

SEEING THROUGH ROSE COLORED GLASSES

By Diane Millar
Regional English Language Officer, US Embassy



Recent Events



A World Problem



Topic and Objective:

- Look at the ways English is gendered
- Examine ways educational practices are gendered
- Get you to reflect on your own practices

Grammatical Gender



Masculine

- **Der Hund** (*the dog*)

Feminine

- **Die Katz** (*the cat*)

Neuter

- **Das Tier** (*the animal*)

And French...

Masculine

Le chat (the cat)

Le chien (the dog)

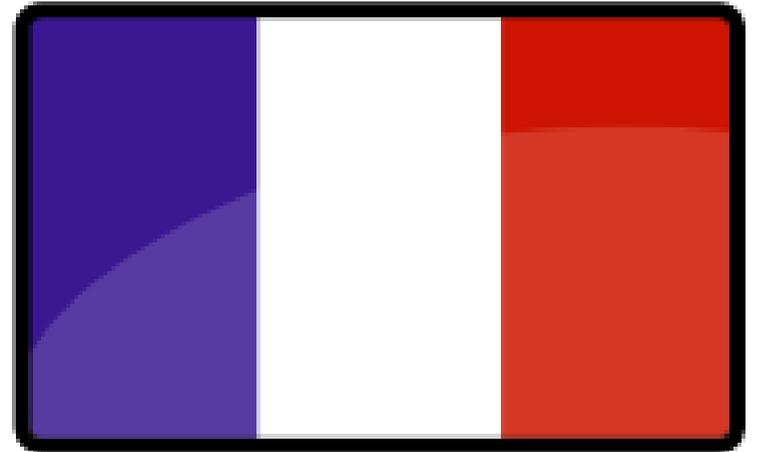
Un animal (an animal)

Feminine

La grenouille (the frog)

La baleine (the whale)

Une araignée (a spider)



English – natural gender

Pronouns:

- He, his, himself
- She, her, herself



Fine and well...until...

Sally brushed her teeth.

(That's fine as Sally is a girl).

Brian looked at himself in the mirror.

(Yes, okay he's a boy)

Anyone entering the building should show
his id card.

(Hey are only men allowed?)

Time to change...new rules..



Chicago Manual of Style

Option #1: Omit it

- The programmer should update the records when data is transferred to her by the head office.
- The programmer should update the records when data is transferred by the head office.

Option #2: Plural It

- A contestant must conduct himself with dignity at all times.
- Contestants must conduct themselves with dignity at all times.

Option #3: Replace it

- A student accused of cheating must actively waive his right to have his guidance counselor present.
- A student accused of cheating must actively waive the right to have a guidance counselor present.

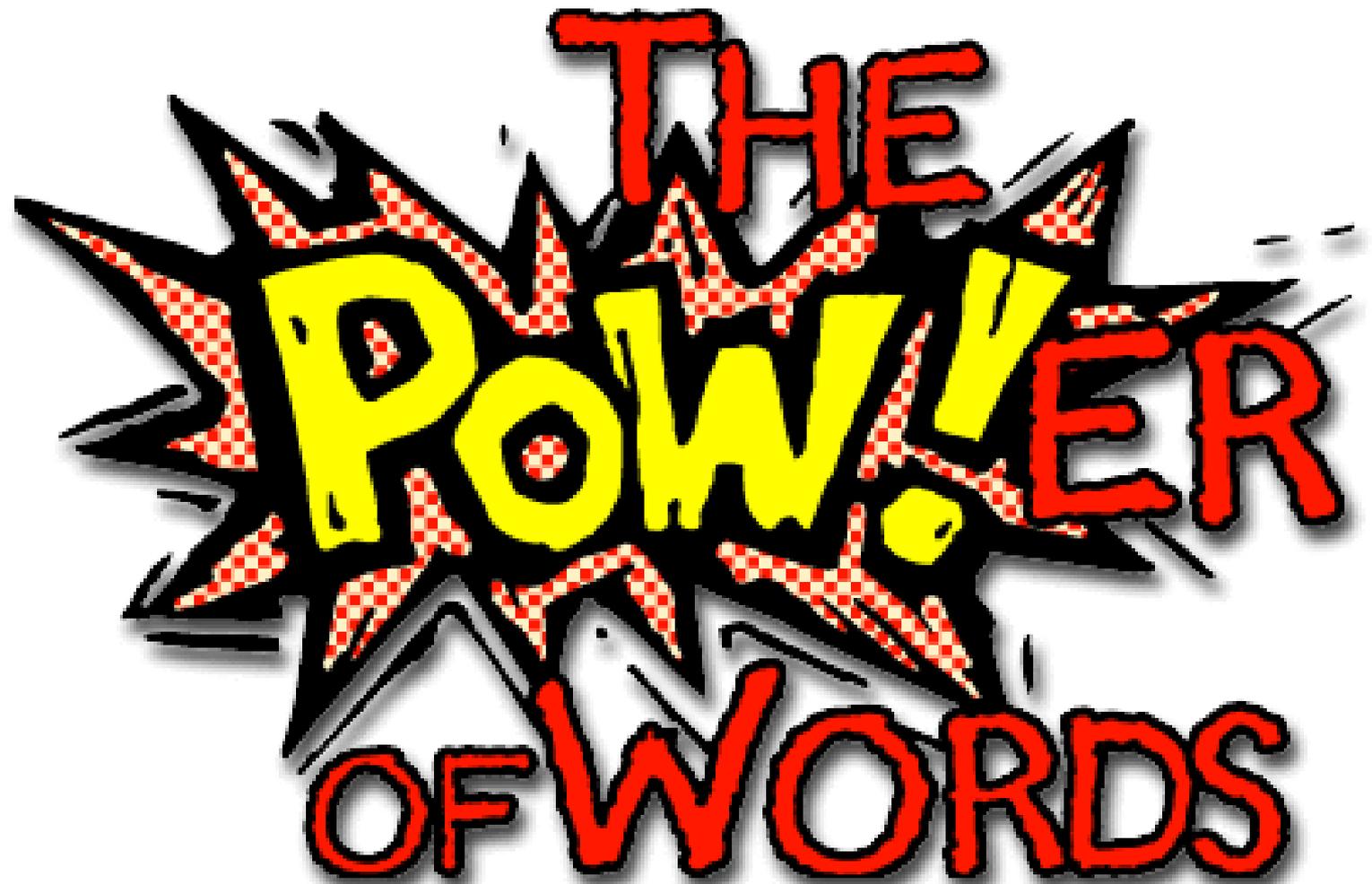
Option #4: Neuter it

- A dancer in New York is likely to earn more than he is in Miami.
- A dancer in New York is likely to earn more than one in Miami.

Option #5: Use She / he (sparingly!)

- If a complainant is not satisfied with the board's decision, then he can ask for a rehearing.
- If a complainant is not satisfied with the board's decision, then he or she can ask for a rehearing.

Lexis



Unmarked words vs. Marked Words

- Waiter / all the waiters (unmarked)
 - vs Waitress (marked)
- Mankind (unmarked)
 - Includes all women (marked)
- King (unmarked)
 - Used for root – kingdom
 - We have queen – but never *queendom
- Some exceptions - Nurse (unmarked)
 - Male nurse

On the whole unmarked term is masculine.

Markedness

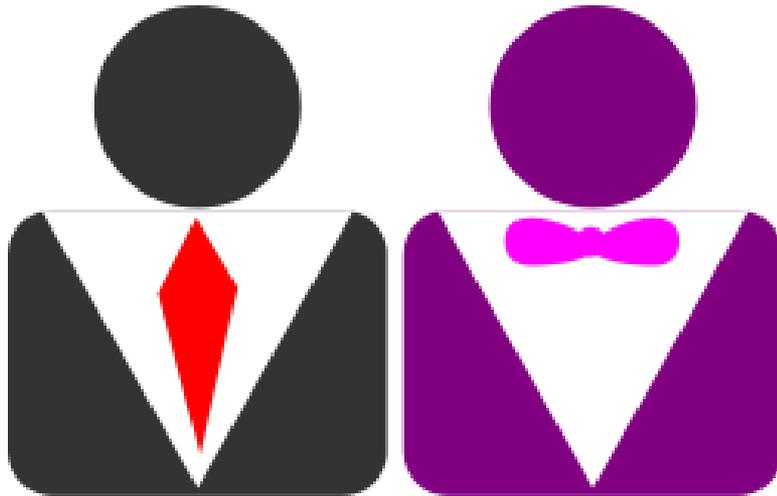
Un-mark my words!

- Actress
- Hostess
- Chairman
- Fireman
- Mankind
- Statesmanship
- Manpower
- Forefather
- Manmade
- Actor
- Host
- Chair
- Fire fighter
- Humankind
- Diplomacy
- Human resources
- Ancestor
- Artificial

Semantics



It makes a difference...



Do you want to buy a
painting from...
an old master?
or his mistress?

He's the governor.
She's a governess.

He's a homeless tramp.
She's a tramp.

Adjective Pairs

1. Aggressive
2. Strong
3. Dependent
4. Gentle
5. Logical
6. Rational
7. Submissive
8. Talkative
9. Tough
10. Emotional

1. Passive
2. Weak
3. Independent
4. Rough
5. Illogical
6. Irrational
7. Dominant
8. Quiet
9. Soft
10. Calm

Adjective Pairs – by gender

1. Aggressive
2. Strong
3. Dependent
4. Gentle
5. Logical
6. Rational
7. Submissive
8. Talkative
9. Tough
10. Emotional

1. Passive
2. Weak
3. Independent
4. Rough
5. Illogical
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7. Dominant
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Metaphors

Women are...
named Iris, Daisy, Rose,
and Lily
They can be
wallflowers and
shrinking violets.
But never call a man...
...a pansy!



Large and small; strong and weak



Women are birdies,
chicks, kittens, social
butterflies and catty.

Men are studs, bucks,
beasts and bears.

Euphemisms...

Instead of pornography

...it's adult entertainment.

Instead of prostitutes

...they are comfort workers.

Instead of a strip club

...it's a gentleman's club.

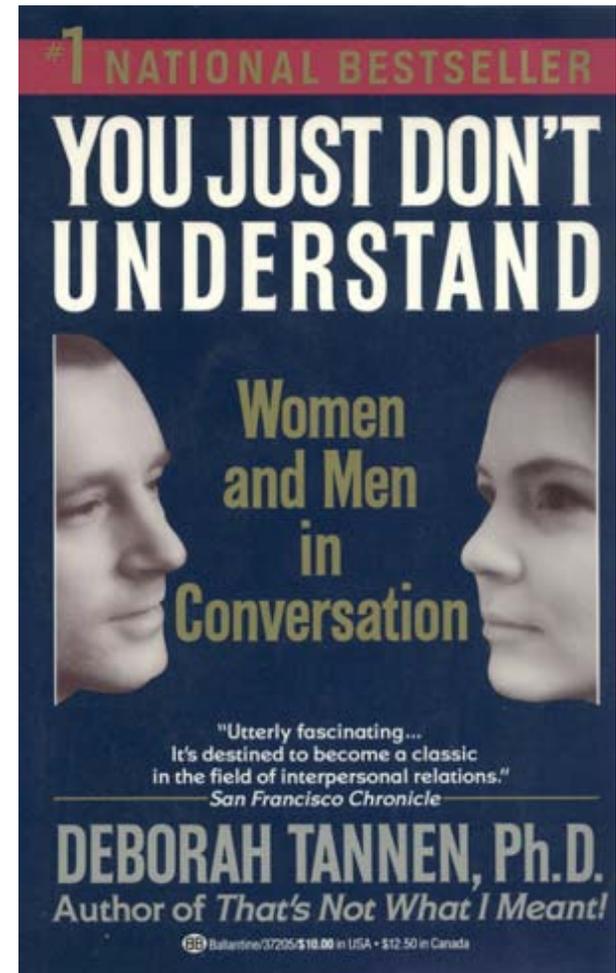
And instead of sexual harassment

...it's eye teasing.



Pragmatics

- Peter Trudgill, 1970s
 - research class / gender
- Robin Lakoff, 1975
 - Language and Woman's Place
- Deborah Tannen, 1990
 - You Just Don't Understand



Tannen's 6 Contrasts

- Status vs. Support
- Independence vs. Intimacy
- Advice vs. Understanding
- Information vs. Feelings
- Orders vs. Proposals
- Conflict vs. Compromise

Differences

Language and communication matter more to women than to men; women talk more than men.

Women are more verbally skilled than men.

Men's goals in using language tend to be about getting things done, whereas women's tend to be about making connections to other people.

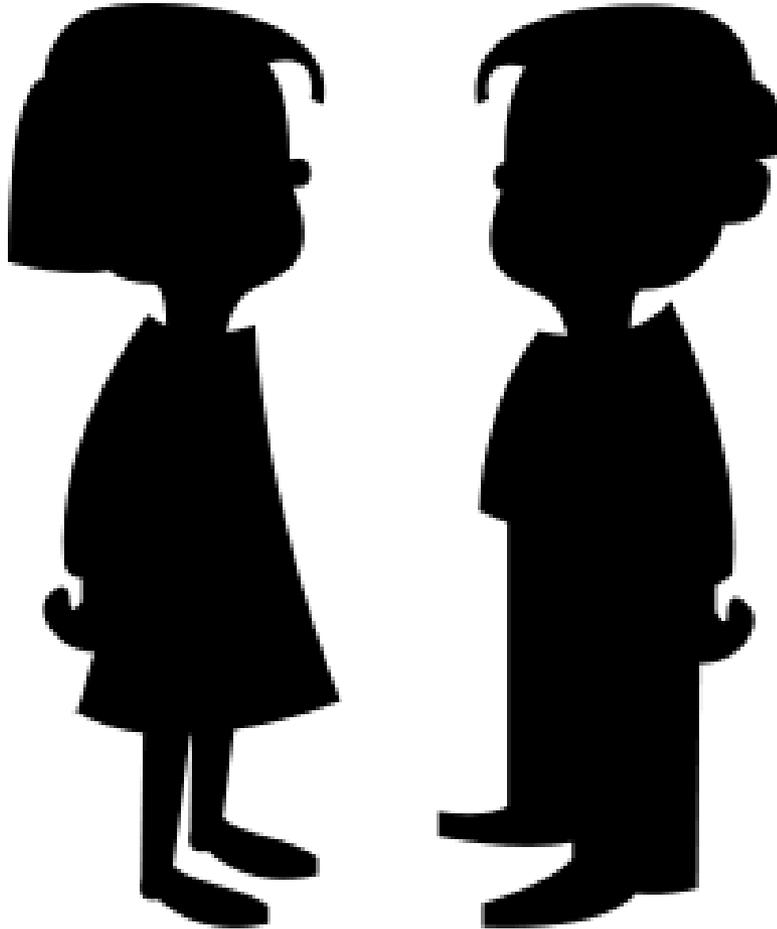
Men talk more about things and facts, whereas women talk more about people, relationships and feelings.

Men's way of using language is competitive; women's use of language is cooperative.

Women vs. Men



Caution...



Is our preoccupation
on difference...

...a justification for

DISCRIMINATION?

Deborah Cameron argues so...

- Systematic differences are based on stereotypes and myths, not facts.
- Because we actively look for differences and we expect differences, we find and publish differences.
- But in reality...

The Gender Similarities Hypothesis (Hyde, 2005) – meta-analysis found

Gender differences in verbal/communicative behaviour

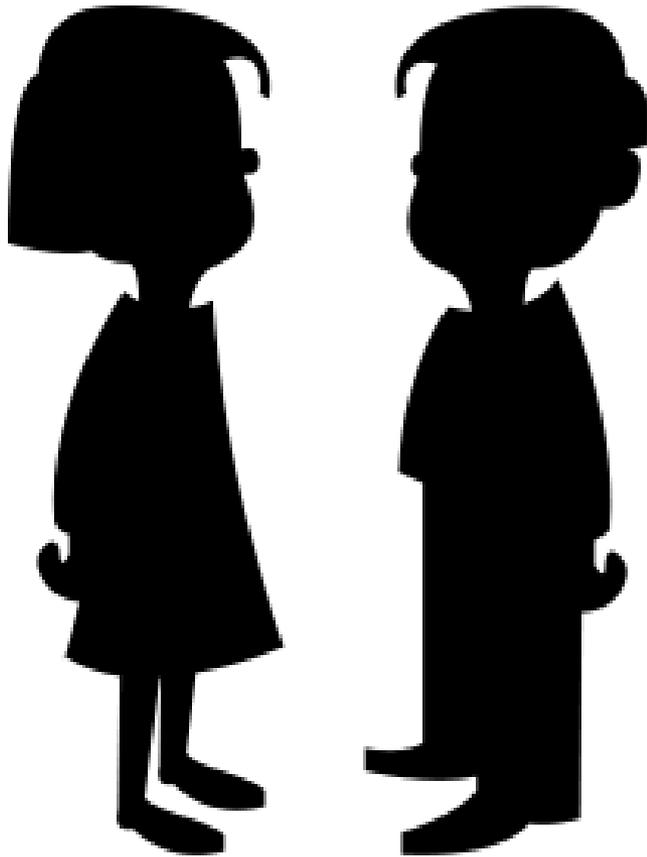
Focus of research	No. of studies analysed	Value of d	Effect size
Reading comprehension	23	-0.06	Close to zero
Vocabulary	44	-0.02-+0.06	Close to zero
Spelling	5*	-0.45	Moderate
Verbal reasoning	5*	-0.02	Close to zero
Speech production	12	-0.33	Small
Conversational interruption	70	+0.15-+0.33	Small
Talkativeness	73	-0.11	Small
Assertive speech	75	+0.11	Small
Affiliative speech	46	-0.26	Small
Self disclosure	205	-0.18	Small
Smiling	418	-0.40	Moderate

Note: asterisks indicate cases where the small number of studies analysed is compensated for by the fact that they were conducted with very large controlled samples.
Source: adapted from Hyde, 'The Gender Similarities Hypothesis'.

Or not so different after all

“Linguist Jack Chambers, suggests that the degree of non-overlap in the abilities of male and female speakers in any given population is "about 0.25%". That's an overlap of 99.75%. It follows that for any array of verbal abilities found in an individual woman, there will almost certainly be a man with exactly the same array.” (Cameron, 2007)

So instead of focusing on
perceived differences



...we should
focus on actual
discrimination.

Sexism in Education



Bloom's Western Canon

Shakespeare

Dante

Chaucer

Cervantes

Montaigne

Molière

John Milton

Samuel Johnson

Goethe

Wordsworth

Jane Austen

Walt Whitman

Emily Dickinson

Charles Dickens

George Eliot

Tolstoy

Henrik Ibsen

Freud

Proust

James Joyce

Virginia Woolf

Franz Kafka

Jorge Luis Borges

Pablo Neruda

Fernando Pessoa

Samuel Beckett

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Jane Austen

Walt Whitman

Emily Dickinson

Charles Dickens

George Eliot

Tolstoy

Henrik Ibsen

Freud

Proust

James Joyce

Virginia Woolf

Franz Kafka

Jorge Luis Borges

Pablo Neruda

Fernando Pessoa

Samuel Beckett

Also known as DWEM



Dead
White
European
Males

And here?

Literature

Anton Chekhov
Mulk Raj Anand
D.H.Lawrence
Arthur Conan Doyle
Arundhati Roy
Jhumpa Lahiri
Bhabani Bhattacharya
William Somerset Maugham

Poetry

Sujata Bhatt
William Shakespeare
Phillip Larkin
Wole Soyinka
William Wordsworth
Padma Sachdev
Ted Hughes
Nissim Ezekiel
W. H. Auden
Dilip Chitre
John Keats
Arun Kolatkar

Essays

Mark Twain
Bertrand Russell
S.Chandrasekhar
G.N.Devy
E.M.Forster
Kumudini Lakhia

And here?

Literature

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William Somerset Maugham

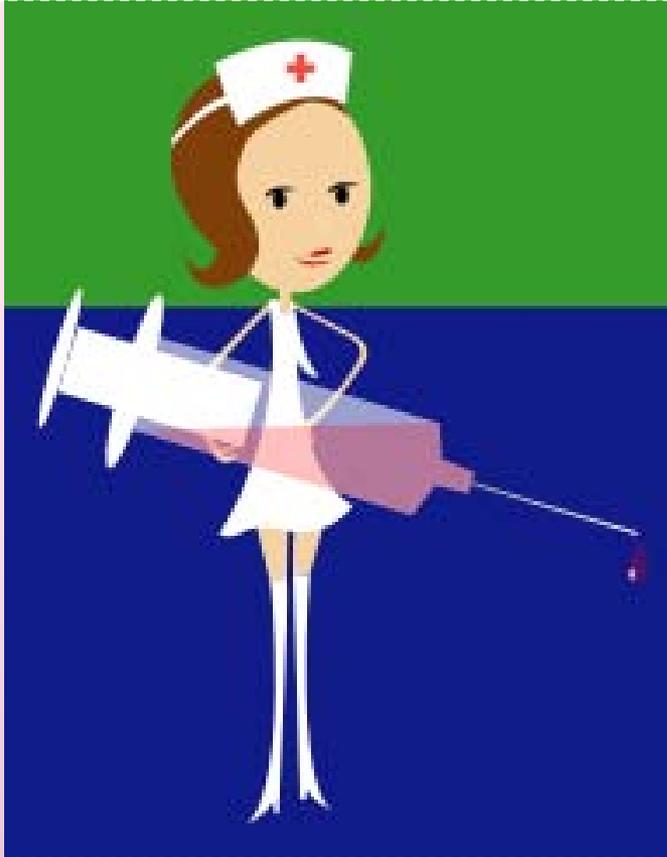
Poetry

Sujata Bhatt
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Essays

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G.N.Devy
E.M.Forster
Kumudini Lakhia

Roles for Women



Images of Women



Textbook analysis

Amini and Birjandi, 2012 – Texts/Pictures, Book III

Men were shown as Women were shown as

Teacher

Nurse

Clerk

Thief

Teacher

Doctor

Pilot

Doctor

Athlete

Boss

Wrestler

Hunter

Shopkeeper

Police

Inventor

Writer

Amini and Birjandi, 2012 – Texts/Pictures, Book III

Men were

Reading newspapers
Listening to the news
Watching TV
Writing a letter
Studying hard
Playing with a hammer
Fixing a car
Running
Riding a bicycle

Women were

Baking a cake
Cleaning the rooms
Watching TV
Working at home
Studying
Losing things
Driving a car
Crying
Making Tea

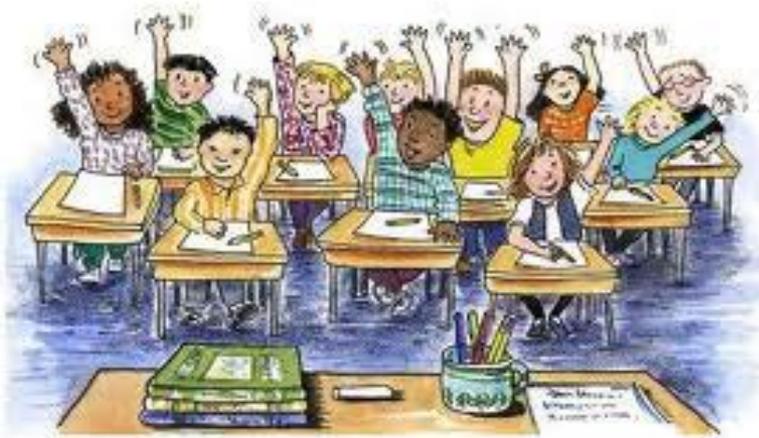
But that was then and this is...?

Blumberg (2007) study for UNESCO on gender bias in textbooks.

Overview of history and where we are now.

“Despite over 35 years of efforts in many nations, gender bias in textbooks will not soon vanish. “Second generation” studies mostly reveal a near- glacial pace of change.”

In our classrooms...



Who do you call on?

Who do you praise?

What do you praise them for?

In our communities

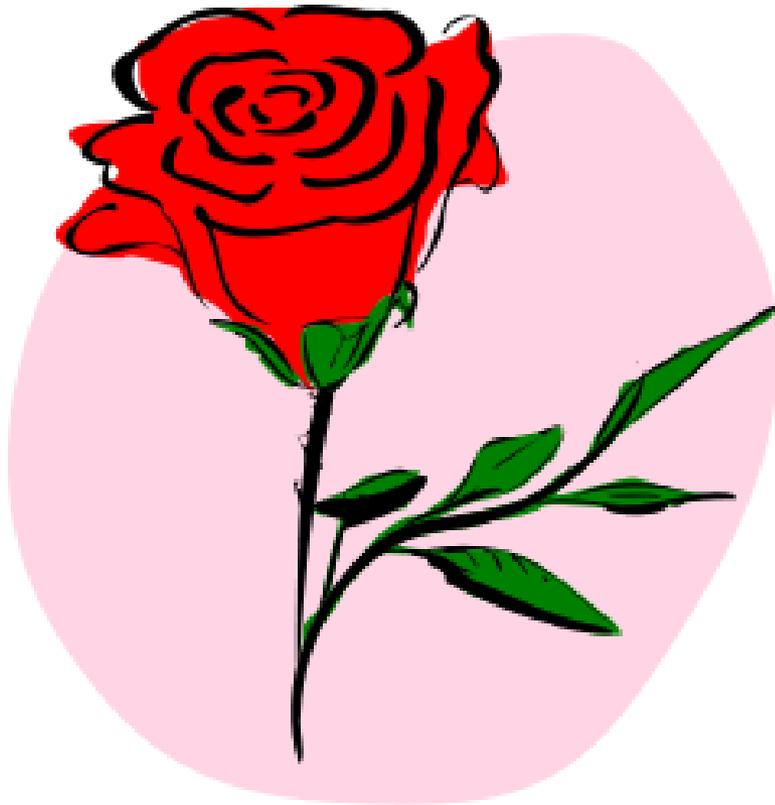


Who gets to go to our schools?

Who gets to decide?

And what do **THEY** learn if they can't learn?

Time to take off the rose glasses



Think about our language

- Pronouns
- Marked words
- Metaphors
- Euphemisms

Change our actions:

- What we teach
- What images we portray
- What we say / do

In conclusion

As people “make conscious decisions about what pronouns they will use, what jokes they will tell or laugh at, how they will begin their letters, they are forced to think about the underlying issue of sexism.

This is good because as a problem that begins in people’s assumptions and expectations, it’s a problem that will be solved only when a great many people have given it a great deal of thought.”

(Alleen Pace Nilsen)

Sources

Amini, M and Birjindi, P. (2012) “English Language Teaching Gender Bias in the Iranian EFL Text.”

Bloomberg, R. (2007) “Gender bias in textbooks.”
UNESCO.

Cameron, D. (2007) “What language barrier?”, The Guardian,
<http://www.guardian.co.uk/world/2007/oct/01/gender.books>

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