUW's (1992) report discusses a wide range of research on many documented effects of gender discrimination. It seems that four main categories illustrate the effects of education bias toward women:

1) the development of psychological stereotypes,
2) a decrease in potential as a result of differing expectations,
3) the inequity of awards and scholarships, and
4) a widespread malaise of lowered self-esteem.

First, children learn gender roles by the time they enter pre-primary school (Gollnick & Chinn, 1990). At age 6 or 7, they already prefer sex-segregated groups (AAUW, 1992). By adolescence and puberty, girls are the "quiet ones" while boys are more gregarious in the classroom (Sadker & Sadker, 1985). By late adolescence, teenage girls know that "marriage, family, and employment outside the home are not equal situations for women and men in our society" (AAUW, 1992, p. 3). Male society wants girls and young women to be well behaved and do well (Gollnick & Chinn, 1990) much like the saying that children should be seen and not heard.

Secondly, once a female has learned to be quiet, good, and unassuming, she recognizes that the world around her serves best those men who exhibit the stereotypical aspirations of success, control, and power. King (1990) says, "An individual is socialized and enculturated into assuming the role and behavior of the society that is considered proper for one's sex--male or female" (p. 39). Unfortunately, educators track boys and girls into different paths based on one's gender (AAUW, 1992). Studies show this can cause psychological trouble, eating disorders, depression, and various kinds of disassociation (Podesta, 1991).

Next, Sadker (1976) shows that for the academically-minded female student, fewer awards go to women, and the majority of the well-qualified students who do not go on to
college are female. Even more recently, the ACLU's Women's Rights Project filed a complaint with the Education Department on behalf of the National Center for Fair and Open Testing. "It charges the Educational Testing Service and the College Entrance Examination Board with violating U.S. education law that bars recipients of federal funds from discriminating on the basis of sex" (American, 1994, 1A). Surveys showed that boys account for about 60 percent of the National Merit Scholarship semi-finalists and winners.

Finally, the most damaging statistics disclosed by the AAUW prove a severe drop in the self-esteem of girls as they go throughout school. Based on a survey of 3,000 girls aged nine to fifteen, 60 percent of elementary girls were happy with themselves, but that percentage dropped to only 29 percent for high-school-aged girls. Conversely, for the same groupings of males, the range was 60 percent in the elementary versus 46 percent in the high school. This lowered self-esteem is a learned trait that shows, among women who are near to entering the work force, a severe lack of self-confidence that will lower their lifelong aspirations (Podesta, 1991).

The current state of education in America for girls is discriminatory and biased toward their achievement as successful and contributing members of society. It is the duty of educators to rectify the patriarchal attitudes of the past and to arrest the strategies that continue to teach females that they are not as intelligent as are males. Bias and discrimination in the classroom does not need to continue.
Teachers should be able to impart non-prejudicial treatment to all students, regardless of gender.

Part Four

Results of Teacher Survey

A very useful tool in assessing an awareness and the presence of gender bias in research is to implement a survey. Researchers have discovered startling results through this method (Sadker & Sadker, 1985, 1986; AAUW, 1992; Young, 1993).

For this study, twenty-nine secondary school teachers recently received a survey, "Assessing Sex Bias in the Classroom" (Appendix B). It also included a letter of explanation and a "Checklist of Equitable Teaching Practices." The twenty teachers (69%) who responded instruct at a 500-student high school located in a low-to-middle-income school district in western Michigan. The study did not ask them to identify their gender. This part of Chapter Three will present their attitudes toward gender bias based on their answers.

Questions on the first part of the survey, numbers 1 through 16, concerned the cognitive/affective classroom environment. The survey included questions on the teachers' verbal interaction with students, use of language, non-verbal interaction, treatment of students, behavioral expectations set for students, and evaluation of academic performance.
Table 1, below, shows a statistical breakdown of the responses to each question:

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The results concerning verbal interaction criterion, Questions 1 through 5, showed that the majority of teachers, 75% to 90%, "Almost always" (A) reported that they interacted similarly with females and males. For example, they said they praised and disciplined equally. Such an overwhelming
favorable response is heartening, yet research demonstrates (Meet, 1994; Kavetas, 1994; Sadker, M. & Sadker, D., 1985) that even when teachers feel they impart instruction to students equally, a classroom observation conducted by a trained observer oftentimes shows this premise to be false. No reasonable teacher, however, would probably openly admit to unfair and biased treatment of students.

As to the use of language, questions 6 through 8, the variation of responses was much broader in range. Sixty-five percent, for example, said they sometimes used the masculine "he" when referring to all people, and 45% consistently said "he or she" and "boys and girls," versus using a reversed word order or a more generic, non-specific term when addressing students. Such data would seem to illustrate a heightened awareness of these individuals' discourse when teaching in their classrooms.

Likewise, they scored themselves highly as to their unbiased interaction in non-verbal communications, questions 9 through 11, with female and male students. Once again, 75% to 100% said they had little or no difficulty maintaining equal eye contact, proximity, and positive behaviors toward all their pupils. In their treatment of students, questions 12 and 13, these staff representatives responded very favorably, stating 85% to 95% treated both genders in an equal manner based on standards of dress and application of classroom rules and privileges.
The behavioral expectations they set for students, questions 14 and 15, showed that 85% always, and 15% sometimes, treat females and males in a similar manner concerning the areas of attitude, abilities, career goals, and appropriate classroom expression. These statistics are quite high when compared to the AAUW's findings (1992).

The final component of the first part of the survey, question 16, revealed that 100% of those surveyed expected the same level of academic performance for both females and males. Other than question 9, which dealt with maintaining eye contact with both genders, this is the only other question that scored a unanimous response.

The survey's second portion asked questions about the physical classroom environment in regard to visual displays, written communication, and gender groupings. As to the frequency with which visual displays depicted both females and males, question 17, 65% said this always occurred in their classrooms. On the opposite end, 20% said they saw no importance to such an equal depiction. Question 18 revealed, however, that 84% saw real value to presenting non-biased behaviors, roles, and occupations available to all students, regardless of gender. Question 17, though, was problematic. The words "non-fragmented" drew questions; some misunderstood the survey's intent. Perhaps if the question had read, "displays historical and contemporary women as part of all life, not just in stereotypical roles," less confusion or fewer written question marks on the survey sheets would have
occurred. Only one staff member verbally asked for clarification of this question prior to answering. Given the uncertain responses, this question would offer little reliability.

The next segment, written communication, questions 20 though 22, queried the teachers on their attitudes toward responses they give to students' work. One-half said they always avoided masculine terminology when referring to all people, 35% did sometimes, and 15% saw that doing this had never occurred to them. Also, 30%-40% responded that they were unaware of how their written communications might include linguistic bias.

The final questions, 23 through 25, dealt with gender groupings within the classroom. Ten percent always maintained segregated groups, 30% did sometimes, 10% found it unimportant, and 50% cited ignorance. As to who, teacher or student, would initiate segregated work groups, 10% again said it was due to teacher initiative, whereas 25% cited student initiative.

An additional element of the survey afforded the teachers space to record further comments and suggestions. Listed below are the responses of those 35% of teachers who chose to do so:

"As a female teacher, students (male) sometimes accuse me of being biased toward females. I think this stems from the types of discipline problems I encounter--mostly from males. I tend to think that I encourage girls, more than boys, to think about and plan for their futures."
Thinking back, I have had just as many contacts with boys outside of class (sending to MEGA day-on-the job, extra help after school, within my mentoring group, etc.)."

"Unless I really don't know my subconscious self, I do NOT discriminate against OR FOR female students because I honestly feel that girls and boys are equal. There are cultural and religious backgrounds which undoubtedly do cause some people—and thus some teachers, unfortunately—to believe that females are inferior to males at all age levels. I'm sorry that they feel that way; I believe they are wrong."

"This survey is not written clearly. The questions themselves need clarification. Also I think too much is made of sex bias in the classroom particularly at the HS level. A teacher with good classroom management will take care of most of these so called potential bias problems before they are problems. Finally, I don't see a problem with differences between the sexes. If each is treated fairly then what's wrong with treating boys as boys and girls as girls?"

"#17 raises a good point—I never thought of this. I buy the posters for the message not who is on it. However after reading this I realized that males are depicted on them more often than females. Sex bias was a point in many of my college classes, so I have tried to avoid it when possible. Also it made me furious when I encountered it in school so as a teacher I try to avoid it."

"I try to break down stereotyping whenever I can."

"Bits of my college education has included study of sex bias in the classroom. I appreciate the fact that concern is 'here' for this topic. I wonder, often, how things would have been different in my own education if this would have been a concern years ago."

In summary, this survey is not intended to be a conclusive summary of a particular teaching staff's awareness of their gender biases in the classroom. It does, however, support certain points made throughout this study:
1) Perhaps teachers can not realistically appraise their classroom practices without an impartial observer who could record pertinent data;
2) Gender stereotyping does exist in many areas, as evidenced in these teacher responses;
3) Some teachers recognize the need for more personal education on the subject in order to improve their pedagogical presentations in a non-biased manner; and,
4) Some teachers are aware of gender discrimination yet also recognize some of their peers are not.

Part Five

Results of Student Survey

The final components of this study are the results of a survey entitled "Achieving Sex Fair Teaching" (Appendix C). A total of 83 students, enrolled in the same school as where the teacher respondents studied in Part Four work, provided answers to the questionnaire. The students represented a sampling from the 500 students attending this particular school in the ninth, tenth, eleventh and twelfth grades. The directions they received were to imagine any teacher, male or female, with whom they had had contact and to answer the questions accordingly.

The results of this survey place the teacher responses in question. While the teachers report gender equity in many
areas, the perceptions of the students are quite different. Even though the students were not necessarily rating their current teachers, they still spoke out quite astutely on the presence of gender bias in their school experience.

Because the focus of this study is school sexism, the survey asked the students to identify the gender of both the teacher and themselves. Tabulations of their responses to the 13 questions and the possible 6 rankings are below in Tables 2 through 5.

### TABLE 2

#### FEMALE STUDENTS' RANKING OF MALE TEACHERS

33 RESPONSES

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Table 2 displays the results of female students who ranked male teachers. Several responses that were particularly interesting occurred. For example, in question 1 a total of 72% said that the teacher either "Often" (D) or
"Almost always" (E) treated female and male students differently; plus, question 2 says 60% believe a teacher projects stereotypical behavior upon his students as per the same categories as just cited. The female students did say, however, as seen in questions 10 through 13 that the teachers predominantly "Never" (A) or "Seldom" (B) projected the idea that only men were capable of working or supporting a family. Several female students added personal comments:

"The teacher I am describing doesn't so much put the girls down about actual schooling or plans after school, but as to their physical capabilities. This teacher thinks that a female can't do certain physical tasks, but that the men can."

"I feel degraded when comments are made to girls about sex, and so on."

"This teacher always says that men have ruled the earth so far, and it will not change. I hate that."

"I feel men and women should be treated equal. A woman could do the same job just as well as a man, maybe even better. Women are just as intelligent."

"I feel it is unfair for women to be considered weak or vulnerable because of their gender. Some teachers are examples of such an occurrence. I find it is more fluent in male coaches."

"I think that bias in the classroom is outrageous because the classroom is one of the few places that is just for learning, and for someone so 'simple' as to discriminate between genders is someone that doesn't need the job of a teacher."

"At my school I feel that not many teachers are gender biased. But on some topics or situations they can direct their attention to one gender. I feel sorry for people who are gender biased because they could be missing out on the other gender."
"A lot of people disagree with me, but I feel that it is a major problem. I think that teachers should take a class on non-biased teaching before getting their licenses, and that teachers that have been in the profession for a while should be retrained or given the same class."

"This instructor always acts more lenient towards the boys he coaches."

"Teacher always has nicknames for guys, like, 'big man' and 'bad.' Girls' names tend to be more 'honey' and 'sweetie.'"

"This teacher complains when someone interrupts his classroom, but doesn't seem to mind at all if it is someone having to do with male sports. He addresses athletic males more and with a better attitude than others. He treats a few certain females like they are stupid airheads. I don't think he intentionally does so, because it is subtle. But it still is noticeable."

"I see that when one boy raises his hand in the class and one or more girls raise their hands to answer a question that the boy gets called on because—Whoa! A boy know the answer!"

"The thing mostly about this instructor that is biased is helping with things other than the work in the classroom. Such as carrying things or cleaning up."

The above responses clearly show that female students, with no prompting, were able to address a key element that this study has cited (AAUW, 1992): boys receive more attention and girls are aware of the differential treatment. Their awareness of gender bias seems higher than that of the teachers.
Table 3, above, demonstrates how female students ranked female teachers as to the exhibition of gender bias in the classroom. This "same gender" evaluation produced quite different results. It clearly shows that the female respondents perceive their female teachers as being predominantly non-biased in their teaching. The majority of all responses fall in the "Never" (A) or "Seldom" (B) columns. These students also provided some additional comments:

"I think women and men are starting to appreciate each other as equals in some areas."

"Most male teachers have guys lift and carry stuff instead of girls."

"Everyone is equal to have their own opinion."

"She's a very nice person to have teach a class and be able to talk to."

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"The teacher I was going to rate really doesn't do this on a biased level. She is not sexist. She does not pay attention to students who fool around and they are usually boys. I've never had a biased teacher that I have noticed."

These respondees, although the fewest (9), say they are able to recognize the existence of gender disparity.

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Table 4, above, addresses the responses of male students who evaluated female teachers. These statistics exhibit, as they do on all the tables, that students believe discrimination does exist in schools. Sixty-nine percent of male students, for example, cite that the female instructor "Always" (A) makes sex related and/or degrading remarks or jokes. Additionally, in a similar manner to the females' perception of a male teacher, these male students also
overwhelmingly say, in questions 9 through 13, that the female teacher "Always" (A) communicates the attitude that success in the workplace is the promise to both male and female students. Fifty-three percent, though, said in question 8 that they were unaware of the teacher explaining the presence of bias in instructional materials. These respondees also made additional statements:

"The survey doesn't say anything about teaching from one point of view—a sexist's point of view. Classes should be taught without giving praise to a person because of that person's sex."

"The teacher does make the impression that she feels women are somewhat superior to men. She also thinks of me as just someone to pick up heavy objects or run errands for her."

"She really believes, I think, that men are inferior to women."

"The instructor tries her hardest to stay non-biased, yet that is not possible at all times and under all circumstances. I understand that fact."

"What's the women's lib all about? I think they are pretty racist or sexist towards men."

"Some female teachers come down harder on their male students than on their female students!"

Again, male students capably generate supportive data as to the ongoing presence of school sexism. Perhaps these responses show a negative corroboration of the females' perception. Apparently the female teachers encourage females but in ways the males see as biased and at their expense.
### TABLE 5

**MALE STUDENTS' RANKING OF MALE TEACHERS**

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The final ranking, male students' evaluating male teachers, appears above in Table 5. These responses cross the "gender sameness" line more than did those of the females. The data on questions 1 through 7 vary more. But as in the previous replies on the tables to questions 9 though 13, these male students also feel that male teachers do not heavily promote or predict discrimination in the workplaces which these students will soon enter. Some final statements by students appear below:

"He flirts with women sometimes and pays more attention to the women in the class, not that it bothers me, though, because I would, too."

"Uses more classtime for girls to explain things. Assumed the 'boys' knew it already. Addresses all boys when talking of sport events. The girls correct papers
and make posters while the boys build or carry junk around for him."

"Basically, bias in classroom settings is increasing. Teachers are blatantly saying brash remarks with no thought behind them."

This final grouping interestingly displays that male students have also encountered gender bias.

**Conclusion**

The respondents' views of school sexism illustrate that students do encounter gender bias during their years in school. The particular gender breakdown of this sampling often demonstrates that students react more favorably toward a "same sex" instructor because they possibly internalize the cultural stereotypes they have learned since, and even before, they entered school. Surely it could not hurt the educational environment of a school to study this learned behavior and its negative reinforcement in the classroom.

As long as students recognize in the classroom an unequal treatment based on gender, it is the duty of all teachers to eradicate such practices as best as they can. Undeniably, society generates inequities between the sexes, but the "buck" has to stop somewhere. Teachers have a profound effect on their students; thus, the future will look much brighter for America's schoolchildren if the staffs of schools will discuss, evaluate, and adapt their teaching practices in order to become more gender fair.
Recommendations

Since the research of educators and psychologists shows that America's schools do not treat both males and females equitably, teachers must become more aware of this bias. The first step would be to initiate districtwide in-service educational forums wherein teachers could receive background on the topic of school sexism.

Next, staffs must engage in dialogue that will help break down gender barriers among themselves in their own buildings. An awareness of classroom conduct and a sharing of ideas and methodology could be a goal of school improvement teams who would then knowledgeably present alternative behaviors to their staffs.

Additionally, educators must not feel threatened to try a change. A didactic approach on the part of administrators could be damaging.

Finally, teachers must include students in this process. Teachers must not exclude input from the very group they serve each day. Students are very apt to say what works and what does not; teachers should listen very carefully.
REFERENCES


Appendix A  School Sexism 52

Definitions

Androgynous  A personality that adopts both feminine and masculine traits as part of one's gender identity.

Feminism  The advocacy of women's rights to full citizenship—that is, political, economic, and social equality with men.

Gender  A term that describes the characteristics, thoughts, feelings, and behavior as being either male or female.

Gender Equity  Equal treatment of individuals with no bias based on the person's sex.

Sex Discrimination  The denial of opportunity, privilege, role, or reward on the basis of sex.

Sexism  The degree to which an individual's beliefs or behaviors are prejudiced on the basis of sex.

Sex Role Stereotype  The assumption that the male half of our population has in common one set of abilities, values, and roles while the female half of our population has in common another set of abilities, interests, values, and roles.

Socialization  The general process of learning to function as a member of society by learning social roles.

Dear Staff,

I am now working toward completion of my Master's thesis. One of my final components is to process and analyze a survey conducted among teachers.

I am enclosing a two-part packet for your perusal:

1) The first, "A Checklist of Equitable Teaching Practices," is for your information only. I am simply sharing this handout with you. Reading it first may assist you in considering gender equity practices. Some comments refer to the primary classroom, but most comments work well in our secondary setting.

2) The second, "Assessing Sex Bias in the Classroom," is the actual survey I am asking you to complete. I estimate it should take no more than twenty minutes to answer.

I hope that you will be able to return completed surveys to me by Friday afternoon.

Please note that I have allowed space for your comments at the end of the questionnaire. I would appreciate any statements or suggestions you might like to add.

I will, of course, share my completed data with you. As a way of maintaining your anonymity, within my paper I will not be directly identifying the school or any personnel who contribute responses.

MANY THANKS!
CHECKLIST OF EQUITABLE TEACHING PRACTICES

One of the best ways for teachers to determine if their classrooms are free of sex bias is for them to quickly complete a checklist evaluation. The questions below should assist teachers in viewing their classrooms objectively. Although the checklist is by no means complete, it allows teachers to get a preliminary picture of the environment and interactions in their classrooms. Any marked "NO" warrants further attention.

CLASSROOM ORGANIZATION

Do you...

1. Examine enrollment patterns to identify possible sex bias?

2. Establish and apply the same grading system to students of both sexes?

3. Set the same standards of behavior for all students in your classroom (e.g. attention, quiet, visiting, etc.)?

4. Apply the same standards for use of tools and equipment to all students?

5. Have the same safety rules for both boys and girls?

6. Keep libraries well-stocked with catalogues of bias-free materials?

7. Examine, replace, and supplement biased materials?

8. Assign classroom tasks (operating projector, note taking) on the bias of skills and interest, not gender?

9. Avoid separating girls and boys for seating, teams, lining up, etc.?

10. Rearrange the classroom regularly so that you have a chance to move around the room and interact with different students?

11. Arrange opportunities for girls and boys to work and play together?

12. Encourage children to experience a variety or roles within a group?
INSTRUCTIONAL TECHNIQUES

1. Address all students with the same tone of voice?
2. Use gender-free terms and occupational titles?
3. Make course descriptions and content appealing to all students, regardless of gender?
4. Refrain from using terms such as "broken home," "latchkey child," and "child of a single parent"?
5. Provide the same learning activities and projects for students (rather than different ones on the basis of sex as providing boys with more labs, girls with more seat work)?
6. Expect the same work habits from both boys and girls?
7. Evaluate standards and expectations to determine if differences are the result of sex role stereotyping?
8. Pay close attention to classroom interaction patterns?
9. Give equitable attention to students of both sexes (instead of more criticism for boys and more support for girls)?
10. Use parallel terminology when addressing women and men students, or referring to men and women in examples (When the chemist works, she must...)?
11. Ask both boys and girls divergent or opinion questions (e.g. explain the theory, describe your reaction)?

STUDENT INTERACTION

1. Encourage students to consider a broader range of program and career options?
2. Encourage use of all tools, toys, and equipment in the classroom?
3. Recognize skill areas that may require extra encouragement (e.g. math for girls, dramatics for boys)?
4. Avoid saying things that would make students think that boys must act one way and girls another way (e.g. "Boys will be boys," "Act like a lady")?
5. Give equivalent attention to students of both sexes (rather than more criticism for boys, support for the girls, etc.)?

6. Recognize all athletic achievements and events?

7. Support students in behavior that is not limited by their sex role stereotype (e.g. boys who are sensitive, caring, artistic)?

8. Help students, girls and boys, to share feelings and cope with stress in a healthy manner?

9. Accept emotional expression from both sexes?

10. Support "pioneer" students who take a chance on fields of study that are not traditionally for their sex?

11. Set the same standards for behavior and administer the same disciplinary action to boys and girls?

12. Avoid comparisons of boys and girls with respect to classroom behavior, attitudes, and accomplishments?

13. Help students understand the difference between sex roles and gender identity?

14. Ask students to tell you when you are treating female and male students differently?

INFORMATION SHARING

1. Make it clear to students that they do not have to conform to rigid sex roles, but to just be themselves?

2. Point out when textbooks, films, and other materials show men and women only in stereotyped ways?

3. Share information with both sexes about their future dual roles as worker/parent?

4. Provide children with nontraditional role models in books, displays, and guest speakers?

5. Maintain a file on role models and volunteers who have worked with students?
6. Share information with students about the structure of the contemporary American family?

COLLEAGUES AND PARENTS

1. Examine and change school practices that contribute to separation and stereotyping of children by gender?

2. Familiarize yourself and colleagues with sex equity legislation such as Title IX and the Carl Perkins Vocational Education Act?

3. Help to arrange staff training on issues of sex bias and sex equity?

4. Promote discussion of stereotyping and changing sex roles among students and colleagues?

5. Encourage the recruitment and hiring of women in administration, and teachers in nontraditional fields?

6. Respond to parents on the basis of their concerns, rather than their gender?

7. Recognize that a child from a single parent household does not necessarily imply a problem at home?

8. Include parents without custody in school memos and activities?

9. Review letters to home for bias?

10. Request parental involvement without specifying gender (room mother, father to build a playground)?

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ASSESSING SEX BIAS IN THE CLASSROOM

Listed below are specific teachers behaviors which fall under two major categories: the cognitive/affective classroom environment and the physical classroom environment. These are further subdivided into more specific groupings such as treatment of students and classroom groups. Please consider each one in terms of what you do in your classroom and check the appropriate column.

A = I almost always do this
S = I sometimes do this
U = I find this to be unimportant
N = Doing this has never occurred to me

A S U N

THE COGNITIVE/AFFECTIVE CLASSROOM ENVIRONMENT

Verbal Interaction

Do you interact with females and males similarly with regard to:

1. the frequency with which you call on them
2. the frequency with which you praise them
3. the kinds of behaviors for which you praise them
4. the kinds of behaviors for which you punish them
5. the kinds of disciplinary measures you use

Use of Language

Is your language free of sex bias with regard to:

6. use of masculine terminology to refer to all people
7. use of acceptance of derogatory terminology to refer to members of one sex

8. word order which consistently places males first (he or she, boys and girls, men and women)

Non-Verbal Interaction

Do you interact with females and males similarly with regard to:

9. maintaining eye contact with them

10. maintaining close proximity with them

11. smiling (or other positive non-verbal behavior) at them

Treatment of Students

Do you treat females and males similarly with regard to:

12. standards for dress and appearance

13. the application of classroom rules and privileges

Behavioral Expectations Set for Students

Do you treat females and males similarly with regard to:

14. attitudes, abilities, career goals, work assignments (audiovisual aides, messengers)

15. the level and nature of emotional expression that is considered appropriate for the classroom
### Evaluation

Are the standards set for male and female students similar with regard to:

16. expected levels of academic performance (criteria used for evaluation)  

### THE PHYSICAL CLASSROOM ENVIRONMENT

#### Visual Displays

Are the visual displays equitable in

17. the frequency with which females and males are depicted  

18. behaviors, roles, and occupations available to males and females  

19. the non-fragmented presentation of material about women  

#### Written Communication

Are all written communications free of linguistic bias in terms of:

20. use of masculine terminology to refer to all people  

21. use or acceptance of derogatory terminology to refer to members of one sex  

22. word order which consistently places males first
Classroom Groupings

Do gender groupings occur

23. as segregated work groups

24. because of teacher initiative

25. because of student initiative

FURTHER COMMENTS AND SUGGESTIONS

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(Adapted from Miller, 1992, MCCTE collection # SE-731. Copyright permission granted.)
ACHIEVING SEX FAIR TEACHING
STUDENTS' QUESTIONNAIRE

Please mark the appropriate spaces:

Your gender: Male ____ Female ____

Gender of teacher you are evaluating: Male ____ Female ____

Choose the letter which most closely describes the teacher you are evaluating.

a. never
b. seldom
c. sometimes
d. often
e. almost always
f. I don't know

____ 1. The instructor treats female and male students differently.

____ 2. The instructor asks students to perform different tasks according to their sex (for example: with phrases like "you men are strong; help carry this equipment").

____ 3. The instructor addresses female students differently than male students (for example: refers to women as "girl," "sweetheart," or "honey").

____ 4. The instructor makes certain assumptions about female students which aren't made regarding male students or vice versa (for example: extent of physical strength, level of general competence, mathematical ability, or legality of handwriting).

____ 5. The instructor makes sex related and/or degrading remarks or "jokes."
6. The instructor uses masculine terms (he, him, his, man) as inclusive of males or females, rather than words such as "he or she," "human," or "people."

7. The instructor regards male students as more likely to be "discipline" problems than female students.

8. Biased materials and curricula used in the classroom mention no discussion of the biases.

9. The instructor communicates the attitude that women shouldn't be "taking the place" of men.

10. The instructor communicates the attitude that women in non-traditional training programs are not as serious as are men about their schooling.

11. The instructor communicates the attitude that female students will marry and probably not work outside the home for many years.

12. The instructor communicates the attitude that male students will become the sole or primary support of their family.

13. The instructor communicates the attitude that high paying, satisfying jobs are more important to men than they are to women.

PLEASE FEEL FREE TO ADD ANY COMMENTS THAT YOU MIGHT HAVE CONCERNING BIAS IN THE CLASSROOM:

________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________

(Adapted from Miller, 1992, MCCTE collection # SE-684. Copyright permission granted.)
Michigan Center for Career and Technical Education
133 E. Erickson Hall
Michigan State University
East Lansing, MI 48824

7 March 1994

Michelle Frantz
4526 S. Quarterline
Muskegon, MI 49444

Dear Michelle,

This letter gives you our copyright permission to publish in your Master's thesis, pending at Grand Valley State University, the following materials:

From ASSESS: Assessing Sex Equity in Schools and Society, MCCTE Collection # SE-731, SE-881, and SE-684.

Sincerely,

Gloria Kielbaso

Please acknowledge this resource with the appropriate citation in your thesis. Thank you.
GRAND VALLEY STATE UNIVERSITY
ED 695 DATA FORM

NAME: Michelle Frantz

MAJOR: (Choose only 1)

- Ed Tech
- Elem Ed
- Read/Lang Arts
- G/T Ed
- Sec LD
- SpEd Admin
- Ed Leadership
- Early Child
- SpEd PPI

TITLE OF PROJECT: School Sexism and Its Educational Implications

PROJECT TYPE: (Choose only 1) SEM/YR COMPLETED: Winter 1994

- Administrative/Policy Study
- Case Study Research
- Curriculum Development
- Curriculum Development & Instructional Material
- Descriptive Research
- Experimental Research
- Instructional Materials
- Survey Research

SUPERVISOR: Dr. Dorothy Armstrong

Write 3 major DESCRIPTORS of your project. Choose from those listed on the back.

High School  Curriculum  Evaluation

ABSTRACT: (50 words or less)
This study examines many of the cultural forces that have contributed to the persistence of gender inequity in American education. The study includes a gender bias survey and its results given to a sampling of high school teachers and students. The study recommends that teachers reevaluate current discriminatory classroom practices.