

Gender in the classroom

Gender differences in (English) lessons

- Boys are generally more competitive than girls in classroom
- They are often faster in response, louder, break rules more easily whereas girls often stay behind because of following rules closely, reacting only after a careful thought and thus more slowly, as well as being quieter than boys
- Unintentionally, teachers often give boys more space and are more tolerant towards their unruly behavior

Classroom Strategies

- Girls' and boys' approach towards learning and participation in lessons may be different but teacher's approach to them must be equal and respectful of their differences
- Assist in the acceptance of the differences that female students bring to classroom.
- Try to be gender-neutral. Avoid sexist expressions in teaching (even "positive" ones) and do not allow use of sexist opinions and behavior in class.
- Set clear rules in your classroom and be consistent when using it.
- Give both boys and girls equal feedback. Respect their different approach to responding
- Include female role models when presenting new topics
- Involve those female students who are not participating in classroom discussions.
- Notice and respond when girls raise their hands. Generally, disregard boys' greater tendency to verbally (and through body language) demand greater teacher attention. Devise a specific response selection protocol and consistently use it.
- Permit students to bring life experiences into the science learning environment. (All students, especially female students, tend to perform best when content is related to previous experience.)
- Teachers should examine their own behavior and assumptions on gender issues. Monitor your own use of sex-biased language.
- The difficulty of questions should be the same for both female and male students.
- Use praise equally for boys and girls. Encourage girls more often.

- Use real-life metaphors and examples in teaching that are pertinent to female students. (Female metaphors should be balanced with male ones.)
- Use the same nonverbal cue to address both boys and girls (e.g., head nodding and encouraging smiles).
- Check to see if textbooks and other materials you are using present an honest view of the options open to both males and females.
- Watch for any unintended biases in your own classroom practices.
- Look for ways in which your school may be limiting the options open to male or female students.
- Use gender-free language as much as possible.

Conclusion

Classroom climate and academic achievement are directly related. Gender-fair teaching, in short, is good teaching that benefits all students.

Gender-fair teaching challenges educators both to treat all students equally and to individually recognize and accommodate different learning styles.