RESOURCES

UNDERSTANDING THE CONSTRUCTION OF GENDER


Focuses on development of gender inclusive teaching practices and encourages teachers to explore their own understandings about gender in the classroom context.


Practical assistance to teachers in this area by suggesting ways of challenging current practices which may restrict young girls’ and boys’ educational outcomes and future potential.


Traces some causes of the crisis in masculinity, the developing interest in masculinity, and the creation of men’s studies as an academic subject. Showing that such enquiries originate in feminist theory and gay political activist theory of the 1960s, Masculinities and Identities examines the dynamics at work in the various cultural constructions of masculinity, not all of which meet with approval in a patriarchal culture. Different strands of masculine discourse are identified and examined in a variety of texts, ranging from the early decades of the twentieth century to the present. Opera, film and current news stories provide examples for exploring the ways in which we construct masculinity.

Browne, R & Fletcher, R (1995), Boys in Schools, Finch Publishing. Fax (02) 9418 8878.

Presents accounts which show how innovative approaches used in schools can change the way boys view themselves and others. A collection of writings from key practitioners of boys’ programs in both secondary and primary schools across Australia. Addresses issues of bullying, school violence, boys’ under-achievement, homophobia, sexism, boys’ non-involvement in school life, relationships, peer culture, masculinity, gender stereotypes, identity and self-esteem.

Clarke, M (1993), The Great Divide, Curriculum Corporation, Melbourne.

This work on the construction of gender differences in primary schools identifies practices and attitudes which contribute to the production of gender differences. A new framework for action is outlined.
Connell, RW (1994), Knowing about Masculinity, Teaching the Boys, paper presented to Pacific Sociological Association Conference, San Diego, USA.


An authoritative, and hilarious, guide to everything girls and women of all ages need to know about dieting, self-esteem, lipstick, nutrition, health, high heels, anti-wrinkle creams, and lots more.


Davies, B (1993), Shards of Glass: Children Reading And Writing Beyond Gendered Identities, Allen and Unwin.

Looks for ways to interact with children and to speak and write in a fashion that disrupts the male/female dualism. With boys and girls of primary school age, from a range of social and ethnic backgrounds, explores the possibility of discovering different ways of being, as well as looking at the ways in which gender relations are resistant to change.

Davies, B (1994), Poststructuralist Theory and Classroom Practice, Deakin University.

Covers classroom management, structuralism, gender identity, educational equalisation. Study materials include: Gender Stories and Language Classroom, Language and Gender—study guide and reader.

Forsey, C (1990), The Making of Men, West Education Centre. Ph (03) 9314 3011, Fax (03) 9314 1075.

Outlines the theory behind the practice, and includes chapters on: the masculinisation of males, the masculine power imperative, denial of self, boys in schools, guidelines for change.

Issues for the 90s: Resource books on contemporary issues, Spinney Press. Fax (02) 9810 6024.

Volume 6: HIV/AIDS—Examines the impact of HIV/AIDS and Safe Sex Education in Australia, New Zealand and other parts of the world.

Volume 12: A violent society?—Young people both as victims and perpetrators; dating violence; men and violence; family violence.

Volume 17: World Conference on Human Rights; human rights, aid and trade; Australia’s record and Asia’s attitudes to human rights.

Volume 24: The body beautiful—Eating disorders; body image; drugs in sport.

Volume 34: A man’s world?—Men’s health; boys’ education; how men cope emotionally with their changing roles.

Volume 41: Sexuality—Identity and sexuality; celibacy; homosexuality; gender reassignment; cross dressing.
Kamler, B, Maclean, R, Reid, J & Simpson, A (1994), Shaping Up Nicely—The Formation of Schoolgirls and Schoolboys in the First Month of School, AGPS.

Investigates gender and language in the primary classroom, examines how masculinity and femininity are constructed differently for girls and boys entering primary school by the language that surrounds them. The focus is on the first month of school, as this period is seen to be crucial in the students’ initiation into the culture of the primary school.

Laskey, Louise & Beavis, Catherine (eds) (1996), Schooling and Sexualities: teaching for a positive sexuality, Deakin Centre for Education and Change, Faculty of Education, Deakin University, Geelong, Victoria.

NSW Teachers Federation (1995), New Agendas: Girls, Boys and Equity. Contact Joan Lemaire. Teachers Federation, 300 Sussex St, Sydney, Ph (02) 9287 2100, Fax (02) 9267 5221.

Practical resources for use in schools, particularly informative in defining the construction of gender, presenting strategies aimed at examining the concept of harassment and how to deal with it.

Orbach, S (1986), Hunger Strike: The Anorexic’s Struggle as a Metaphor for Our Age, Penguin.

Examines the causes of eating disorders, arguing that they are, at once, a reflection of society’s demands that women look a certain way and deny their needs, and a rebellion against such ideas. Orbach, a psychotherapist specialising in eating disorders, also suggests ways in which the medical profession might treat these conditions more effectively.


A self-paced kit allowing facilitators to choose from a variety of workshops including: what gender is, how gender is constructed, gender in the media, gender in sport, gendered violence, effective learning and teaching, behaviour management, and reforming the curriculum.

Robertson, M (1992), Starving in the Silences: An Exploration of Anorexia Nervosa, Allen and Unwin.

Offers a feminist analysis of a condition which the medical profession regards as a psychiatric illness. Social worker and playwright Matra Robertson examines the relationship between food and femininity, and the place of the anorexic, in a culture which has created ‘a maze of food patterns, taboos and meanings’. Robertson argues that current psychiatric, sociological and feminist literature does not sufficiently explore the meanings which anorexics ascribe to their lives, and that new understandings of anorexic behaviour will emerge if sufferers are allowed to speak for themselves.
Examines how the mass media distorts images of women, and the devastating effects this can have on women themselves. It includes interviews with image-makers, medical and psychoanalytic experts, and former and current bulimics and anorexics.

Uses a narrative format to explore the ways in which gender and young people’s understanding of it impact on young people and their relationships with each other. The program is designed for use with both males and females, because girls and boys need to reconstruct their perceptions of masculinity before meaningful changes in adolescent positioning on the spectrum of masculinities and femininities can occur.

A positive and practical resource which will assist teachers to establish a constructive learning environment where boys and girls work together with mutual understanding and respect.

An incisive look at how the beauty industry and mass media ultimately oppress women. Wolf, who herself suffered from anorexia as an adolescent, devotes a compelling chapter to dieting and eating disorders.
POST-SCHOOL PATHWAYS


Identifies gender ideology and economic power as the basic issues. She concludes that, while masculinity continues to be defined in terms of paid work outside the home, and femininity in terms of mothering and housework, we are likely to see very little change in household arrangements.


Essential reading for anyone interested in the future of gender relations.

Genderwork: An Education Kit on the Concept of Gender and Work, Tasmanian SCO Gender Equity. Fax (03) 6233 6980.

An excellent practical resource for primary and junior secondary teachers. It challenges students to assess stereotypical roles and aims to effect positive changes in attitudes among students, parents, employers and the public towards those entering trades. The teachers’ guide helps teachers recognise the ways in which classroom behaviour contributes to the construction of gender and offers strategies to improve quality of schooling for girls as well as boys.


Kenway, Jane (1990), Gender an Education Policy—a call for new directions, Deakin University Press, Geelong, Victoria.


Examines the ways in which Australian families use time.

Report of the Inquiry into Equal Opportunity and Equal Status for Women in Australia (1992), Halfway to Equal, AGPS.

Women’s Studies Resource Centre, Into Our Own Hands, Video Resource Package.

Encourages girls in upper primary and junior secondary school to become involved in politics. Tells two stories: the history of Australian women’s achievement of the right to vote and to stand for Parliament; and the tale of a group of girls who learn about shared decision-making, lobbying and local and state politics as they work together to save an area of bush near their school.

VIOLENCE AND SCHOOL CULTURE


The kit is produced in two separate editions, primary and secondary, and includes professional development materials, curriculum materials, a leadership manual, a user’s guide and a video.

Uses student-centred learning to assist young people to understand violence within the context of power and gender, why it occurs and the consequences; to develop communication and negotiation skills for preventing violence in personal relationships; and to raise awareness of how popular culture and sport institutionalise violence in Australia.

National Film Board of Canada, Out: Stones of Lesbian and Gay Youth, Classroom version, video and discussion material. Available from Heathcliff Distribution, 41 Gould Avenue, Petersham NSW 2049.

NSW Department of School Education (1994), It’s My Decision. Video discussing the sensitive issue of sexual decision-making in relationships, including safe sex information.


Ollis, Debbie and Tomaszewski, Irene (1993), Gender and Violence Project—Position Paper, DEET, Canberra.


Part 1—targeted at staff and parents, covering issues such as the difference between sex and gender, how gender is constructed; the links between gender and violence; and what schools can do. Part 2—targeted at upper primary students, shows how the construction of gender is linked to violence, inequality and harassment at school, and reinforces the need for change.


Developed with secondary students, for secondary students. Through a montage of dramatic presentations, workshops and interviews, students define what sexual harassment is, what the effects are, why it happens, and what you can do about it. Students draw upon their own experiences while reflecting on the wider social contexts, and present some strategies for positive action.

South Australian Department for Education and Children’s Services, Windows on Practice. Ph (08) 8235 8059 or (08) 8372 1840, Fax (08) 8235 1197.

A means for teachers to learn about the practice of their colleagues. Documents current practice in classrooms, schools, clusters of schools and across the government education system, to inform, assist and challenge teachers in their day-to-day teaching. Includes programs to counter sexual harassment Reception to Year 7, and a program for pre-adolescent boys, 'Boys and Relationships'.
West Education Centre Inc, Footscray, Victoria, Being Me. Ph (03) 9314 3011, Fax (03) 9314 1075.

Three attractively presented posters dealing with ‘Feelings’ invites reflection on a range of emotions and how they are communicated and dealt with in daily life; ‘Conflict’: illustrates three typical approaches to conflict—submission, aggression and assertion; ‘Power’: explores the abstract notion of power—where it comes from and how it is accessible to all.

**CURRICULUM TEACHING AND LEARNING**


A collection of 10 units for Kindergarten to Year 3, middle and upper primary, aimed at enhancing the educational experiences of girls and boys and expanding their future options


This special edition presents five papers on boys in English:

- Adolescent Boys’ Perceptions of Masculinity: A Study of Group Stories Constructed by Years 8, 9 and 10 boys. Mary Rhodes.


This special edition presents five papers on boys in English:

- Critical Literacy for Boys? Wayne Martino.
- Doing Masculinity. David Buchbinder.
- Mestizaje: Interweaving Cultural Multiplicity and Gender Codes in English Studies. Maria Pallotta-Chiarolli.

Fraser, H & White, RS (1995), Constructing Gender: Feminism in Literary Studies, University of Western Australian Press.

Focuses on the idea that gender is not biologically determined but rather a construction of cultural, historical and even geographical factors. The editors have drawn together a vital and accessible collection of essays covering a diversity of topics and analysing writers from Shakespeare to Grenville, making this a work particularly suitable for use by secondary students.

Gilbert, P & Rowe, K (1989), Gender, Literacy and the Classroom, Australian Reading Association.

The book investigates how the power of gendered language affects girls and boys in their reading and writing development.

Gilbert, P (1993), Gender Stories and the Language Classroom, Deakin University Press.


Based on a broad overview of the most current research and theory on gender and English. It provides an accessible overview of the ways in which gender is constructed through language practices. The author poses questions related to gender relevant to the goals outlined in the Statement on English for Australian Schools and to key assumptions underlying English—a curriculum profile for Australian schools.

Hetherington, P & Maddern, P (1993), Sexuality and Gender in History, Optima Press, WA.

Essays which ask new questions, especially about the experiences of women, including studies of abortion, rape, prostitution and in-vitro fertilisation, as well as more ‘traditional’ subjects, such as the history of Catholicism, which are now being re-examined in the light of contemporary interest in the gender divisions and power structures in society at various times in history. This volume, from the work completed by honours and postgraduate students in the Department of History in the University of Western Australia, is an important addition to our understanding of the past in a field previously neglected by historians.


Topics covered include: our gendered identities, expanding girls futures and reforming the curriculum.


Fax (08) 9385 1922.

An anthology of 12 texts—9 short stories, a nursery rhyme, an essay and two magazine articles—by a range of quite different writers, for Year 10 and above. The texts are accompanied by activities, which apply ideas derived from contemporary literary theory to classroom practice in accessible ways. Although the concepts addressed are
frequently complex, the approaches taken are activity-based and encourage involvement from students.

**Real Girls Use Computers** (video), Westcap. Fax (03) 9688 5001.

After discovering that many girls think a career in computing means only word processing and clerical work, staff at Westcap and the Department of Business Computing, both at Victoria University of Technology, got together with students from Footscray Girls’ Secondary College to broaden computing’s image.

**Teese, R** (1995), *Gender, Curriculum and Assessment*, DEET.

The text and accompanying activities encourage discussion of the ways in which gender might be read.


Interpretation of data on what particular groups of girls and particular groups of boys study at school and on how well they achieve.

**SUPPORTING CHANGE**


**Brown, J & Reeve, P** (1993), Parent participation, equality and democracy, Chapter 8 in Smith, DL (ed), *Australian Curriculum Reform Action and Reaction*, Canberra: Australian Curriculum Studies Association (ACSA), PO Box 884, Belconnen ACT 2616.


**GENERAL RESOURCES**


This conference, held under the auspices of the Gender Equity Taskforce of MCEETYA, brought together a wide array of speakers on gender equity, covering topics such as gender reform, the construction of gender, gender and difference, the costs of gendered behaviour, and the impact of gender on post-school life.

The study was designed to provide data on gender matters in relation to boys as well as girls. The data collected provides baseline data against which progress in implementing particular aspects of the National Policy for the Education of Girls in Australian Schools 1993–97 can be judged. The report indicates that systematic and consistent action on the issue of gender does lead to improved outcomes.


Developed within the context of examination of the status of women; outlines schools’ responsibilities in contributing to the achievement of equality between the sexes and in improving the conditions of life for girls and women. All Australian schools should ensure that what is being taught and learned does justice to girls and women, taking account of their culture, language and socio-economic diversity, and is equally valuable for girls and boys.


Represents a key developmental phase in national policy processes designed to improve educational outcomes for girls. This major national initiative involved all state, territory and Commonwealth Governments working together to bring about real improvements in equality of educational outcomes for girls and boys. Builds on the National Policy for the Education of Girls in Australian Schools. Encourages direct action in such areas as curriculum. Two commissioned reports, Listening to Girls and Where Do I Go From Here?, accompany the National Action Plan.

Department of Employment Education and Training. The GEN Fax (02) 6257 2317. Published approximately eight times per year.


Terminology used in the education of girls policy area and implications for policy priorities and programs.


A report for the Gender Equity Taskforce of the Ministerial Council on Education, Employment, Training and Youth Affairs to investigate national databases that now exist in Australia, to assess what they are doing and how adequate that seems to be in terms of gender equity and to comment on whether the data collection could be done differently or better.