

PROMOTING GENDER EQUALITY IN THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE CLASSROOM

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Poll Review!

- In your English language classes, do males or females talk more?
- Why?



Gender Inequality, a Quiz!

Objectives

1. Understand the importance of gender equality in English language classrooms
2. Practice identifying gender bias in classrooms
3. Understand how to establish an equal classroom learning environment
4. Discuss classroom strategies to promote gender equality
5. Identify gender bias in classroom texts or materials

What is Gender Equality in Education?

“Gender equality” in education refers to boys and girls experiencing the same advantages or disadvantages in attending school, the same approaches in teaching methods, gender neutral curricula, and academic orientation, all of which aim to ensure equal learning achievement and subsequent life opportunities.

- [UNESCO's EFA Global Monitoring Report 2003/2004](#)

What is Gender Equality in Education?

- **Gender Equality** = females and males have same education opportunities
- **Gender Inequality** = females and males do not have the same education opportunities



Why is Gender Equality important for education?

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- Gender inequality impacts the ability of learners to access and participate in quality education
- Providing men and women equal access to education is critical for breaking the cycle of poverty



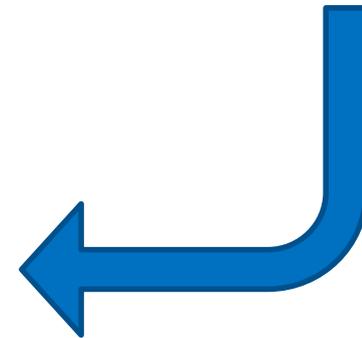
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Why is Gender Equality important for education?

- Promoting gender equality is the same as having good classroom management
- The best form of teaching is the most fair and equal form of teaching!

“Noticing” as a teacher



“Noticing” as a teacher

Tools:

- Keep a reflective journal
- Make a chart of gender interactions and participation
- Invite peer observers

IDENTIFYING GENDER INEQUALITY: A CASE STUDY

Case Study

Answer these questions:

1. What problems are happening in this class?
2. What could the teacher do now to solve these problems?

Case Study:

- The teacher is a secondary school teacher, who is teaching an 8th grade class (ages 13-14) of about 40 students.
- All the male students sit together on one side of the class, and all of the female students sit together on the other side.
- The teacher stands in one place at the front of the class and sometimes asks questions to the class.

Case Study:

- Whenever the teacher asks questions, the same three students (all male) usually answer all the questions.
- Sometimes the teacher calls on females to answer a question, but they usually refuse to answer or say they don't know.
- Whenever this happens, the male students laugh at the female students or make jokes.
- One female student will sometimes try to participate, but usually she is interrupted by a male student when she is talking.

Case Study: Question 1

1. What problems are happening in this class?

- The teacher is only calling on the first students who raise their hand
- The teacher is often only calling on male students
- The teacher is not encouraging the female students to participate
- The teacher is not disciplining male students for interrupting female students or laughing at them
- The teacher is not trying to make the class interactive or collaborative

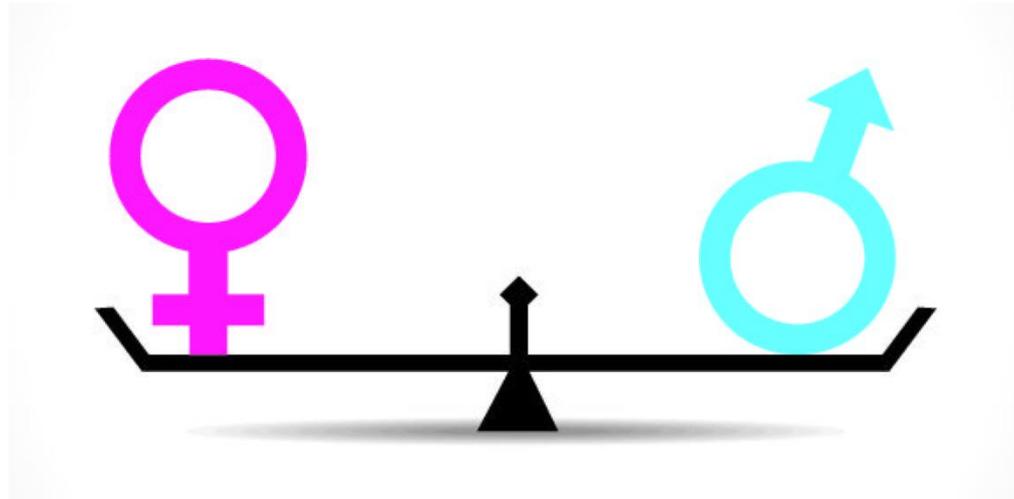
Case Study: Question 2

2. What could the teacher do now to solve these problems?
 - Wait longer before calling on students to speak
 - Alternate more between calling on female and male students
 - Support and encourage female students when it's their turn to answer
 - Discipline students who interrupt other students or who laugh at them
 - Create more interactive or collaborative classroom exercises, to accommodate students (male or female) who have different learning styles

ESTABLISHING YOUR CLASSROOM LEARNING ENVIRONMENT

Classroom Learning Environment

- Hold equal academic and behavioral expectations of all students



Classroom Learning Environment

- Establish a set of rules or classroom norms for your students from the very beginning.



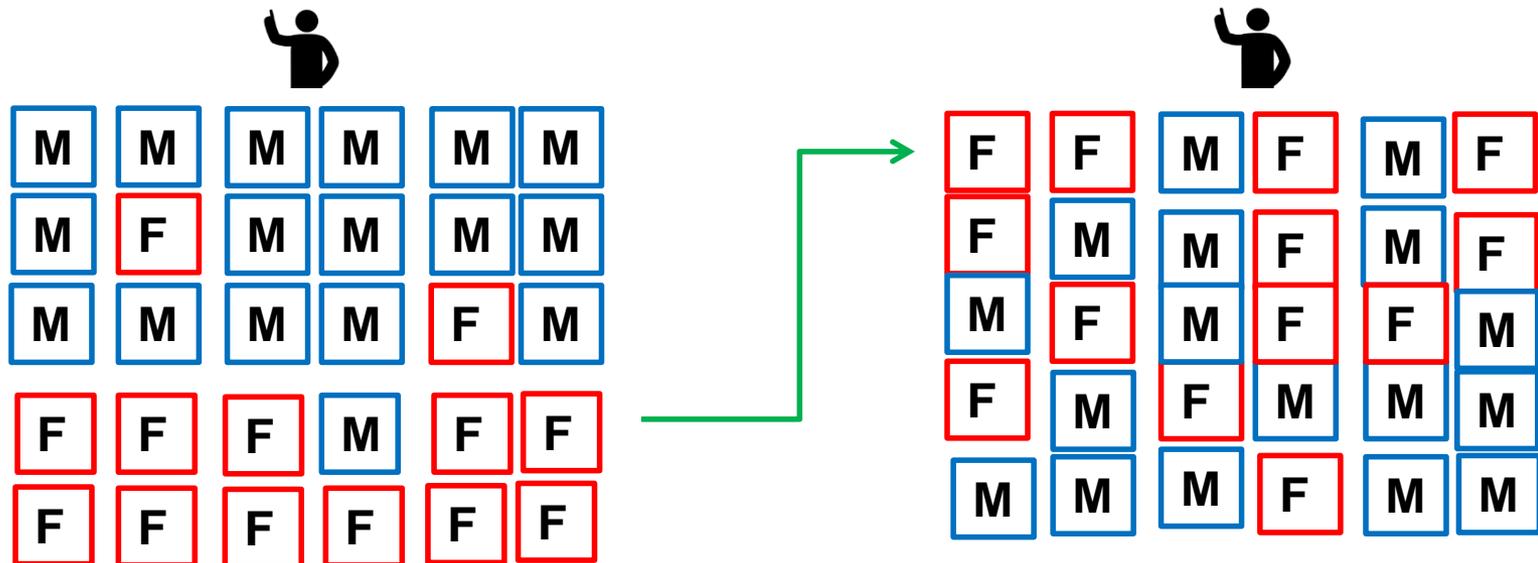
Classroom Learning Environment

- What are some classroom rules that may encourage equal treatment of both genders?



Classroom Learning Environment

- Have classroom seating that enables equal participation
- Teachers tend to interact the most with students who sit in the front 10-20% of the class



Classroom Learning Environment

- Group work versus individual work
 - Some students are not confident expressing themselves publicly



Classroom Learning Environment

- Support and encourage both female and male learners to be class leaders, possibly having one female and one male as co-leaders
- Display posters on walls that portray female and male characters in equal numbers
- If having students perform classroom “chores” in your class, refrain from having students doing tasks based on traditional gender roles. (example: boys carry heavy things and girls clean the chalkboard).

Classroom Learning Environment

- How else can you create a classroom environment that supports equal opportunities for males and females?

Please raise your hand if...

- Raise your hand if these ideas seem like something you could do with your classes?



CLASSROOM STRATEGIES

- Student-Teacher Interaction
- Body Language
- Discipline

Student-Teacher Interaction Poll!

Student-Teacher Interaction

- Call on or address both female and male learners a balanced number of times and for all subjects.
 - Don't call on first student who raises hand or yells answer
 - Count to five before calling on students to answer
 - Keep a class list and randomly call names



Student-Teacher Interaction

- Keep a list and put a check by each student's name after you call them
- Alternate between calling male and female names
- Call on hand-raisers only after encouraging all students to participate



Student-Teacher Interaction

- Give both female and male students equally complex responses to their answers



Student-Teacher Interaction

- Provide equal praise to both male and female students



Student-Teacher Interaction

- Use Gender Neutral language
 - Use female names and pronouns an equal amount as men's in class, exercises, or texts
 - Use “She or he”, “he or she”, or “they”

~~“Guys...”~~ →

“Everybody/everyone”

“She or he”, “They”

Please raise your hand if...

- Raise your hand if you could use these strategies in your classes?



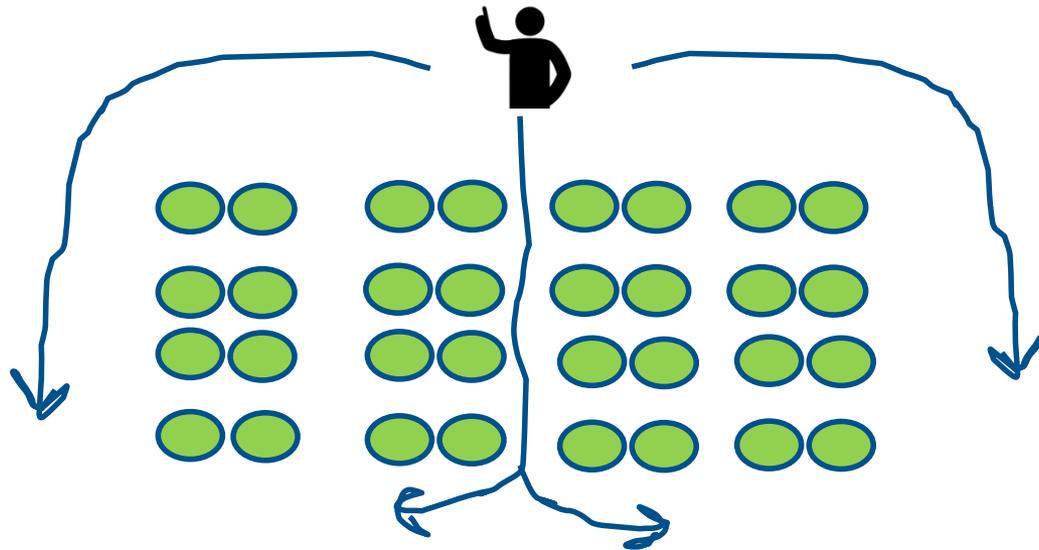
Body Language

- Be aware of your informal cues – leaning forward, walking away, etc. Make sure you are giving the appropriate nonverbal cues when both male and female students are talking



Body Language

- Move around the room, or to different locations of class as you speak.



Discipline

- Be aware and ready to intervene when male student say insults or put-downs to female students. This is especially important when female students are participating out loud in class



Discipline

- Equal offenses deserve equal punishments whether the perpetrator is male or female



Other Classroom Management Tips

- Return to the remarks of students who start to speak but are interrupted or who drop their point before finishing
- Give students the space to finish their thought, and be aware of students' whose comments who are being ignored.
- Emphasize male or female students' comments by putting them on the board.

GENDER INEQUALITY IN TEXTBOOKS AND MATERIALS

Poll Question!

- Do you feel that English language textbooks and teaching materials are equal in how they portray females and males?

Inequality in Materials

- Studies have found that many ESL texts contain stereotypes about women, underrepresent women, mention men first, and make offensive jokes about women.
- Some studies have found that men can make up anywhere between 57-80% of characters mentioned
- Textbooks are used by teachers as a core means of teaching in 70-95% of classroom time

Materials Analysis

- Briefly examine the textbook image
- What do you notice about how the men and women are being portrayed in this text?



Photo Credit: <http://www.lifetrumylens.com/gender-equality-in-global-education-policy-a-case-of-nigeria/>

Materials Analysis

- What do you notice about how the men women are being portrayed?
 - The women and are being portrayed in gender-stereotyped jobs
 - Most of the women pictured do not have jobs as high a level as the men do
 - There are more men pictured then there are women

Materials and Curriculum Checklist

- ✓ Are the materials and resources used by you or your students free from gender stereotypes?
- ✓ Do the teaching and learning materials portray girls and boys with equal prominence, respect, and potential?
- ✓ Does the curriculum reflect the needs and life experiences of both females and males?
- ✓ Does the curriculum promote peace and equality for boys and girls regardless of their race, class, disability, religion, or ethnic background?



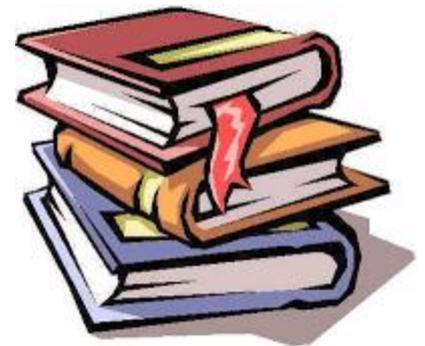
Please raise your hand if.....

- Raise your hand if you could use this checklist in your class?



Improving your materials

- Ensure that males and females are depicted equally in class materials
- Ensure that the themes, subjects, and pictures used in class materials are relevant to the life experiences of both female and male students.
- Ensure they female and male students are not just depicted according to stereotypes
- Ensure a gender balance of authors



Improving your materials

- Supplement ESL texts by including writing or work by or about women
- Cite women as well as men as authorities about various topics
- Adapt your materials when necessary to include more image and stories about women



Review

1. Discussed the importance of gender equality in English language classrooms
2. Practiced identifying gender bias in classrooms
3. Learned how to establish an equal classroom learning environment
4. Discussed classroom strategies to promote gender equality
5. Identified gender bias in classroom texts or materials

References

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Thanks for Attending! See
you on the Niing!

Questions?

“Gender Equality is more than a goal itself. It is a precondition for meeting the challenge of reducing poverty, promoting sustainable development and building good governance.”

- *Koffi Annan, former United Nations Secretary General*