This ERIC "FAST Bib," which focuses on gender issues in language and writing, presents annotations of 23 ERIC documents and journal articles published between 1987 and 1991. The first section of the FAST Bib is an overview; the second section is divided between issues that are relevant to the elementary and secondary levels and issues that emerge at the post-secondary level. The final section offers a specifically feminist viewpoint of issues in literacy. (RS)
Gender Issues in Language and Writing

by Patricia Dickinson

Feminist studies and research on gender bias have begun to open educators' eyes to the need for evaluation and change. Educators need to examine their values, beliefs, and actions in order to understand the relationship between gender and language use. It is not enough to be aware of overt stereotypes, non-inclusive language, and tendencies toward bias; educators must learn to examine the way they have been socialized and how that affects teaching styles and methods.

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Abstracts for some of the articles cited here have been abbreviated to conform to the FAST Bib format. Three types of citations are provided in the bibliography: ERIC documents, journal articles, and papers.

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Overview


Contains nine learning modules on sex equity topics, each of which provides one or more lesson plans for learning activities that combat traditional sex role stereotypes and behaviors.

Chapman, Anne. "Description of Workshop Series for Precollege Teachers on Women and Gender, Including Topics Covered, Readings Used, and Sample Handouts." 1989. 18 p. [ED 313 322]

Describes a curriculum development project designed to help pre-college teachers integrate new information and insights based on women's studies and gender scholarship into their teaching. Sample topics include the following: the history of concern with women and gender; shared and gender specific experience and behavior; and pedagogical implications of the ways society is gendered.


Suggests that today's teachers are less likely to try to communicate with minority and female students at all grade levels, and that white females are still omitted
Dickel, Michael. "Wendy’s, the Potato Head Kids, and Me: Dealing with Sexist Representations in Language and Culture or, Un-wrapping the Hamburger." Paper presented at the Annual Fall Conference of the Midwest Writing Centers, 1990. 15 p. [ED 325 848]

Discusses the sexist language on "Kid’s Meal" boxes which portray women as incompetent, passive caregivers, lacking rank and authority, and men as authoritative, adventurous, and rescuers. Describes how discussion of the boxes’ inherent values can help students recognize the importance of equal representation, as well as the content of that representation.


Describes a series of conflicts centering on gender issues at a large metropolitan high school. Accompanied by discussion questions designed to present prospective teachers with complex professional problems that ask them to interpret the situation and decide upon possible solutions.

Kernberger, Carolyn. “Just Say No to He/Men, or Teaching Nonsexist Language in the ESL Classroom.” Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the New Mexico Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages, 1990. 21 p. [ED 317 061]

Discusses the teaching of nonsexist language and reviews the history of the awareness of gender bias in language. Outlines the arguments for and against nonsexist language teaching.


Provides a syllabus and teaching notes for a course on gender and communication theory. Presents teaching notes based on the assumption that a course grounded in a gender perspective requires style in the classroom that complements the course content.


Reports findings from 43 in-depth interviews with college students about sex and sexism in school. Implications for teacher and administrator preparation.


Findings from a study of 120 first-grade children who had regular access to language-arts computer experiences indicate (1) young children do not perceive reading as a female activity; (2) for writing there was no consistent gender association; (3) computer use was seen as a masculine activity by all children.

Ollila, Lloyd; and others. “Gender-Related Preferences for the Choice of Particular Animals as Writing Topics in Grade 1.” Journal of Research and Development in Education, v22 n2 p37-41 Win 1989.

Describes a study in which four hundred fifty first-grade children were asked to imagine they were animals and to write about their animal selections. Boys tended to identify themselves with animals characterized as strong, dangerous, or wild. Girls tended to link themselves with animals that are weak, safe, or tame.


Studies the attitudes toward reading as a sex-role appropriate behavior in classrooms using basal reading instruction or the whole language approach. Suggests that the nature of instruction has a significant effect on
Post Secondary


Argues that educational discourse styles are affected to an excessive degree by sexism. Suggests that the values underlying sexism are so deeply ingrained as to be difficult to detect.


Analyzes several hundred essays written by an equal number of male and female college students in response to two separate prompts on a writing proficiency test. Finds partial support for the hypothesis that men focus on an individual's autonomy and women on relationships.


Examines teaching effectiveness through the communication style used by the instructor, as well as the biased expectations that can be held by instructors of their students' intellectual performance.


Asks several questions: To what extent do teachers' comments on students' autobiographical writing reflect unstated cultural assumptions about gender? To what extent do textbooks identify "good" autobiographical writing with the features of one gender or another? To what extent should teachers/editors attempt to be gender-neutral?

Rose, Shirley K. "Reading Representative Anecdotes of Literacy Practice; or 'See Dick and Jane Read and Write'!!!" *Rhetoric Review*, v8 n2 p244-59 Spr 1990.

Reviews college students' compositions describing the acquisition of their literacy skills. Reports that males' anecdotes tend to reflect individual achievement and competition, whereas females' writings display a process and cooperation focus. Argues that new research must be conscious of these differences, or gender-blind studies may be gender-biased by default.


Examines gender differences in topic choice by analyzing freshman writers' narratives of an incident they witnessed. Finds that pronounced, gender-based patterns influence text production, with women demonstrating caring and nurturing values in everyday life and men engaging in romantic fantasies of self-aggrandizement or apocalyptic fascination with automobile accidents.

Focus on Feminist Issues


Presents an interview with psychologist and author Mary Field Belenky. Explores her collaborative work with three other authors in compiling findings on women's cognitive, intellectual, and ethical development. Identifies shortfalls in the traditional ways of looking at women. Notes greater recent attention paid to the teaching of writing.


Explains that women's serious writing has not been considered rhetoric because of its pedagogical implications and association with practice, rather than theory. Discusses the different voice that women have which has not previously been recognized as rhetoric, but which is reinventing the rhetorical tradition and will be judged in part on the basis of relationship, growth, community, and learning.


Argues that Janet Emig and Andrea Lunsford, two eminent women theorists, have been especially instrumental in creating a feminine rhetoric which is process-oriented, relational, integrated, and collaborative.

Damarin, Suzanne K. "Unthinking Educational Technology." In: *Proceedings of Selected Paper Pres*
Presentations at the Convention of the Association for Educational Communications and Technology, 1990. 14 p. [ED 323 925]

Examines an approach to feminist "unthinking" and rethinking of educational technology. Concludes that the contributions of the teacher user and the female student user to the teaching-learning process are denied by the increasing use of educational technology. Suggests a number of questions that might guide feminist rethinking of educational technology.


Contends that males command a public discourse community of epic proportions, while women have traditionally been restricted to the private sphere. Calls for eliminating the emphasis in the classroom on argumentative discourse and correct usage, and for developing instead a community of cooperation and an awareness of many equally effective ways of communicating through writing.

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This publication was prepared with partial funding from the Office of Educational Research and Improvement, U.S. Department of Education, under contract no. R188062001. Contractors undertaking such projects under government sponsorship are encouraged to express freely their judgment in professional and technical matters. Points of view or opinions, however, do not necessarily represent the official view of the Office of Educational Research and Improvement.