

Recognizing (Almost) Invisible Gender Bias in Teacher-Student Interactions

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Abstract: This paper examines my role as teacher/researcher in perpetuating or trying to eliminate gender bias from my interactions with elementary school students. This descriptive study of a teacher/researcher interacting with students analyzes naturalistic data to answer the question, “How does a teacher/researcher perpetuate or disallow differential treatment of the students based on gender considerations?” Data included extensive email messages between myself and the students and video recordings of classroom interactions. Analysis of the data indicated that gender biases are more invisible and more difficult to eliminate than expected. Even in a classroom firmly grounded in feminist pedagogy, gender bias was almost impossible to eliminate. A feminist perspective informed the analysis.

Introduction

Sitting in the same classroom, reading the same textbook, listening to the same teacher, boys and girls receive very different educations (Sadker and Sadker, 1994).

This paper describes one portion of a much larger study on gender biases and gender stereotypes within an elementary school context. The specific research question that this paper addresses is: How does a teacher/researcher perpetuate or disallow differential treatment of the students based on gender considerations? This descriptive study of a teacher/researcher interacting with elementary school students analyzed naturalistic data that included extensive email messages between myself and the students and video recordings of classroom interactions. A feminist perspective informed the analysis.

Analysis of the data indicated that gender biases are more invisible and more difficult to eliminate than expected. A feminist perspective is essential in this struggle, but insufficient for eliminating the culturally embedded, long-standing gender biases pervading our schools and lives. Gender bias is insidious because it can be almost invisible. Classroom interactions between teachers and students put males in the spotlight, and relegate females to the sidelines, or to invisibility (Sadker, 1999). Krupnick (1985) analyzed ten years of her classroom interactions with students, and found that males speak more and for longer periods of time and are more likely to interrupt others. In 1992, the American Association of University Women (AAUW) found the females receive less attention from teachers than males, and this attention is often negative or critical, resulting in increased self-doubt about their abilities. In addition, curricular materials offer stereotypical images of women and ignore female role models. Gender bias is difficult to overcome, but Jones (2000) has found, fortunately, that teachers’ inequitable treatment of girls and boys can be decreased through training and self-analysis of video recordings of classroom teaching.

Dale Spender (1982) spoke of her shock at discovering that she was spending a minimum of 58% of her classroom time interacting with boys and a maximum of 42%, and an average of 38%, of her time interacting with girls. The discrepancy between what she thought she was doing and what she was actually doing dismayed her. She maintains that in our educational system, male subjectivity is made to appear as objective fact. She believes that sexism is a bias that is practically impossible to eliminate because it is the foundation of education in our male-dominated society. This paper examines my role as teacher/researcher in perpetuating or trying to eliminate gender bias from my interactions with the students.

Description of the Study

This paper describes one portion of a much larger study on gender biases and gender stereotypes within an elementary school context. As a teacher-researcher, I offered several extensive technology workshops to elementary school students. After teaching students to use a variety of technology tools, I encouraged them to use these tools in ways and directions of interest to them. Participants included twenty-five elementary schools students in second,

third, fourth, and fifth grades. About half of the participants were male, and half female. They were a diverse group who attended racially and economically diverse neighborhood schools. The workshops were free, and all students enrolled through self-selection. The workshops took place in an up-to-date computer lab where there was a one-to-one ratio of computers to students. One group of students participated three hours per day during the June and October intercessions of their year-round school, for a total of 60 hours. The second group of students participated two hours per day, two days a week, during their fall semester, for a total of 45 hours.

Methodology and Findings

In this qualitative study, I examined 750 pages of email between the student participants and myself, and over 100 hours of videotaped interactions in our classroom. After reviewing the videotapes, I transcribed those segments where I found blatant gender bias. Then I transcribed, noting times of each interaction, two typical classes during our workshop. Data analysis started with reviewing all the email and transcribed video to determine evidence of gender bias. I then used HyperQual2™ to tag and sort data. Finally coding, counting, and tallying of relevant categories was done in order to paint a picture that reflected both the gender-neutral and gender-biased interactions within our classroom. This paper focuses exclusively on the gender-biased interactions.

Even in a classroom firmly grounded in feminist pedagogy, gender bias was almost impossible to eliminate. I felt the shock that Spender did when I viewed videotapes of my interactions with elementary school students who participated in my technology workshops. I was embarrassed to see myself spending more time interacting with boys than girls, explaining processes to boys and doing the job for girls, and complimenting boys for their brains and cleverness and complimenting girls for their cooperation and helpfulness and, parenthetically, for their brains and cleverness. This review of videotapes and audiotapes and my review of all email documents helped me form several assertions about my role in perpetuating or eliminating gender bias within my classroom. Although I interacted with students in *many* ways that showed no gender bias, this paper focuses on those interactions in which I inadvertently treated boys and girls differently. I discuss each of the following four assertions in detail.

- Assertion 1: I gave preferential treatment to boys in my email correspondences with them.
- Assertion 2: I asked girls to be classroom assistants and to help me maintain the orderliness of the room.
- Assertion 3: I gave preferential treatment to boys in my personal interactions with them.
- Assertion 4: I had different expectations about boys' behavior and girls' behavior.

Assertion 1: Preferential Treatment of Boys in Email

When I first counted and tabulated the number of messages and the number of words in my email messages, I was encouraged to find that I generally wrote both more messages and longer messages to the girls. A surface inspection of these data revealed that my behavior was *atypical* for American classrooms where boys generally get more attention than girls. I wrote an average of 8.9 messages to girls and an average of 8.3 messages to boys. Each message to a girl averaged about 60 words and each message to a boy averaged about 57 words. A look at these numbers revealed that I was interacting with boys and girls approximately the same; I even favored girls to a small extent. However, just as Morse and Daiute (1992) claim, any noncontextual measure is a mismeasure of women and girls. When I reviewed the email interchanges, audiotapes and videotapes, I discovered that I was giving preferential treatment to the boys.

There were critical differences, for instance, in how I handled the topic of learning with the participants. For every two messages I wrote to girls about learning new information or a new process, I wrote three to boys. These data suggest some gender bias on my part – as teachers are acculturated to think of boys as more active learners than girls (Sadker & Sadker, 1986 and 1994; and Walkerdine, 1990). Teachers perceive that boys explore more, are more likely to be risk-takers and are consequently better students. When I looked closely at the email interactions surrounding the topic of learning, I discovered much greater gender bias than was evident on the surface. An equal number of messages to and from girls dealt with the topic of learning. However, I wrote about learning to boys three times more frequently than they wrote to me. I encouraged them to explore, to travel electronically to new frontiers, and to discover new ideas. Despite my efforts to think of girls and boys in the same light, my unconscious gender bias was all too evident in these data.

When I sorted through all the data in this area, I realized that I *responded* to the girls about their learning and I *initiated* the topic with the boys. Sample interactions between the girls and myself follow (including misspellings):

Katy Author	October 4 October 5	<i>I have found info on Hawaii. Maby I can show pitchers of Hawaii in class. I'm glad you found lots of information on Hawaii. Of course you can show pictures of Hawaii. That would be a real treat.</i>
Beth Author	September 30 October 2	<i>It was fun to look up things and especially to look at pictures on the Internet. I'm glad you're enjoying looking up things. Pictures are great on the computer, aren't they?</i>
Liza Author	October 3 October 3	<i>I would like to find the map of the wwather world. Please ask me to show you how to get to the weather maps. They're really fun to see because you can see so much from high above the earth.</i>

Sample interactions between myself and the boys follow:

Author Andy	June 11 June 13	<i>You seem to like exploring the Internet? You are right.</i>
Author Andy	June 21 June 23	<i>How do you like browsing? Found anything exciting or interesting? I do not like brwsng.</i>
Author Nick	October 7	<i>You seem to have collected lots of data for your state report. Was it fun learning about a new state? (No Response)</i>
Author Rob	June 21	<i>What did you learn about in your Internet search? (No Response)</i>

These boys' answers were terse or nonexistent. Yet I persisted in writing to the boys about learning, probably because of the image I carried in my head of boys as curious and active explorers and learners. Even though I tried to foist this image on them, few boys bought into my image. Girls, on the other hand, were anxious to share their learning with me. I responded to their messages, but did not offer the same level of encouragement as I did the boys. The final picture was full of irony. The girls, without active encouragement on my part, become active and spirited explorers; while the boys, even with large doses of encouragement, did not become the eager and enthusiastic explorers the girls did.

A close examination of my email messages revealed my tendency to compliment the boys for their *brains* and *cleverness* and the girls for their *effort* and *attitude*. The stark contrast in compliments is evident in the representative messages below. To boys I wrote:

To Tom	October 2	<i>Your writing is getting much better since you've been writing a lot in our Workshop.</i>
To Dave	September 28	<i>I like your sense of humor. Your remark about electronic distance was very clever.</i>
To Mike	October 23	<i>I'm so proud of you. You've taken to the Internet like a fish to water. You're turning into a great researcher.</i>
To Charles	October 26	<i>I'm so proud of you and the learning you are doing in our Technology Workshop!</i>

And to girls I wrote:

To Eve	September 28	<i>I sure appreciate your cooperation and good attitude.</i>
To Julia	December 5	<i>I'm so proud of the interest you've taken in our class and the effort you've put in! Thanks so being such a grand participant!</i>
To Christi	June 14	<i>Thanks for being such an interested and cooperative student.</i>
To Linda	June 21	<i>I was so proud of you yesterday. You acted so responsibly.</i>

On several occasions, to my dismay, I even complimented girls (and one boy) for their looks or grace:

To Eve	October 17	<i>You look very graceful. I am not surprised that you want to be a ballerina when you grown up.</i>
To Julia	October 26	<i>You have the graceful look of a dancer!</i>
To Susie	October 23	<i>Smile! You look pretty when you smile!</i>
To Tom	June 22	<i>I hope this doesn't embarrass you, but I think you look "cute" without your baseball cap.</i>

When I wrote to Tom, I acknowledged the peculiarity of my remark by saying *I hope this doesn't embarrass you* and by putting quotation marks around cute.

Assertion 2: Girls as Classroom Assistants

Girls are enculturated to be neat, quiet and calm, while boys are encouraged to think independently, be active and speak up (Chapman, 2004). In her extensive research on girls in schools, Walkerdine (1990) found that the three most common terms which girls (at all grade levels) used to describe characteristics they should possess were "nice," "kind," and "helpful." With this in mind, girls are happy to become teachers' helpers. They become what Walkerdine calls "the guardians of the moral order, keepers of the rules" (p. 77). Christi became my teacher helper, with the other girls in the class serving as her assistants. Although this role may not be advantageous for Christi from an academic standpoint, I thrust it upon her without second thought and she accepted willingly.

Vignette One

Christi is shy and beautiful. She peers out at the computer lab through dark eyes and long lashes, but doesn't speak. I stand to the side of the lab and watch Christi and the other students as they inspect the computers, the printer, and the room. In the noisy excitement of the classroom, Christi's quiet stance is noticeable. We begin our first day of class. I notice that Christi is quite knowledgeable about the Macintosh and she quietly helps her classmates throughout the day. When class is over, she speaks to me in a barely audible voice.

"I have a Mac and a modem at home. But my modem isn't hooked up. Do you think you could fix it?"

"Of course," I reply with a smile, "You just name the day!"

The dance begins. Christi and I have each been in classrooms a long time – Christi as a student and I, first as a student, and for many years as a teacher. We have learned the unwritten rules of school; we have learned well how a female is *supposed* to behave. We are two female dancers who know the dance so well that we don't need a choreographer to help us with the steps. We are so practiced we do them without thinking. We move to the beat of an invisible tune. All girls know the words to this tune. The refrain goes like this: *Good girls are nice, Good girls are kind, Good girls help out, Good girls don't pout*. I set the stage for the dance to begin in my email to Christi:

Author	June 14	<i>Thanks for your help. I couldn't "make it" without your help.</i>
Author	June 21	<i>I really enjoy having you as a student.</i>

We build trust in one another. Christi enters the dance and together we negotiate the steps, smoothly, because we know this dance deep within our souls:

Author	October 2	<i>Please remind me to bring MacUSA to school so you can show some other kids how to use it.</i>
Christi	October 3	<i>Don't forget to bring MacUSA today.</i>
Christi	October 5	<i>I'm going to make a sign for your door. What do you want it to say?</i>
Author	October 5	<i>It was nice of you to show Mandy how to use MacUSA. You decide what my sign should say.</i>
Author	October 6	<i>Thanks for being such a good helper to your classmates. I really appreciate your helpfulness.</i>
Christi	October 10	<i>I will bring the disk with your sign on Tuesday!</i>
Christi	October 11	<i>On the disk, my sign is named 'My Room' and your signed is named 'Alice'.</i>
Author	October 11	<i>Thanks for letting me know the titles of our signs. Do you want to help me edit the newsletter on Thursday afternoon?</i>
Christi	October 12	<i>I would love to help.</i>
Author	October 13	<i>I'm glad you'd love to help. I'll count on you for after class – 'til about 3!</i>
Author	October 14	<i>Thanks for your help yesterday afternoon. We finished our work just in time! Thanks for being a great member of our Workshop!!!!</i>

And then we know the end of the dance is near.

Christi
Author

October 14
October 14

I will miss you!
Please keep in touch by email. I will miss you, too!

Discussion of Vignette One

It all sounds so poetic when I use a dance metaphor to explain the *good-girls-are-helpful-kind-and-nice* syndrome. However, I think a trapped-in-a-pit metaphor would have been more apt. Christi, along with so many young women, was defining her identity by how she operated in the classroom. She liked her role as teacher's helper, she was comfortable and confident in that role, and she did a great job. So why am I concerned? I'm concerned because this role limits Christi's self-identity. If she sees herself as teacher's helper, it is impossible for her to see herself as academic risk-taker and rule breaker; the two roles are mutually exclusive. Christi and I both benefited from our teacher-teacher helper relationship: I relied on Christi for help in the classroom, and she gained confidence in herself through our friendship. However, if my ultimate goal was to treat all students without gender bias, I must acknowledge that encouraging Christi to assume the gendered role of teacher helper trapped her and endangered her potential for growth.

Assertion 3: Preferential Treatment to Boys in Interactions

Below I describe two engrained gender biases that are evident in many classrooms, including mine: the *bright boy* syndrome and the *boys have the floor* syndrome. Sadker and Sadker (1986) characterize the American classroom as consisting of "two worlds: one of boys in action, the other of girls' inaction. Male students control classroom conversation . . . ask more questions . . . and receive more praise for the intellectual quality of their ideas. They get help when confused. They are the heart and the center of interaction" (p. 42). Andy is the epitome of the bright boy who demands and gets attention, help, and praise at the expense of the girls in the classroom. The vignette that follows provides evidence of another deeply engrained gender bias, what I call the *bright boy* Syndrome.

Vignette Two

Redheaded, bright-eyed Andy strolls into the computer lab with a smugness that the other students do not possess. He can afford the luxury of walking slowly while the other students rush, because he knows he can take any computer he wants; Andy is a leader in the group – and what he wants, he gets. Class begins. All the students are reading and answering their email. The room is quiet; the students and I are intent on reading our email.

"Alice, I need help!" Andy's loud voice startles us.

"I'm reading my email, Andy, I'm sure you can solve your problems on your own."

"No I can't. I'm stuck in some weird place; I don't know how to get out."

"I probably don't know how to get out either. I'd just have to keep trying different things 'til I got out. Why don't you try that strategy?"

Andy eventually figures out his difficulty and begins answering his mail. I receive the following note:

I am sending mail without you helping. I'm sending some stuff about me to you

And I reply:

Thanks for sending me a message. I was very proud of all you did on your own without my help.

About 30 minutes later, I am giving a demonstration of how to search the Internet. I ask for ideas on topics the class might like to search for. Andy jumps out of his seat, wildly waving his hand. When I call on Janet, he loudly calls out, "Chess, lets look up chess." The other boys immediately echo his request and the girls silently nod their assent. Andy continues his domination of the classroom: he calls out, demands help, and acts irresponsibly. He has learned over the years that he can engage in this kind of behavior: Bright boys can act in ways which would never be considered appropriate if the actors were slower boys or a girl. I determine that I should discuss this issue with him and send him a lengthy email message about three days later:

You have a real knack with the computer. You could be a real leader in our class, but right now you're choosing NOT TO BE. Wouldn't it feel really good to settle down, learn a lot, and then help your classmates if they need it. You catch on really quickly and I could benefit from having a good assistant. It doesn't help you or the class when you act silly, talk out and need me to help you. Write back and let me know what you think.

I receive no response, but I do notice some changes in his willingness to try things on his own. He also voluntarily helps others when they ask for help. The following week I compliment him in several messages:

I was very happy to see your improved attitude and behavior.

Thanks for having a more serious attitude in class. I appreciate it and it seems you are learning a lot.

Andy and I learn to co-exist. We both admire the other for our curiosity and love of learning. I learn how to channel some of his energy in productive ways and how to let the rest go with a boys-will-be-boys shrug of my shoulders. Andy learns that I will not enable his “I need help” behavior and that he can do well without help. As teachers and students, we have miles to go in our pursuit of ungendered classrooms, but Andy and I accomplished the first inch – and we both felt like that was quite an achievement.

Discussion of Vignette Two

This was the saga of a bright boy who received more than his share of attention. He learned quickly and thought deeply. His questions were important contributions to the classroom community. BUT he demanded and got too much attention, and consequently was cheating himself out of reaching his potential. This was also the saga of a bright boy who has learned to play the bright-boy game – a game designed to allow bright boys to do little but appear like they are accomplishing a great deal. Walkerdine (1990) reported that many teachers overestimate bright boys’ successes and competencies *because* they break the rules, ask questions, and challenge the classroom code. This counts as evidence of their competence and, in turn, generates more attention by teachers. This well-established system not only advantaged boys, it silenced girls; moreover, it did so subliminally and most people are unaware that this insidious system is working all too well in American education today.

Boys Have the Floor Syndrome

Examination of the audiotapes revealed that I gave preferential treatment to boys. My shock at this revelation paralleled the shock of many other teachers who are convinced they are interacting more with girls, only to discover that it’s boys who have the floor in most classrooms. I timed representative interactions with the students at the beginning, middle, and end of each workshop and was astounded to discover that interactions with boys usually ranged from one to three minutes and interactions with girls were as brief as ten seconds and seldom longer than a minute and a half. One of the major reasons for this discrepancy was how I handled questions and requests for help. When Amie asked for help with editing her writing, I asked her to read me the paragraph she’s written. When she’d finished reading, I responded with “I heard you say ‘oops’ on a couple of things. You fix those.” I then quickly moved on to the next student. The total interaction, including Amie’s reading, lasted 34 seconds. On the other hand, when Rob requested the same type of help, this interaction transpired:

Author	<i>Let’s fix your punctuation: internet needs a capital I.</i>
Rob	<i>OK</i>
Author	<i>Is this a new sentence?</i>
Rob	<i>Yeah, it should be.</i>
Author	<i>So we need a period here, don’t we?</i>
Rob	<i>OK</i>
Author	<i>OK. Let me see. So far we have “To go to the Internet, I turn on my computer …..”</i>

I continue reading and giving suggestions for two minutes and 57 seconds. This was a frequent pattern throughout those interactions that I timed.

Review of the videotapes reveal another interesting difference in the type of assistance I gave boys and girls. Serbin and O’Leary (1975) found that teachers give boys extended directions so they can accomplish a task on their own. However, teachers were less likely to offer explanations or directions to girls and often did the job for them. I am sorry to say, that on occasion, I was one of those teachers. When Tom asked me how to get to vampire bats on the Internet, I spent four minutes and 13 seconds sitting beside him guiding him step-by-step through the process of navigating the Net. When Jing-Mei asked me to help her locate information of her native country, Korea, I took her mouse in my hand, and without a word, clicked here and there until I had located some appropriate information. Then I turned the controls back over to her with a curt, “Go to it,” and then I made my way around the rest of the classroom. It is important to note that the majority of the time I did *not* take over the mouse and do the search for the students. But when I did, it was more often with girls than with boys.

Each of these examples illustrates what Sadker and Sadker (1994, p. ix) label “insidious gender lessons and micro-inequalities” which girls suffer at the hands of teachers. Each time a teacher ignores a girl and defers to a boy for his

opinion or answer (as I did with Janet and Andy in Vignette Two), girls learn silence. Girls learn to defer to boys; girls learn to be helpful and nice and quiet; girls learn that they are worth less than boys. Even when girls excel at a task, their accomplishment becomes invisible and they, in turn, become invisible. Silent and invisible, girls are short-changed in school – and in life (AAUW, 1992).

Assertion 4: Different Expectations Regarding Behavior

As Sadker and Sadker (1994) pointed out so vividly in their landmark book, *Failing At Fairness*, boys are more active, talkative, and domineering in classrooms than are girls; they also receive more attention, both complimentary and critical, than do the girls. My messaging to the boys about their behavior was an example of a teacher giving more attention, albeit mostly critical, to boys than to girls. I wrote on this topic eight times more often to boys than to girls. Other evidence for inequitable treatment was found when I investigated the praise that I gave the students. The disruptive boys received more praise than the cooperative girls. I found that instead of asking for better behavior from the boys, I complimented them for their efforts. On the one hand, I praised boys for the least amount of effort hoping that praise would help them focus more and disrupt the class less. On the other hand, I assumed that girls were smart, focused and well behaved; I never even thought to compliment them on their contributions. Messages to Tom and Christi reflect this inequitable treatment:

To Tom	June 16	<i>Congratulations with your success on the Internet Treasure Hunt. You and Christi did a great job hunting together.</i>
To Christi	June 16	<i>Are you enjoying the Internet Treasure Hunts?</i>

In the following email to students, I complimented the boys for what I took for granted in the girls:

To Tom	June 14	<i>Thank you for being a cooperative student. It helps our class when people cooperate.</i>
To Andy	June 20	<i>Thank you for having a more serious attitude in class.</i>
To Dave	November 2	<i>It was nice to see you working quietly and INDEPENDENTLY on Monday. I'm proud of you!</i>
To Rob	June 17	<i>I was very proud of your effort on Thursday. You worked hard, were very responsible, and had a good attitude.</i>
To Nate	June 25	<i>Try to focus more on your research paper on Monday and Tuesday.</i>
To Al	November 16	<i>Please try to use your time carefully today. You spend a lot of time NOT on the computer. Please try to focus more today.</i>
To Andy	June 14	<i>Wouldn't it feel good to settle down and learn a lot. It doesn't help when you act silly, talk out and need me to help you settle down.</i>
To Andy	June 17	<i>I was very happy to see your improved attitude and behavior.</i>

The comments to Rob and Dave fall into the overtly-stereotypical-response-to-a-disruptive-boy category. I had asked Rob to leave our workshop for three days and to return only if he could be a more responsible member of our class. His behavior was so much better on his return that I wrote him the message that appeared above. When I considered the new Rob versus the old Rob, I felt justified in my praise. But had I considered the new Rob and almost any girl in the class I would have seen the praise as biased treatment that favored a single boy over all the girls. This bias is, in effect, a double-edged sword: the first wound is inflicted by complimenting boys for behavior that is expected of girls; the second is inflicted by spending inordinate amounts of time with boys, thus taking away from the time and attention that should rightfully belong to girls.

Conclusion and Implications for Classroom Practice

It is difficult for me to speak objectively about my interactions with the students during my study, and so I make no claim of objectivity. My goal was to report as succinctly and thoroughly as I could how my interactions with the students. I was outraged that there were instances of gender bias in my classroom. As a firmly established feminist, I used the Internet as my text, operated without the constraints of a prescribed curriculum, and evaluated my students' progress in a holistic, contextualized manner. Given these conditions, I presumed my classroom would reflect very little gender bias. I was wrong. The beguiling nature of this pervasive beast renders it invisible to all but the most discerning individual who has learned to get beyond our cultural training of how to do gender.

Despite my intentions to treat girls fairly, I inadvertently perpetuated the gender bias so often found in schools. In her chapter on girls and mathematics in *Schoolgirl Fictions*, Walkerdine (1990) suggests that "schooling reproduces relations of production by virtue of the institutional power of teachers. . . . School is a place in which fantasy

becomes inscribed in fact” (p. 63). Because I was in the perceived position of power (teacher), my unequal treatment of boys and girls perpetuated and validated the reality of gender bias in the classroom. Both Walkerdine and I viewed this institutionalization of gender bias as part of the hidden curriculum of schools today.

Gender bias is difficult, but not impossible, to overcome. In my upcoming book, I describe numerous strategies that teachers can follow to begin to erode the gender bias embedded in our culture and our schools. I close by outlining just a few of these strategies that teachers can use to create more gender-neutral classrooms.

- See yourself as part of the problem, AND part of the solution.
- Increase your awareness of your interactions with students by videotaping your teaching and
 - categorizing and counting your interactions with boys and girls,
 - timing your interactions with boys and girls,
 - looking for stereotypical ways that you treat your students, and
 - examining your expectations for males and females.
- Increase your students’ awareness by discussing gender bias and gender equity with them; try some of *their* ideas about creating gender-neutral classrooms.
- Ask you students to locate gender inequities in what they read, view, hear, say, and write.
- Begin using more gender-neutral language, teaching and learning materials, and examples.
- Create a classroom atmosphere that encourages, supports, and challenges, both boys and girls.
- Make a greater effort to call on everyone in the classroom, not just the boys.
- Discuss gender equity with your colleagues to share your struggles as well as your successes.

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