

Introduction

Biased messages can often be transmitted unknowingly. Students come to the classroom with many of their own biases. Educators must be aware of unconscious biases that can impact their own expectations of student ability and achievement. It is important that teachers make every effort to base their instruction and supportive activities on a wide spectrum of views and information, and on sound evidence of the facts. Students will perform to their perceived level of expectation, and educators must be sensitive to the diverse learning styles and needs of the students in their classroom. Often, assumptions are made about student ability based on traditional ways of measuring achievement and intelligence, which often show evidence of cultural, gender, and disability bias. Obviously, this negatively impacts many children.

This booklet is intended to help educators recognize common aspects of diversity often overlooked in the curriculum and/or classroom and to provide strategies to address these areas. By implementing these strategies, educators can meet the diverse learning styles and needs of students in their classrooms.

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Contents

Diversity

Recognizing Diversity in the School and Classroom 3

Disabilities

Students with Disabilities and the Vocational Setting 17

Equity

Learning and Gender 29

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Recognizing
Diversity
in the
School
and
Classroom



The basic building blocks of any school are people (Edwards and Young, 1992):

- ◆ School-board members
- ◆ Administrators
- ◆ Teachers
- ◆ Students
- ◆ Parents
- ◆ Community leaders

The climate created within the school and the classroom determines the degree of success or failure of a school-based diversity program. It is not enough for the school administration to urge others to embrace a diversity program because it is the right thing to do. The administration must plan carefully, or the result can be strong resistance from any or all of the groups of people considered the basic building blocks of the school.

Administrative Involvement

The following strategies are used by school administrations to establish an effective school-based diversity program:

1. Build trust among school employees, students, parents, and community leaders.
2. Create an open, problem-solving climate in which diversity-related problems are acknowledged and differences are clarified, both within and between groups.
3. Assign specific individuals decision-making and problem-solving responsibilities.
4. Increase within the school the sense of sharing in diversity goals and objectives.
5. Increase each student's awareness of the diversity process and its consequences for school effectiveness.

Instructor Involvement

Instructors are one of the basic building blocks of a successful diversity program. They are necessary participants in planning the diversity program, and they play a most critical role in implementing the program in their classrooms.

In an inclusive, school-based diversity program, diversity issues are not taught as a separate subject area; they are integrated into all subject areas in a school's curriculum. Each teacher in each subject area (English, math, science, vocational training, social studies, etc.) implements the program through the teaching methods and content materials he or she selects to present in the classroom.

Instructors who have implemented effective school-based diversity programs have used the following strategies in their classrooms.

1. Determine own sensitivity—the ability to identify and empathize with the feelings, values, and behaviors of others—before facilitating group activities that allow students to explore these same feelings, values, and behaviors.
2. Convey to parents the feelings, values, and behaviors that are expected of students when they are involved in group activities in the classroom.
3. Define for students the skills they must learn to use when they are involved in group activities. For example, students must learn to
 - ◆ **Examine their own attitudes** — learn about their own attitudes and how their attitudes were developed.
 - ◆ **Validate group differences** — learn that there will be differences among the values, goals, expectations, and points of view of the various members of a group but that these differences must be seen as valuable to the group.
 - ◆ **Identify group similarities** — learn that, despite group differences, there will be common goals among the various members of a group and that the group members must work to identify those common goals.
 - ◆ **Practice advocacy thinking** — learn to place one's self in another's shoes, to see a problem from another group member's point of view.

- ◆ **Validate conflict** — learn that conflict can be a creative force that defines problems and encourages open and constructive problem solving if group members use effective techniques to resolve the conflict.
- ◆ **Practice risk-taking** — learn to enjoy exploring new situations and solving new problems.

Curriculum and Bias

A critical challenge facing educators today is that of choosing textbooks and other instructional materials to meet the needs of an increasingly diverse population. It is important to make sure that the materials include representation of the variety of groups and individuals that make up our pluralistic society and that their inclusion is done in a non-biased manner. Districts can make this possible by establishing written guidelines that include standards for equity to be used by curriculum committees when selecting instructional material and textbooks.

Bias messages are often transmitted unknowingly. Biases are manifested when student interaction is limited to curriculum or materials that do not represent people from different cultures or genders, or do not include individuals with disabilities. This implies that individuals from these groups are inferior or unimportant. Inappropriate language and terminology also imply biases.

Six forms of bias have been identified in classroom materials.

- ◆ **Invisibility** — the absence or under-representation of specific groups. Absence implies that members of these groups are less valued, important, or significant in our society.
- ◆ **Stereotyping** — depicts members of any cultural group, gender, or individuals with disabilities in strictly traditional or rigid roles or assigned restricted attributes.
- ◆ **Selectivity/Imbalance** — content which highlights the perspectives or contribution of only one group and totally or partially omits others.
- ◆ **Unreality** — does not represent members of any cultural group, gender, or individuals with disabilities and minimizes their issues, events, problems, or concerns.

- ◆ **Fragmentation/Isolation** — places the contributions, issues, and concerns of non-dominant groups in an exclusive section or in their own chapter. This minimizes the importance of the information.
- ◆ **Linguistic** — omission of non-Anglo names and feminine or masculine pronouns or use of incorrect terminology.

Educators must be aware of biasing elements that may exist within curriculum and materials. A “biasing element” is any aspect of language content within the context in which it appears—which might create or reinforce a prejudice against a group of people, an uncalled-for stereotype of a group of people, or values contrary to current notions of equality and equity among people. There are three types of biasing elements:

1. **Slurs** — words, statements, modifiers, or innuendoes that are derogatory toward, insulting to, or disrespectful of a group or member of a group.
2. **Stereotypes** — failure to note a wide range of differences among individual members of a group and erroneously expressing the notion that all or nearly all group members are the same when they are not.
 - ◆ **Occupational Roles** — portraying individuals as unemployed, athletes, or in low-wage/low-skill types of occupations based on minority status, gender, or disability.
 - ◆ **Family/School Roles** — attributing certain household tasks to one gender or the other, assigning minority groups to specific types of communities (Native Americans live on reservations, etc.), or classifying groups of individuals by perceived ability rather than actual ability.
 - ◆ **Personality Traits** — characterizing members of a specific group as having certain attributes (upper income people are snobs; persons with disabilities are loners, etc.)

- ◆ **Physical Characteristics/Appearance** — categorizing members of a specific group as dressing, looking, speaking, walking, or behaving a certain way.
- 3. **Erroneous Group Representation** — when two or more groups are implied or specified in the material.
 - ◆ **Under-Representation** — the absence of a group when the content suggests it should be present or treating a group present as insignificant.
 - ◆ **Segregation** — an artificial separation of one group from another.

The following list of biasing elements is adapted from “*Reflecting Equity and Diversity*,” a bias awareness course developed by the Michigan Department of Education. It can be used to increase the vocational educator’s awareness of the typical biasing elements often found in curriculum and materials. It is intended as a resource to determine if biased messages are contained within curriculum and materials being considered for use with students.

Racial/Ethnic

Associates a given racial/ethnic group with a particular activity.

Associates a particular group with only one or two geographical locales and/or settings.

Limits social relationships between people of different ethnic/racial groups.

Consistently portrays ethnic/racial groups in stereotypical traditional dress.

Portrays ethnic/racial groups as superior or inferior in any of the following:

- ◆ Contributions to Society
- ◆ Intelligence
- ◆ Education
- ◆ Leadership Ability
- ◆ Emotional Stability
- ◆ Morality
- ◆ Honesty
- ◆ Physical Appearance
- ◆ Industriousness
- ◆ Physical Capabilities
- ◆ Social Institutions
- ◆ Social Structures
- ◆ Social Organizations

Implies that racial/ethnic groups should not socialize with others in the workplace by including pictures of segregated groups.

Conveys negative qualities through comparison of appearance.

General Stereotypes

General Stereotypes

Socioeconomic

Implies that people who have higher incomes are better than people who have lower incomes.

Implies that material possessions determine economic status.

Uses dress to denote one's social status.

Implies that manners/etiquette denote one's socioeconomic status.

Implies that level of education denotes a particular financial status.

Gender

Depicts women as peripheral and men as the center of activities in illustration or text.

Depicts men as active doers and women as passive receivers or observers.

Implies that women are less physically able and men more physically able.

Characterizes men as more capable at certain tasks and women as less capable.

Implies that men and women pursue interests based on gender rather than individual preferences.

Implies that gender determines one's position, status, and place in society—economically, socially, etc.

Disability

Tends to oversimplify and generalize about individuals with disabilities.

Focuses only on the person's disability and not individual strengths and abilities.

Depicts persons with disabilities as not capable of or desiring relationships with persons who are not disabled.

Suggests different standards of behavior, performance and discipline should be implemented for persons with disabilities.

Uses disabling conditions as a noun (the deaf, the blind, the disabled).

Refers to people with disabilities as "afflicted by" or "afflicted with."

Patronizes individuals with disabilities.

General Stereotypes

Under-Representation

Racial/Ethnic

Omits or diminishes other ethnic minorities in historical and biographical references for their achievement.

Depicts mostly European women when the achievements of women are shown vs. selection of a multicultural variety of achievers.

Portrays characters of European descent in leadership roles to the exclusion of other ethnic leaders.

Portrays minority ethnic groups mostly in subservient roles.

Socioeconomic

Implies that persons from lower income households don't achieve their goals.

Portrays only middle or high socioeconomic groups enjoying certain activities, sports, or entertainment.

Implies that only certain ethnic groups achieve higher socioeconomic status.

Gender

Uses the generic "he" to include both males and females when gender is unspecified.

Uses universal male terms when the word is meant to include both genders (mankind, man-made, manpower, forefather).

Gender (cont.)

Diminishes the issue of gender equity by grouping the problems of women and minorities together.

Omits or diminishes the achievement of women in historical and biographical references for their achievements.

Includes historical/contemporary quotes and anecdotes from men more frequently than those from women.

Consistently uses male voices to narrate audio materials.

Shows men as central figures and women as peripheral characters.

Portrays women in subservient or inferior roles.

Disability

Does not portray persons with disabilities in workplace illustrations.

Implies that persons with disabilities are nonexistent.

Diminishes the issues/concerns of individuals with disabilities.

Portrays only people without disabilities as contributors to and makers of history.

Under-Representation

Segregation

Racial/Ethnic

Includes information and insight about minorities and women in separate units or lessons only.

Portrays minority ethnic groups only in the context of their ethnicity rather than as individuals.

Shows minorities and women as peripheral characters in text or illustrations.

Socioeconomic

Focuses on contributions of persons from middle and upper socioeconomic groups.

Depicts individuals from lower socioeconomic backgrounds as criminals. Fails to include "white collar" crime.

Implies that only individuals from middle and upper socioeconomic backgrounds can be role models.

Gender

Consistently portrays males as group leaders and females in subordinate roles.

Isolates the contributions of females in separate chapters/units, rather than integrating them where appropriate.

Portrays women authority figures only with other women rather than in a gender integrated setting.

Disability

Implies that certain disabilities only occur in certain ethnic groups.

Implies that persons with disabilities are from low socioeconomic backgrounds.

Portrays persons with disabilities as loners or as only socializing with other people who are disabled.

Includes separate chapters or units about persons with disabilities rather than integrating them where appropriate.

Depicts groups of persons with disabilities always separated from the mainstream.

Portrays persons with disabilities on the perimeter of activities rather than an active participant.

Segregation

Administrators, teachers, and all the building blocks of any school will know they have created a successful, inclusive, school-based diversity program when school-wide policies and procedures and the teaching methods and content used in every classroom:

- ◆ Reflect the diverse nature of our society, both past and present.
- ◆ Present diversity of culture, ethnicity, and customs as strong, positive features of our nation's heritage.
- ◆ Present gender, culture, race, and disability in a way that builds mutual respect and understanding.
- ◆ Portray people—boys and girls, men and women, whatever their culture—as displaying various human characteristics and emotions.
- ◆ Provide a balanced representation of the cultural contributions of all groups.
- ◆ Examine the social forces and conditions that operate to optimize or minimize the opportunities for certain groups.
- ◆ Examine real problems and real people—regardless of their culture, gender, or disability—do not focus only on heroes and highlights.

(Adapted from Gloria Grant, 1974)



Students with Disabilities and the Vocational Setting



Meeting the individual learning needs and styles of every student is challenging. Students with disabilities often present more difficult challenges for vocational educators than those encountered when teaching students without disabilities.

Who Are Disabled Students?

For secondary students, most often disabled students are those who qualify for special education services at their home school and who meet the criteria under one or more of 12 disability categories. These categories include:

- ◆ mental retardation
- ◆ speech/language impairment
- ◆ emotional disturbance
- ◆ visual impairment/blindness
- ◆ other health impairment
- ◆ hearing impairment/deafness
- ◆ deaf-blindness
- ◆ autism
- ◆ orthopedic impairment
- ◆ traumatic brain injury
- ◆ specific learning disability
- ◆ multiple disabilities

NOTE: The severity of the disability and how the disability manifests itself is unique to every individual with a disability.

IEP

Most students who have one or more of these disabilities will have an Individualized Education Program (IEP). The IEP will include specific modifications or accommodations that classroom teachers need to provide for the student in the regular education setting (including vocational education). Ideally, the vocational educator should be a member of the IEP team as a regular education provider. At a minimum he/she has a responsibility to review the IEP prior to the student entering his/her program (State Accreditation Standard: 210:35-13-74) and should work closely with the student's special education teacher to assure the necessary modifications and accommodations are implemented appropriately. If the vocational educator is not a member of the student's IEP team, the sending district is responsible for ensuring the vocational teacher is provided access to the student's IEP; is informed of his or her specific responsibilities for implementing the IEP; and knows the specific accommodations, modifications, and supports that must be provided to the student.

Sending District's Responsibility

- ◆ provide vocational teacher access to the student's IEP
- ◆ inform vocational teacher of his or her specific responsibilities for implementing the IEP
- ◆ inform vocational teacher of specific accommodations, modifications, and supports that must be provided the student

In addition to secondary students who are on IEPs, a vocational instructor may have secondary as well as adult students who qualify as disabled under Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act or the Americans with Disabilities Act. Under each of these acts, an individual with a disability is defined as a person who has a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activities, has a record of such an impairment, or is regarded as having such an impairment. Major life activities are:

- ◆ caring for one's self
- ◆ walking
- ◆ hearing
- ◆ breathing
- ◆ working
- ◆ performing manual tasks
- ◆ seeing
- ◆ speaking
- ◆ learning

Services for secondary students who are disabled under this definition are very similar to those provided to students who qualify for special education. The sending school and the technology center should work very closely to assure that the student's needs are met in the vocational classroom.

Adult students who are disabled under this definition must notify the technology center of their disability and provide documentation of the disability. An accommodation plan is developed and implemented if necessary for the individual to participate in the vocational training program. If an adult student tells a vocational educator that he/she has a disability, or if the teacher suspects an adult student has a disability, the teacher should contact the 504/ADA Coordinator on campus to assure appropriate procedures are followed.

Modifications

Regardless of whether the individual has an IEP or an accommodation plan, a student may require modifications to classroom activities and assignments. The modifications required to assignments and activities for a student will be stated on the student's IEP or accommodation plan. Modifying a classroom assignment or activity means that certain aspects of the assignment or activity are lowered or reduced to a certain extent or degree to allow the student to acquire or demonstrate acquisition of skills. It does not mean that the assignment or activity is modified so much that the integrity or intent of the assignment or activity is compromised. However, it may mean using alternate curriculum and/or materials to teach the course content to the student. The following are some suggested modifications that can be made for an individual with a disability.

REMEMBER: When determining which modification to apply, one should take into account not only the individual's needs but also the purpose of the assignment or activity. These modifications cannot be applied to every individual or to every situation.

Modifications to Examinations

- ◆ Reduce the number of exams required for the individual to take.*
- ◆ Identify alternative means for demonstrating skills and measuring progress.*
- ◆ Allow more time for regular exam.
- ◆ Reduce the length of the regular exam (making sure all necessary content is covered).
- ◆ Administer sections of the exam in intervals.
- ◆ Use more objective items (fewer essay responses).
- ◆ Give the exam orally.
- ◆ Allow student to tape record test answers rather than write them.
- ◆ Have a classroom assistant mark the scan sheet with the student's response.
- ◆ Allow the student to complete a take-home test (may be specially designed, rather than exactly like in-class examinations). *
- ◆ Substitute an assignment for a test.*

- ◆ Grade student on subject knowledge, not spelling, grammar, etc., unless it is pertinent to what the student is being tested for.

*These modifications would not be appropriate for high-stakes testing such as competency testing, licensure tests, etc. The licensing agency should be contacted to determine acceptable modifications and necessary documentation to demonstrate the student's need for specific modifications. These modifications should be discussed with the IEP team or with the accommodation team and included on the student's IEP or accommodation plan.

Modifications to Assignments

- ◆ Repeat instructions or provide more detailed directions.
- ◆ Provide course syllabus or outline.
- ◆ Use individual learning packages with clearly stated objectives.
- ◆ Use progress charts, informal individual feedback interviews, etc.
- ◆ Give instructions through several channels (written, oral, demonstration, etc.).
- ◆ Provide materials that are programmed or that can be self-checked.
- ◆ Brief the student on key points before starting an assignment.
- ◆ Reversals and transpositions of letters and numbers should not be marked as wrong if they are a manifestation of the student's identified disability. Instead, reversals or transpositions should be pointed out for correction.
- ◆ Allow student to print rather than write in cursive.

Modifications to Regular Assignments

- ◆ Allow more time for regular assignments.
- ◆ Reduce the length of the regular assignments.
- ◆ Break the assignment into a series of smaller assignments.
- ◆ Reduce the readability of the regular assignment

(physical format, shorter sentences, spacing, reduced reading level, etc.).

- ❖ Underline/outline major points in the regular assignment.
- ❖ Change the format of the instructional materials.
- ❖ Provide alternative supplementary materials to the regular text (workbook, edit).
- ❖ Use different format materials to teach the same content (puzzles, games, tapes, etc.).
- ❖ Use high interest/motivating materials along with drill materials.
- ❖ Use interest checklists or informal interviews to determine student interests.
- ❖ Share remediation or reinforcement materials from other teachers.
- ❖ Use adaptive equipment or facilities (jigs, ramps, etc.).
- ❖ Provide study aids (hints, cue cards, spelling list, guides, calculators, etc.).
- ❖ Use color-coded materials/textbooks.
- ❖ Use tape-recorded materials and texts.

Modifications to Written/Reading Assignments

- ❖ Allow the student to demonstrate acquisition of skills by performing the skills or completing “hands-on” or physical assignments.
- ❖ Allow the student to give oral presentations, reports, projects, role-play, etc.

Modifications in Presenting Content

- ❖ Provide the student with an outline of upcoming classroom lectures.
- ❖ Provide the student with a cassette recording of lectures for individual review.
- ❖ Emphasize major points in lectures by using handouts, transparencies, maps, and charts.
- ❖ Speak more slowly when lecturing.
- ❖ Allow a teacher aide or volunteer to take notes for the student.
- ❖ Allow a classroom peer to make copies of their notes for the student.

- ◆ Use visual materials (charts, filmstrips, slides, films, maps, etc.) or audio materials (tapes, records).
- ◆ Use individualized learning centers or learning packages.
- ◆ Provide laboratory, “hands-on,” or learning-by-discovery experiences.
- ◆ Use programmed learning or self-checking materials.
- ◆ Use independent study experiences.

Modified Criteria for Evaluation of Student

- ◆ Use a pass/fail system to evaluate the student.
- ◆ Use a pass/fail system for attendance.
- ◆ Give student credit (Cr.) if his/her work is commensurate with his/her ability. Give a grade of “F” if effort is not present.

Accommodations

Students often manifest certain behaviors as a result of their disability, and these behaviors must be accommodated.

Accommodating a student for certain behaviors means to adjust the environment, methods of teaching, or methods of presenting information to eliminate or compensate for a particular behavior.

The following charts list some suggested accommodations for specific behaviors students may exhibit.

REMEMBER: The accommodations necessary for an individual to participate in a situation will be stated on the student’s IEP or accommodation plan and are based on individual need. They cannot be applied to every individual or to every situation.

Behavior Exhibited	Suggested Accommodations
Difficulty sustaining effort and accuracy over time.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Reduce assignment length and strive for quality rather than quantity. ◆ Increase the frequency of positive reinforcements. Provide immediate feedback when you observe the student doing something well.

Behavior Exhibited	Suggested Accommodations
<p>Difficulty following a plan (student has high aspirations or goals but lacks follow-through).</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Assist student in setting long-range goals by breaking goals into realistic parts. ◆ Use a questioning strategy. For example, "What do you need to do to accomplish this goal?" Continue asking questions until the student has reached an identified goal. ◆ Have the student set clear time lines and establish how much time he or she needs to accomplish each step. Monitor the student's progress frequently.
<p>Difficulty sequencing and completing steps to accomplish specific tasks.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Break task into manageable steps. ◆ Provide examples and specific steps to accomplish tasks.
<p>Shifting from one uncompleted activity to another without closure.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Define the requirements of a completed activity. For example, "You must complete these four steps before you can go on to the next project."
<p>Inappropriate behavior when working with others in class.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Assign a specific role to the student when he or she is working in small groups. ◆ Provide structure by defining the task, listing the steps necessary to complete the task, and assisting the group to define roles and responsibilities of each group member.

Behavior Exhibited	Suggested Accommodations
<p>Difficulty following through on instructions.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Make sure you have the student's attention before giving instructions. ◆ Use cues to alert the student that important information is about to be given. ◆ Accompany oral directions with written directions. ◆ Give only one direction at a time. ◆ Quietly repeat directions to the student after the directions have been given to the rest of the class. ◆ Check for understanding by having the student repeat the directions back to you. ◆ Place general methods of operation and expectations on charts displayed around the area or provide reference pages for the student to place in an organizational notebook. ◆ Develop job or work cards. ◆ Use fewer words when explaining directions. ◆ Provide examples. ◆ Have a peer demonstrate the task to the student.

Behavior Exhibited	Suggested Accommodations
Difficulty with tasks that require memory.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Structure activities and assignments so that the student uses visual, auditory, and tactile modes of learning. ◆ Allow student to “sub-vocalize” when completing tasks.
Difficulty taking tests.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Allow the student extra time for testing. ◆ Allow the student to be tested orally. ◆ Use clear, readable, and uncluttered test forms. ◆ Allow enough space for the student to write his/her response.
Difficulty with written material.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Provide student with a copy of reading material with main points underlined or highlighted. ◆ Provide an outline of important points that is organized by categories. ◆ Tape record chapters in a text. ◆ Provide more white space between sections of assignments, tests, or reading assignments.

Behavior Exhibited	Suggested Accommodations
<p>Easily confused when provided with spoken information, lectures, or audiovisual materials and has difficulty taking notes.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Provide the student with a copy of the presentation or lecture notes. ◆ Allow peers to share carbon copies of notes from presentations for lectures. ◆ Provide framed outlines of presentations. ◆ Allow the student to tape record presentations for lectures. ◆ Emphasize key words, points, phrases, etc.
<p>Difficulty sustaining attention to tasks or other activities and is easily distracted by extraneous stimuli.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Reward the student for sustaining attention. ◆ Break activities into small units. ◆ Reward the student for timely accomplishments. ◆ Cue the student by using physical proximity and touch. ◆ Provide a quiet place or preferential seating.
<p>Poor handwriting or inability to write.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Provide a scribe for the student. Grade content, not handwriting. ◆ Allow the student to use a computer or special equipment. ◆ Shorten assignments and emphasize quality over quantity.

Behavior Exhibited	Suggested Accommodations
<p>Student interacts poorly with adults, defies authority, or engages in passive manipulation.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Provide the student with frequent and positive attention and feedback when he/she demonstrates appropriate behavior or accomplishes tasks successfully. ◆ Talk with the student individually about the inappropriate behavior and its effect. Provide examples of why the behavior is inappropriate such as, “What you are doing is....” Or “A better way of getting what you need or want is...”

What if?

When appropriate modifications and accommodations are provided for students with disabilities and implemented correctly, the student can usually attain the skills necessary to become competent employees within specific occupations. If the modifications or accommodations outlined in the student’s IEP or accommodation plan are not effective and the vocational educator is certain they are being implemented correctly, a request can be made to reconvene the IEP team or accommodation team. At this time, the IEP team or accommodation team will revisit the modifications and accommodations and determine if others are available that might be more effective. If not, the team may need to revisit the placement of the student to determine if it is the least restrictive environment for the student or if there are alternative placements available in which the student could attain his/her occupational goals.

REMEMBER: Modifications and accommodations are not intended to make school or life “easier” for students with disabilities. Modifications and accommodations have been identified through deliberate and extensive measures and are necessary and important in order that the student may learn.



Learning and Gender



Reaching Every Student

Gender equity means expanded options for all people. It supports learning in an environment free of gender bias and unrealistic stereotypes about appropriate male and female career choices. It means having dreams and goals based on talents, skills, and interests and pursuing those with the support of family, education, and the business community.

Gender Differences in Communication

Men and women possess a mixture of traits that have previously been considered exclusively masculine or feminine. There can be a great deal of variation between the way women and men speak, which may lead to frustration when men and women try to communicate with one another.

Research has shown that men talk more than women. Women speak less frequently in mixed groups and are less likely to initiate topics of conversation. The following communication styles can assist you in developing effective lesson plans to reach all students.

In Meetings	
Men tend to:	Women tend to:
<ul style="list-style-type: none">◆ speak at length◆ use louder voices◆ are more likely to interrupt◆ resist being influenced in public	<ul style="list-style-type: none">◆ speak briefly◆ phrase statements as questions◆ wait for turns◆ smile and nod more than men
At Home	
Most men see home as:	Most women see home as:
<ul style="list-style-type: none">◆ freedom from talk	<ul style="list-style-type: none">◆ freedom to talk

In School

Boys tend to:	Girls tend to:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ receive more attention (8:1 ratio) ◆ be listened to more carefully ◆ be active and more competitive ◆ focus on goals ◆ be independent thinkers ◆ offer advice and solutions ◆ receive more precise feedback ◆ be criticized more ◆ be given more time to respond 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ be process focused in communication ◆ receive less attention ◆ be asked fewer questions ◆ send and receive more nonverbal and verbal cues ◆ be more actively involved in maintaining a conversation ◆ switch speaking styles during communication (conversation may interject dialect with standard speech.) ◆ build rapport and talk things over ◆ use more questions, hedgings, and qualifiers in their speech

In the World of Play

Boys tend to:	Girls tend to:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ focus on competition and conflict—win or lose situations ◆ involve action with less emphasis on talk ◆ closely follow agreed upon rules ◆ always have a goal line 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ focus on communication and interaction ◆ involve fewer players ◆ have few guidelines ◆ involve negotiation ◆ be more actively involved in maintaining a conversation

It is a fact that our schools and the workplace are diverse, and to ignore differences between genders is to be in a state of denial. Basically, the most intelligent and appropriate response is to be sensitive to gender and cultural differences in communication. If schools and businesses are not sensitive, unrealistic decisions on the basis of individual prejudices and biases are made.

One vital area to address is gender-biased language. In one study, elementary school children were asked to draw pictures of cavemen. They drew men. But when they were asked to draw cavepeople, they drew men, women, and children. In the English language, regardless of which meaning is suggested for the word “man” (adult man or human being), the effect has been to exclude or overlook women and girls and their contributions. The exclusive use of masculine pronouns has a similar effect.

Interaction

Teachers need strategies to improve their skills in working with all students regardless of gender, ethnicity, age, or disability. Many people do not think that girls and boys are treated much differently from each other today, especially in schools. Certainly most educators do not intend to be biased against any student. They want to treat students individually and fairly.

Regardless of the best intentions, actual behaviors are based on deep-rooted assumptions that differentiate between appropriate roles and jobs for women and men. These assumptions, often unconscious, result in subtle differences in the way we treat students, in what we expect from them, and how we think they should act. The results of these unintentional differences in treatment have both short- and long-term consequences. Awareness can be raised and teachers can learn strategies that increase fairness in schools.

In spite of teachers' best efforts, studies show:

- ◆ Approximately 25 percent of American students do not interact with the teacher at all during class.
- ◆ Nearly 65 percent have one interaction or exchange (positive or negative) with the teacher during class.
- ◆ Fewer than 10 percent have three or more interactions with the teacher during the class period.

Interestingly enough, these interactions typically fall into four types: praise, 10 percent; criticism, 5 percent; remediation, 33 percent; and neutral responses, 52 percent. Neutral responses tend to be the least effective responses for learning. Additionally, most teachers, whether women or men, give boys more attention than girls.

Sometimes it is difficult to remember that the more interaction students experience, the more learning takes place. Student participation also enhances self-esteem, which in turn boosts ability to learn and remember. As students participate actively, they begin to trust themselves and see themselves as more capable. They are more willing to take risks and able to complete difficult tasks and assignments. Higher levels of interaction also lead to expanded realization of options in life.

When educators have done some searching and homework on themselves, the classroom, and society regarding biases and stereotyping, it shows in their behavior toward students. They make more conscious choices of curriculum, diversify teaching styles, and validate the individuality of every student in the classroom. As teachers become more aware of how they interact with students in the classroom, participation ratios of boys and girls become more equal, communication skills improve, and students' self-confidence grows. Educators can choose to engage students in different ways to encourage full participation.

As teachers make these efforts, students benefit. Students internalize attitudes and skills that promote working in a relaxed, professional manner with people regardless of gender, race, or disability. Students integrate other ways of thinking in problem solving and daily life. They become more aware of gender equity and multicultural issues. They make career choices based on abilities and interests, rather than circumstances and stereotypes. They recognize the need to be serious about a career path regardless of gender.

Ways to Supplement Instructional Materials

- ◆ Invite people employed in nontraditional occupations to speak to students.
- ◆ Present students with an actual picture of the work world and help prepare them for the changes that are occurring.
 - Discuss gender biases that exist in our culture.
 - Use case studies dealing with the problem.
 - Use role playing to get students involved at a personal level.
 - Use curriculum intended to eliminate gender bias.
- ◆ Have students develop a career plan, based on their interests, aptitudes, and abilities. Have them include obstacles and difficulties they would have to overcome and how they would overcome them.
- ◆ Keep a file of newspaper clippings, magazine articles, and Web sites on people in nontraditional occupations.
- ◆ Prepare bulletin boards or displays of nontraditional occupations in relation to your program.
- ◆ Have students analyze trade journals and other materials ordinarily used in class; ask them to edit materials they find that are gender-biased.
- ◆ Have students search out and interview people who have nontraditional roles.

Checklist for Infusing Equity into Mentoring, Job Shadowing, Worksite Learning, Job Placement, Cooperative Education, and Apprenticeship

“DOs”

- ◆ Make mentoring, job shadowing, worksite learning, job placement, cooperative education, and apprenticeship training opportunities available to all students without regard to gender.
- ◆ Get written assurances from businesses, industries, labor unions, and other employers that state they do not discriminate before referring or assigning students .

“DON'Ts”

- ◆ Utilize employment tests or other selection criteria that disproportionately exclude a particular class of persons on basis of gender/diversity.
- ◆ Make pre-employment inquiries concerning the marital status, pregnancy status, and/or number of dependents to determine the employment condition of the applicant.
- ◆ Participate in contractual or other relationships that have the effect of subjecting applicants, employees, or students to discrimination.

Harassment: It's Not Academic

Harassment of students is a *real* and serious problem in education at all levels, including elementary and secondary schools as well as colleges and universities. It can affect any student, regardless of gender, race, age, or disability. Harassment can threaten a student's physical or emotional well-being, influence how well a student does in school, and make it difficult for a student to achieve his or her career goals. Moreover, harassment is illegal—Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972, and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act prohibits discrimination, including harassment. Preventing and remedying harassment in schools is essential to ensure nondiscriminatory, safe environments in which students can learn.

Definitions of Harassment

What is harassment?

Attention that annoys and interferes with work, performance, creativity, and/or rights.

What is sexual harassment?

Attention, both verbal and physical, aimed at one's gender.

Schools can address harassment by implementing a harassment policy. This lets students, parents, and employees know that sexual harassment and other forms of harassment will not be tolerated.

A school is also required to adopt and publish grievance procedures for resolving discrimination complaints, including complaints of harassment. Good procedures provide an effective means for promptly and appropriately responding to harassment complaints. Finally, a school is required to have at least one employee (preferably two, a female and a male employee) responsible for coordinating efforts to comply with civil rights laws and regulations.

Resources

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