

Gender in
Education

EDUCATIONAL PSYCHOLOGY

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Terms

Sex – biological sex, usually male/female, but there can be innate exceptions (intersexed people)

Sex differences – differences in physiology and anatomy

Gender – social and psychological component of one's identity as male/female or else, it also refers to a position/status in a particular society/culture. (Measuring in/equality [Global Gender Gap Index](#))

Gender roles - the patterns of behaviors, attitudes, and expectations associated with a particular sex.

Gender differences – in physical behaviors, styles of social interaction, academic motivations, behaviors, and choices.

Gender socialization – subtle or not so subtle societal pressures (sanctions) and rewards for people to make them conform the gender roles for respective sexes. It is a way how to maintain and reproduce culture as it is.

Equality between sexes is a question of **human rights** (e.g. lack of menstrual hygiene products keeping poor girls from going to school, or being trafficked as a child bride, or questions of „potty parity“)

Equality between genders is a matter of **equal social value ascribed** to said behaviors and choices, as well as **opportunities to make choices** regardless of sex or gender. (e.g career choices 1 2).

All values are arbitrary, created by social consensus in a particular historical moment. The gender norms change.

Inclusion – differences among people are valued, not discriminated against. Equality of opportunity is a basic inclusive principle.

Equality of opportunity in education

Equal opportunities in education = everyone has the same opportunities to learn, no matter what the differences between them are. It does not mean that everyone should learn the same thing, at the same time and in the same way.

Children and teachers come to school **already socialized** (by parents, peers, and the media) into gender roles. Teachers further influence gender differences by their responses to and choices made on behalf of students.

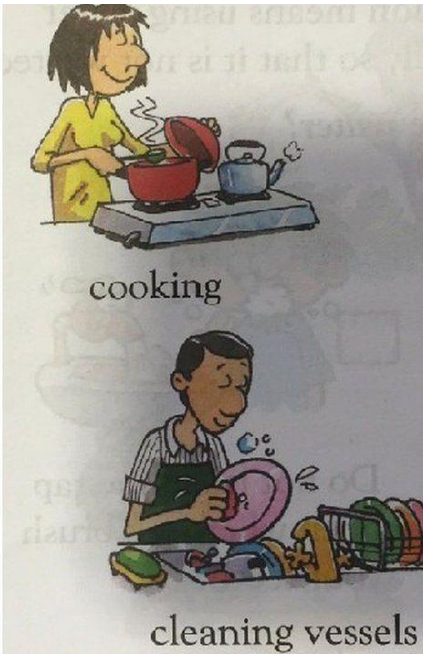
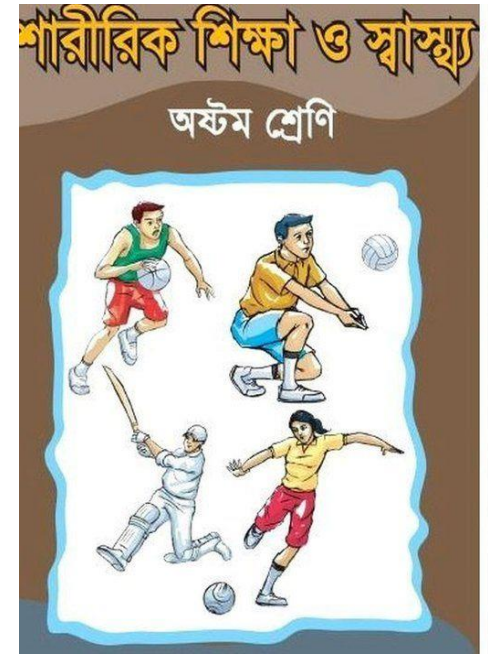
Teachers are often unaware of their own **biases**. The time pressure and stressful situations can result in a quick use of cognitive heuristics = **stereotypes**. T

Teachers should take time and reflect upon their biases and use **learning and teaching resources**, that do not promote gender stereotypes.



Current status

Suggestions for revision



Boy or girl in the classroom? Guess the column tag.

teacher		
Praises	Correct knowledge	“Good” or compliant behavior
Overlooks or ignores	“Good” or compliant behavior; <i>incorrect knowledge</i>	<i>Misbehavior</i> ; correct knowledge
Criticizes	<i>Misbehavior</i>	<i>Incorrect knowledge</i>

Teacher bias (Seifert, Sutton, 2011)

1) amount of attention paid to each sex

teachers interact with boys more often than with girls by a margin of 10 to 30 percent depending on the grade level of the students and the personality of the teacher (maybe: boys more assertive, talk more often; teachers is preventing mischief; boys are more restless - teacher brings the boys attention back to the task)

2) the visibility or “publicity” of conversations

teachers interact with boys from greater distance, more people can hear conversations; teachers get closer to girls

3) type of behavior that prompts teachers to support or criticize students....previous slide

The result (which is probably unintended) is a tendency to make boys' knowledge seem more important and boys themselves more competent. A second result is the other side of this coin: a tendency to make girls' knowledge less visible and girls themselves less competent

Gender differences in school achievement of boys and girls (Seifert, Sutton, 2011)

Social interaction outside classroom – boys tend to form larger groups, social groups tend literally to fill up a lot of space, and often include significant

amounts of roughhousing as well as organized and “semi-organized” competitive games or sports. Girls with few closer friends are less noticeable.

Social interaction in classroom – boys speak up in discussions first, more often and even they don't know much about topic, in project work they are more likely to ignore girls' comments and contributions. Teachers can ask girls to talk first or include activities promoting turn taking in listening and speaking)

Boys (more likely working-class boys) – are more likely to adopt negative attitude to schoolwork as a „boys' group norm“ at the end of elementary schooling or in high-school. They „ostentatiously underachieve“ or „hide their achievement and aspirations from peers“.

Girls are more motivated (they are expected to) to perform well in school.

Girls before puberty are less “gender policed” (social sanctions) for variety in their hobbies or their interest in „boy activities“.

Girls, especially in puberty, may downplay academic ability to be more likable by peers. In order to be more „feminine“ (attractive to boys) they can underachieve in [math](#) and science. See „[stereotype threat](#)“

Boys are more encouraged to participate in formal and informal sports. Boys with disabilities or dislike for sports can be excluded from social interactions or even bullied.

Individual students who contradict gender stereotypes about physical abilities may benefit from emotional support or affirmation from teachers, they may be less likely to get it elsewhere.

Physically, boys tend to be more active than girls, and by the same token more restless if they must sit for long periods of time.

Boys are more prone than girls to rely on physical aggression if they are frustrated. Women as teachers might have greater difficulties dealing with boy's aggression due to their gender socialization. (Girls and women are often socially sanctioned for expressing anger)

According to Alan Schore, an expert on attachment and emotion regulation (coping with stress and frustration, controlling affect and aggression), boys might be developmentally at greater risk.

Affective and behavioral control is essential for paying attention and learning, as well as social interactions in school and well-being of pupils and teachers alike.

Feminization of schools

The world is gendered, gender is an organizing principle. Hierarchical organization of the society with valued masculine at the top is characterized by devaluation of the feminine (activities like child rearing, cooking, household chores...services, nursing, social work, teaching...) the prevailing devaluation can be derived from parameters like salary, prestige/status and authority/power.

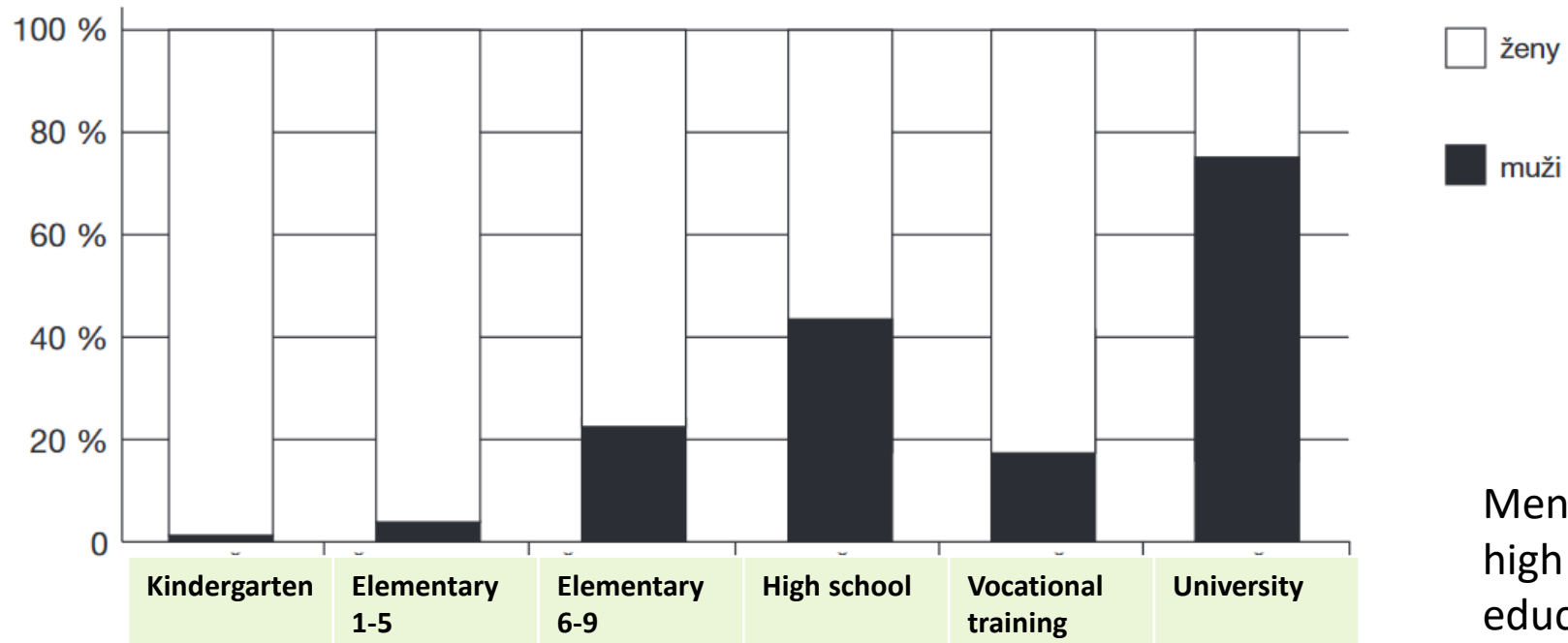
Fun fact> Sociologic studies suggest, that if women occupy more than two thirds of positions within certain profession, the prestige of said profession lowers as well as salaries (Smetáčková, 2019).

This is a sociological, historical, psychological and economical issue, difficult to tackle in a simplified manner.

Girls are increasingly performing well (except for heavy drop in self-esteem in adolescence) – feminized school environment seems to foster ways of learning more suitable to girls

Boys are underachieving and failing (research from USA, UK, Australia), that's when feminization „becomes a problem“. Boys are lacking „real life“ male role models, especially boys from single-mother households.

Men (muži) and women (ženy) in teaching profession in the Czech Republic (2004)



Men are more likely to teach in high schools and in tertiary education.

(Smetáčková, 2019)

Solution?

Various initiatives and experts call for solution: „more men to schools“.

The argument is that pupils should see men working with young children to help eradicate the impression that teaching is „women’s work/child care“ and simultaneously reduce the low status (and bring more money into education system).

What do you think? Is a feminization a problem? What is your experience and what would be your solution?

<https://revisesociology.com/2015/02/04/gender-inequality-education-in-school-factors/>

<https://www.aasa.org/SchoolAdministratorArticle.aspx?id=5642>

<https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/EJ1073203.pdf>

Resources

Seifert, K., & Sutton, R. (2011). Educational psychology. Athens: The Global Textbook Project.

Smetáčková, I. (2013). Genderová rovnost ve výsledcích: znevýhodňují české školy chlapce, nebo dívky? *e-Pedagogium*, 13(1), 15-29.
doi: 10.5507/epd.2013.003.

Smetáčková, I. (2019). Gender ve škole. Příručka pro budoucí i současné učitelky a učitele. Otevřená společnost, o.p.s. Dostupné
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