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SCHOOL OF EDUCATION

Essay/Assignment Cover Sheet

Name of Student: _____ Emily Briody_____

Course: _____ Fine art and Education_____

Submission Date: _____ 8th January 2024_____

Lecturer/tutor Patsy Bodkin_____

Essay/Assignment title _____ _Find and discuss an example where curriculum (broad definition) has had a socially destructive impact (past or present)...Ireland or elsewhere (countries/regions outside of Ireland, past or present)?

Student ID: 20380381

Word count: _____

Criteria	Ex	VG	Good	Fair	Poor	Comment
Introduction (statement of problem, response to task)						
Range and use of appropriate sources						
Development of argument (analysis, interpretation)						
Conclusions (application, findings, outcomes)						
Presentation, language, academic conventions						

Please tick Y/N for Profile of Needs

General comment:

Indicative grade:

Tutor: _____

Date: _____

Copy of this sheet must accompany all written submissions

Gender Bias in the Classroom in America

Introduction

In this research essay I am going to discuss what the role of Gender bias plays in the classroom in America and ways that the teacher can help reduce how it can affect the student's understanding when it comes to stereotypes. Gender bias is an example of social destruction in curriculum that needed to be targeted in America. Gender is part of the teacher bias that I am going to go focus on. I will start off by briefly defining what is meant by the Teacher Bias and the prejudice against particular groups, where students can be treated unfairly by their educators. I will discuss the difference between a male and female teacher and how they teach differently, the comparison between girls and boys in the classroom and how they work and answer differently and ways that they can start to all work the same way.

What is meant by Teacher Bias?

Teacher bias can be known as educational bias, referring to prejudice against particular groups on the basis of gender, age, race, sexual orientation, or economic standing which can cause students to be treated unfairly by their educators. Teacher bias falls into one of two categories such as Implicit bias (unconscious bias) and explicit. Explicit bias (educational bias) involves educators that are aware of the prejudices and attitudes they may hold towards particular groups of students depending on race or gender. Implicit bias (Unconscious bias) involves prejudices that a teacher may possess but is completely unaware of, which can lead to damaging effects in a classroom setting. Both, Implicit and Explicit bias involve fixed

notions, attitudes and opinions towards particular groups causing unfair treatment towards certain students in the class. (learninga-z.com)

Gender Bias in the Classroom

In light of a teacher's own beliefs and expectations for each gender, they can recognise their own biases by reflecting on how they treat children. In accordance to accepting children for who they really are this is the first step. To become gender neutral by not favouring one from another is the second step. This can be achieved by supporting classroom behaviour that defies gender stereotypes. Acknowledging and celebrating individual qualities from both sides of the spectrum can encourage genderless behaviour (McCormick, 1994). Student achievement is rather associated to whether a teacher's instructional style matches a student's learning style. While female students learn best cooperatively and males learn much more easily through competition, it is vital for teachers to give all students opportunities to take part in both learning modes (Fennema, Peterson 1987). In a 1990 study, Good and Brophy stated additional differences in the way teachers treat students noting that teachers give boys a much better opportunity to develop ideas and be active reinforcing boys for general responses more so than they do for girls.

The Destructive Nature of Gender Stereotyping

Research rarely addresses how gender stereotyping affects and miseducates boys as well as girls. In a 2002 study, Pollack states that the myth, "boys should be boys", justify the stereotype of the "dominant and macho" male obstructs many of their natural behaviours.

Boys are often hesitant to open up about their feelings of fear for fear that they would be labelled as “feminine”.

Sadker (2002) implies that boys do not always fit in easily in schools with the presence of girls or because a majority of teachers are female, as girls tend to be quieter and less disruptive in responses to challenges in comparison to boys’ acting out. Cognitive skills such as reading/writing curriculum with an emphasis on verbal abilities tends to develop sooner with girls rather than boys (Kindlon, Thompson, 2002). Boys are still assumed to be the winners of the gender gap division despite these early struggles as they later are viewed as more successful in the business world. As males become older, they come across social pressure not to appear “feminine”, which can make them more likely to encounter loneliness as they are stereotyped into less flexible gender roles than girls (Sadker, 2002).

Does Gender Bias Shape Education

Some believe that gender stereotypes are a product of early rearing practices in the home environment and schools should remain neutral in order to allow the students to develop their own gender identities, as some controversy surrounds the role of teachers in neutralising stereotypes (Gray & Leith, 2004).

Sadker and Sadker (1994) observed that boys call out the answers eight times more often than girls, and what they say may have very little relevance to the question that was asked, comparing boys to be more active than girls as they dominate classroom conversations achieving more attention whether its positive or negative.

Many terms are attempts to construct what it means to be male or female, therefore making stereotypes appear concrete. These words are not challenged and are taken for granted,

creating a language developed by men for men, representing a linguistic bias against women such as “Boys don’t cry and girls don’t fight”, which should be avoided. Teachers’ ought to use de-gendering terms as “police officer” and “firefighter” instead of “policeman” and “fireman” (Suzanne Romaine, 1999).

Teachers shouldn’t only praise girls for their physical appearance or neatness of work, instead commend both girls and boys for their ability. While girls learn best collaboratively and boys learn best while challenged by peers/rivals, it is vital that students are given plenty of opportunities to participate in both methods of learning ability (Marshall, Reinhartz, 1997).

Teachers should avoid separating girls from the boys when making a seating plan or when forming teams for classroom contests and projects, this can send a message that there is a difference between the groups (Stanford, 1992).

A number of studies have demonstrated that textbooks, children’s literature and computer software remain to portray stereotyped gender role behaviours, emotions and occupations, with more male characters depicted more often than females which can shape children’s attitudes, beliefs and gender role identity (Alpe, 1996; Gooden & Gooden, 2001; Murphy & Gipps, 1996; Prentice, 1986).

Teachers can help to reduce the idea of gender role identity by selecting literature that presents nontraditional characters engaged in non-stereotypical behaviours, such as boys being sensitive and nurturing and girls being brave and adventurous (McCormick, 1994).

Ways to Address Gender Issues in the classroom

Teachers need to observe their own instructional behaviour. Working with a group of colleagues who can observe teaching experiences, recognise particular incidences of gender

bias, and review ways to change. Colleagues can serve as coaches helping a peer, guiding them to improve new instructional strategies (Joyce, Showers, 1982). Time for self-reflection after a teacher has taught a class is a way of identifying and changing inappropriate teaching behaviours. Audio/videotaping is a way of journalling and self-reflecting (Griffith, Laframboise, 1997). This method reveals the teachers' strong beliefs and the reasons for those beliefs.

Each student is different, the way each student connects with the curriculum depends on their individual learning style, previous knowledge and experiences, interactions between the teacher and the information that they are learning and the ability to organise the new information and incorporate it into existing knowledge base (Forman, Kushner 1983).

The idea that children separate themselves by gender as early as preschool is proven by studies on gender role identity. Children determine appropriate role identities by imitating adults, receiving praise and encouragement from adults for perceived feminine or masculine behaviour, and trying out roles with peers (Maccoby, Jacklin, 1974).

The Comparison between male and female teaching strategies

Male teachers are typically more subject-focused, more direct with their students, and more likely to employ lectures as a teaching method. In contrast, female teachers seem more indirect, ask a lot more questions, and prioritise student centred learning (Grossman, Grossman, 1994). Therefore, men teachers incline to be more dominant and stricter and conduct their classrooms with much more control and organisation compared to women. Female teachers appear to form warmer instructional environments, where a lot more

questions are asked and there is a greater opportunity for risk taking to take place (Durkin, 1997).

Some teachers can be unconscious of gender bias in the classroom, particularly because it may be indirect, where they don't realise it. Teachers should be sensitive to ways of delivering feedback. Teachers treat and respond to students in a different way centred around their expectations of student performance, which can have a harmful outcome on girls academic and social achievement (McCormick, 1994).

Conclusion

Based on my research, there are strategies for the teacher to help prevent students from getting caught up in the stereotypical ways of society. Ways of implementing the change in how students perceive stereotypes could be changing or updating their textbooks, literature and phrases, such as using "police officer" instead of "policeman", therefore the students are not going to assume that a police officer is masculine. Giving students a chance to see women in more dominant roles, changing the way children think from a young age. Teachers can address these issues in the class by reflecting on their way of teaching through journaling and observing how their work colleagues teach. There was a time when teachers wouldn't mix girls and boys together when grouping them for teamwork activities. Now, in the present day I can see the difference, boys and girls are put into groups by their teachers, working well together solving problems and using their different ways of thinking making our society equal.

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