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A NARRATIVE INQUIRY TO EXPLORE THE CONNECTION
BETWEEN GENDER AND DISCIPLINE IN GRADES PRE-K-8

by

Nicole Salazar

A master's thesis submitted to the Graduate Faculty in Liberal Studies in partial fulfillment of
the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts, The City University of New York

2020

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A Narrative Inquiry to Explore the Connection between Gender and Discipline in Grades Pre-K-8
by

Nicole Salazar

This manuscript has been read and accepted for the Graduate Faculty in Liberal Studies in satisfaction of the thesis requirement for the degree of Master of Arts.

Date

Colette Daiute

Thesis Advisor

Date

Elizabeth Macaulay-Lewis

Executive Officer

THE CITY UNIVERSITY OF NEW YORK

ABSTRACT

A Narrative Inquiry to Explore the Connection between Gender and Discipline in Grades Pre-K-8

by

Nicole Salazar

Advisor: Colette Daiute

Abstract

Because behavioral discipline can impact children's development, it is important to ensure that educators work in fair and unbiased ways with all children, across gender, race, and other groups. Biased disciplining of children's behavior in classrooms can occur as micro-aggressions (McCabe, 2009), sometimes counter to what educators may believe about their own behavior. As a means of raising awareness of gender-biased treatment in classrooms, this thesis involved narrating – a dynamic activity that elicits accounts of events – and thus as a means of reflecting on behavior in everyday practices. Educators anonymously completed a questionnaire requesting narratives of various disciplinary situations they have encountered. The goal of gathering this data was to begin a database of educator-reported gender-focused events, to analyze the narratives, and, based on the analysis, create a professional development curriculum for educators to use to improve their own practice. The narrative analysis identified patterns of how the educators described problematic behaviors, student genders (via names and pronouns), student dress code violations, and student name-calling. The results indicate that educators characterized male and female students differently in disciplinary practices, in the descriptive language used, and used different disciplinary procedures. Examples of the analyzed differences were that female students were more often explained the rationale behind their discipline or negative behavior than male students and the majority of narratives about dress code included female student protagonists, in which sexuality is emphasized specifically in one narrative. Based on the research presented in Chapters 1 and 2, Chapter 3 presents a professional development program offering educators some guidance on identifying gender biases and related manifestations in classroom discipline practices.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

Abstract.....	iv
Introduction.....	8
Chapter 1: Literature Review.....	11
Chapter 2: Questionnaire Data and Analysis.....	25
Chapter 3: Gender and Discipline Professional Development Program	39
Conclusion.....	62
Appendix A.....	57
References.....	61

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 3.1 Schedule	44
Figure 3.2 Current Disciplinary Procedures.....	46
Figure 3.3 <i>Verbs correlated with gender in 100,000 plot descriptions</i> Bar Graph.....	47
Figure 3.4 Descriptions Worksheet.....	49
Figure 3.5 Narrative Analysis Worksheet	50
Figure 3.6 Gender Messages Worksheet	53
Figure 3.7 Program Evaluation Survey.....	57

Introduction

The manner in which a child is disciplined can have a tremendous effect on their development. It can establish the standard for what is acceptable behavior and how to treat others, but most importantly what is expected from them in society. Heteronormative gender roles are so strongly rooted in our culture as Americans, that it effects many of our interactions, including those between classroom authority figures and children. Studies have shown that “student sex differences in classroom experiences are due to the students themselves and not to the sex of the teacher,” (Wilkinson & Marrett, 1985, p. 138). During my years working with children, I have seen that a classroom’s disciplinary culture can set the tone for the way children behave. Most children respond best when there are clear expectations for them and for the educators, but what happens when those expectations include strict albeit implicit gender norms? Disciplinary events are ones where gender norms are likely to play out, and this study will use narration as a way to reflect on those events.

Chapter one explores prior research on the relationship between gender and discipline, which includes a variety of international studies exploring how male and female students are treated differently in the classroom. This can include the amount of times a misbehaving child is spoken to, what is emphasized when they are disciplined, or how certain children are used as instruments of discipline against their peers.

Chapter two includes the theory and rationale for narrating as a means of reflecting on and raising awareness about problematic events. The chapter then summarizes a design and analysis of the narration of various instances of discipline from educators. This analysis is based on the theory and method of dynamic narrating, which is “a concept emphasizing the interactive, communicative, purposeful nature of narrating, leading to strands of meaning researchers can identify to enhance findings about human problems, understandings, and behaviors,” (Daiute, 2014, p. 29). These

narratives came from educators working with children in Pre-K-8th grade who volunteered to share narratives about perceived misbehaviors and educators' responses to those behaviors. Examining how educators narrate these events is important because "narrating is a relational process, occurring within a system of diverse situations and diverse perspectives from an individual's point of view while always implicating others," (Daiute, 2014, p. 29). Each of these interactions or recollections has the potential to be vastly different because each educator and child are different, but if patterns arise, it can illustrate common judgements or biases that are held across social or cultural groups.

Chapter three draws on the narrative analysis to propose professional development activities for educators. This program aims to help educators uncover their biases, and how to unlearn some of the pervasive gender norms, by reflecting on their vocabulary choices and story construction in narrations of classroom events, and revising those narrations according to an unbiased framework. The materials include a mixture of data sets, video, relevant articles, worksheets, and partner and group discussions, all of which are based on the results from the study. This includes a smaller version of the narrative analysis used in chapter two which asks educators to examine their own disciplinary practices. The curriculum also offers guidance on creating a more equitable learning environment and how to speak to and discipline children in the same ways, without regard to gender.

Not only can these patterns of expectations affect the child in the classroom, but because school is where children learn the norms and rules they will carry with them into adulthood, they can follow the child throughout their life, and potentially be passed onto their future children. Certain patterns of "evaluative feedback probably have more favorable effects on boys than girls in developing self-confidence, sense of efficacy, and a tendency to attribute academic success to internal factors," (Wilkinson & Marrett, 1985, p.129). In this example, if equivalent types of

feedback are not given to girls as well, and in a way that they are receptive to, they are losing out on the opportunity to build that confidence and lay the foundation for their future academic success.

Chapter 1: Literature Review

Gender and Discipline

Discipline is a practice, applied in different ways, that is typically intended to educate children to react appropriately in diverse situations and teach children about acceptable behavior (Sege & Siegel, 2018). Of course, all discipline cannot only happen at home, but must happen at educational institutions as well. For the purpose of structure, classrooms have asymmetrical power relationships between the students and teachers (McDowell & Klattenberg, 2018). The teachers often have more speaking rights than the children, who are expected to obey teacher directives (Kupchik, 2012). Discipline in school allows for teaching and learning to occur, and for children to become socialized in preparation for adulthood (Fleming et al., 2008), but this discipline is often dependent on the gender of the student.

This research is important because it demonstrates that school engagement, especially when creating “ideal pupils,” (Odenbring, 2014, p.347), in early childhood, predicts success in later years, and if discipline is too heavy-handed, students can end up missing valuable classroom time. When the number of suspensions a child has increases, the child is more likely to drop out of middle school or high school as they progress. “Effective disciplinary strategies, appropriate to a child’s age and development, teach the child to regulate his or her own behavior; keep him or her from harm; enhance his or her cognitive, socioemotional, and executive functioning skills; and reinforce the behavioral patterns taught by the child’s parents and caregivers,” (Sege & Siegel, 2018, p. 2). Because discipline can impact children’s development to such an extent, it is important to ensure that educators are working with children in unbiased ways, unencumbered by traditional gender norms. This literature review is exploring prior research on disciplinary practices

in classrooms, how they connect to educator-held gender norms, and how those affect the treatment of students.

Children need safe environments to play and test boundaries, including in public contexts like schools, before they become adults. Children should be able to test the boundaries put in place by adults and society, and challenge norms in school without judgment. “Gender messages bombard us from birth on. Studies show that within 24 hours of a child’s birth, its parents respond to it in ways that reveal their gender stereotypes,” (Gamble & Gamble, 2015, p. 170) and children often encounter this male-female duality throughout their lives, bringing that experience with them to any future conflict or interaction. Students start school with sex-differentiated goal and attitudes (Wilkinson & Marrett, 1985, p. 80) and bring their own experiences.

It can be argued that this duality is not as strong as it once was, and society, particularly children, do not live in the confines of such strict binaries anymore. Although there is still a gap in how men and women are treated, that gap is closing. Parents and educators are understanding that this binary only works to limit children and their potential.

The self is partially determined by our discourse, which includes complex “relations of power which permeate, characterize and constitute the social body, and these relations of power cannot themselves be established, consolidated nor implemented without the production, accumulation, circulation and functioning of discourse,” (Foucault & Gordon, 1980, p. 93).

Language in Western society has been organized by binaries in which “gender role expectations and behavior, like any other entrenched expectations and behavior that develop slowly over time and become “second nature”, are not easily changed,” (Wilkinson & Marrett, 1985, p. 139).

Intercepting these, often restrictive, gendered messages early on in a child’s development allows for the longest amount of time to unlearn them, and replace them with equitable ideals instead. “As

they mature, young people focus increasingly on broader social contexts, like school, where different expectations, like those for proper classroom behavior, organize activity and meaning (Cazden, 2001),” (Daiute 2014, p. 6). The way children are disciplined at school create stories and meaning around those seemingly negative reactions, causing their mind to create patterns of expectations for their future.

Scholars have conducted the following studies on how children are disciplined at school and home, and certain variables can contribute to different groups of children being discriminated against, or simply treated differently than others. Many classroom management techniques reward obedience instead of assertiveness, and this creates difficulty for highly active students (Aina, O. E., & Cameron, 2011), and many of these studies show this poses a challenge for male students, who have been described as “more active and salient in classrooms,” (Wilkinson & Marrett, 1985, p. 120). Children often spend the majority of the first years of their lives surrounded by parents or family. Educators must acknowledge and take into account where a child’s foundation of gender roles stem from, and what kind of gendered treatment they may be accustomed to.

Importance of Language

Language has always been used to maintain gendered stereotypes within society, so it is important to realize that our vocabulary itself can enact agendas. Educators have to understand that words themselves do not hold any power until we provide context and meaning and in effect, gender the language as we use it. Barbara Read’s work in 2008 explained *disciplinarian discourse* which showed that “linguistic styles used by teachers were direct and assertive, and used to exert control over pupils, reminding them of the teacher’s power and authority,” (McDowell & Klattenberg, 2018, p. 4). Students can hear this problematic language from a variety of places,

including their families, peers, the media and educators. This language can either foster equity or not.

Language as a way of imposing gender stereotypes on students

There are many ways in which educators use gendered language, either intentionally or unintentionally. A very common example of how children experience gendering is the use of the term *you guys*. This is often used when addressing the entire class, but this in essence erases the females from the group. Educators also tend to use words like *honey* and *sweetie* (Aina, O. E., & Cameron, 2011) specifically when addressing female students. Minute details such as these can affect the environment of a classroom, and set a tone for how each gender is supposed to act and be treated.

The role of an assistant often falls on female students' shoulders in the classroom, and allows them to become closer to the educator, reinforcing the importance of females' proximity to adults. This type of behavior is often encouraged and is a way for the student to prepare to conform for success in the role of student in the future (Odenbring, 2014). One example of female students being treated differently is in the Odenbring study, in which a female student is asked to assist the group during lunch by handing out napkins. This implicitly shows the other children that it is ok to disrupt the female's meal time to partake in a type of service role, rather than have her eat as the male students may be allowed to. "Studies that have examined subtle qualitative aspects of teacher behavior suggest that teachers may be socializing boys relatively more toward self-reliance and independent achievement striving while socializing girls relatively more toward conformity and responsibility." (Wilkinson & Marrett, 1985, p. 132) In the Chick study, educators reinforced nurturing and helpful behaviors in girls, even calling one student a "good little helper" (Chick, 2002, p. 151).

Female students can also be used in other ways to help with classroom management. They can be placed next to their louder male counterparts, and used as a “damper” (Odenbring, 2014, p. 351), to help keep students quiet and regulate the male’s behavior. The female students are expected to be more mature, and capable of handling the responsibility of calming male students. They are considered a ‘good girl’, which is very problematic because it leads to less time, attention and help from the educator, since they feel she will fare well on her own.

In S. Walker’s 2005 study, male students called out in class at a rate of 8 times more than females, and their outburst sometimes had nothing to do with the discussion being had. The educator’s response in these cases was usually focused on noting that the comment was on or off topic, but when a female called out, the response was more focused in reminding her about the no-calling-out rule. In this case, the educators are focusing on the content of what the male student says, versus focusing on the act of misbehavior of the female student. “The early gender bias experiences that children encounter can shape their attitudes and beliefs related to their development of interpersonal and intrapersonal relationships, access to education equality, participation in the corporate work world, as well as stifling their physical and psychological well-being, (Hendrix & Wei, 2009),” (Aina & Cameron, 2011, p. 11). Though these experiences can seem small, these are what stay with a child as they grow up, and are used to make sense of the world around them.

Unfortunately, research in elementary school settings has shown “rather consistently that teachers give more attention to boys than to girls” (Wilkinson & Marrett, 1985, p. 3). According to L. Serbin’s 1973 study, male students received more extended conversation and direction than female students. This includes more detailed directions on how to do things themselves. Females received less instruction, which could be an indicator of stronger mental development, but can also

be seen as oversight for certain students requiring more assistance. The females did receive significantly more attention when they were physically closer to the educator, but the males received the same amount of attention, regardless of proximity. When the educators were asked about their own disciplining, they did recall reprimanding the male students more often, but did not recognize giving females a different amount of attention, compared to the males.

Studies have shown that “teachers criticized boys more for misbehavior, even though boys did not misbehave more than girls,” (Wilkinson & Marrett, 1985, p. 89). Brophy and Evertson, with Anderson, Baum and Crawford (1981) noted that “teacher attitude data revealed small but statistically significant differences favoring girls over boys in teacher’s perceptions of such variables as maturity, persistence, achievement level, cooperation, and attentiveness. About two thirds of teachers’ free response descriptions of girls were positive, but only about half of their comments regarding boys were positive,” (Wilkinson & Marrett, 1985, p. 126).

The saying *boys will be boys* has been used to excuse male children’s behavior when in reality it is problematic, and has been particularly understood as such in recent years in terms of sexual assault.

The Constructs of Femininity and Masculinity

Characteristics such as aggression, leadership and control are seen as more masculine, whereas being caring or nurturing is seen as more feminine. Although femininity is often linked to being delicate, this is opposite of how many female students are disciplined. This may be because females are given so many requirements for being a *good girl*. The *good girl* label is a prime example of why educators need to be reflexive in their teaching and have discussions on the gender norms children exhibit. “The form of emphasized femininity manifested in the present study is the construction of a silent, quiet and compliant girl who is subordinated to dominant gender norms (cf.

Blaise 2005),” (Odenbring, 2014, p. 354). Whether it be how females participate within the classroom, or how they are expected to act, these gender norms are still alive and well. “The 'good girl' image was strongly linked with stereotyped behaviours regarded as appropriate for young women—polite, respectful, conscientious, helpful, eager to please, obeying without question.” (Robinson, 1992, p. 278). Some studies show that although statistically males receive harsher punishment than females, “teachers and administrator are quicker to punish female student in an effort to maintain their ‘purity’, or to uphold standards of femininity that contradict unruly behavior,” (Kupchik, 2012, p. 160).

In recent years, female students’ behavior has not necessarily changed, but how they are policed has. Previously, “police would have ignored girls’ misbehaviors as harmless, but now they are more likely respond to this misbehavior with arrest,” (Kupchik, 2012, p. 188), meaning expected gender norms are changing. These kinds of gendered pressures can be particularly harmful for students who do not identify strongly with the gender associated with their sex or with any gender specifically.

Dress Code

Dress code is an area of discipline that, especially in recent years, has been outed as having a disproportionately negative affect on female students. These rules often mean that females are held to the dress code standards much more often than males are. When it comes to policing sexuality, it often only applies to female students. The dress codes for females usually include prohibiting clothes that supposedly promote sexuality, but this in turn treats them as objects. Although males are theoretically held to the dress code as well, their rules are focused more on prohibiting gang association and violence, rather than anything having to do with sexuality or

exposure (Kupchik, 2012). These policies may technically be gender neutral, but are still enacted differently because gender norms are still heavily enforced within institutions of education.

The Role of Discipline in Educational Institutions

Although parents have primary and legal responsibility for their child, the school's children attend are a large part of their childhood and where they learn social norms. These institutions work toward social reproduction, and this includes helping children learn self-discipline, and how to react and respond when they encounter an authority figure, such as a parent, adult, or police officer. "Young children create and internalize their own meanings of gender, based on the social cues of the adults," (Aina & Cameron, 2011, p. 18). Any interaction they have with an adult can potentially influence how they define the world around them. It is important that gender is looked at because daily interactions with educators can aid in socializing both their male and female students into gendered behavioral expectations.

States have various groups and programs in place to police youth, and ensure they follow the rules society has provided them with. There are various programs that are responsible for preventing misbehavior, such as TASC, the Truancy Assessment and Service Centers, in the Southern part of the U.S. Those with lower socioeconomic status are often monitored more by the state, and controlled with punishment, whereas those with higher status are in control of the advantages they receive throughout their youth (Kupchik, 2012). This can lead the students to becoming objects of punishment as opposed to partners in the process of learning (Kupchik, 2012).

One of the largest studies was conducted by Chiu and Chow, in 2010, which looked at 107,975 students in 7,259 schools from 41 countries. This study examined classroom discipline with the understanding that when effective, self-discipline becomes internalized and helps foster a sense of responsibility in the children. A variety of questionnaires were sent out to voluntary

students and principles. Some students were later selected to take a longer assessment of 2-hours, followed by another questionnaire. Additional data was obtained from the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development's Program, for International Student Assessment (OECD-PISA). The reported classroom disciplinary practices included things such as how often "the teacher has to wait a long time for students to quiet down," "students cannot work well," "students don't listen to what the teacher says," "student don't start working for a long time after the lesson begins," and "there is noise and disorder," (Chiu & Chow, 2011, p. 522). Once analyzed, the results showed that classrooms with more female students and higher mathematic achievement had better reports of discipline from the teacher questionnaires. The student's perception of teacher support and student-teacher relations was also reported to create a better disciplinary environment, by means of minimizing disruptive behaviors and encouraging responsible behaviors.

One study was able to identify three philosophies of discipline that can vary widely depending on culture, socioeconomic status, race and current trends. "Wolfgang (1999) suggested that teachers may use three discipline philosophies while handling misbehaviors of the students: Relationship-Listening, Confronting- Contracting, and Rules and Consequences," (Erdena & Wolfgang, 2004, p. 4). In Wolfgang's 2007 study, when disciplining males, educators most often used the "Rules and Consequences" philosophy, allowing the educator to use maximum power in the classroom, and dictate the type of behavior they are expecting. For females, educators most often used the "Confronting-Contracting" philosophy, in which the educator confronts the misbehaving student and encourages them to change their behavior. This indicates that educators used strategies that exerted maximum power when with their male students. There also appears to be an assumption that male students can handle more severe punishment than females can. With their female students, the educators' rationale was that females have better verbal skills and

therefore negotiation is more useful when disciplining them. This may explain why female students were negotiated with more, and perhaps given lighter discipline.

Discipline at Home

The first place most children encounter discipline is at home. Even the best parent can find themselves unknowingly using gendered identities and language when disciplining their child, particularly since much of this is instilled from our own childhood. Children then bring that experience and knowledge into the classroom, where educators may have to help children unlearn some of these pressures and inequalities.

Parents often stress the development of independence with male students but focus more on the child's proximity to adults for female students. Studies have shown males in Europe and the United States get harsher punishment at home compared to females. Sorbring, for example, demonstrated that 58% of children from 205 families in Sweden felt they would be disciplined differently if they were of the opposite gender (Sorbring, 2004). From this same group, families that used harsher disciplinary methods also had more gender-stereotypical parental behavior, as well as encouraged gender-typed behavior including doing certain chores around the house. This reasons that if there are stronger gender roles in the household, the disciplinary methods used may be more intense, perhaps because there are more "rules" or norms, that the child is expected to follow.

Rationale for using Gendered Discipline

Disciplinary styles must be adapted to each individual child, and some feel gendering discipline is the best and most effective way to reach them. There is some research that shows small differences on how male and female students learn. One issue that negatively impacts male

students frequently is Zero Tolerance Policies. This is often implemented when a school has concerns about violent offenses, such as bringing a knife or drugs to school. This disproportionately impacts students of color, specifically males. In addition, “boys are more susceptible than girls to the ill effects of poverty and poor home environments,” (Yang, 2018, p. 336). Another suggestion for correcting gendered discipline was to increase the number of male educators in the field. Although this may lessen the feminine stereotypes around the teaching profession, it does not necessarily impact motivation or accomplishments made by the male students. There is also the question of whether male students need this extra attention, with frequent over-diagnosis, and “throughout elementary school, males are far more often referred to school psychologists and clinics for problems ranging from disruptive behavior to learning disabilities (Bentzen 1963),” (Serbin, 1973, p. 796).

Discipline and Race

This thesis will not specifically cover the interactions of race and discipline, as there are too many additional factors and variables to take into consideration. There has been some research in which race, gender and discipline overlap, supporting the common mistake that poor and minority youth are often seen by authority figures as more threatening in their actions, even when the misbehavior is similar to a white child (Kupchik, 2012). Part of why this is so problematic is that adults can have different perceptions of what is threatening. This can be particularly the case when the educators do not come from the same cultural background or neighborhood as their students. This subjectivity is cause for concern because many times, youth are more likely to get in trouble for minor rule violations, with the educators being the only ones to decide if a rule was actually broken. This does not allow for the student to have much of a voice or agency. Because African American and Hispanic youth are disciplined more frequently for minor transgressions than other

students, punitive school discipline policies may disproportionately worsen outcomes for students of these racial/ethnic backgrounds, (Marchbanks III & Blake, 2018). When policies or rules are not created in a manner that are culturally and gender inclusive, youth can end up being the victims of these gray areas. Black students are more likely to see these disciplinary discrepancies than white students. The most common reason is defiance, or *willful defiance* (Yang, 2018), which includes talking back to educators, repeated lateness or using a cellphone in class.

After a 2016 study from the OCR (U.S. Department of Education’s Office of Civil Rights), in a southeastern district in the U.S., it was found that African American students were disproportionately overrepresented in disciplinary actions, with African American girls being given disciplinary consequences 6 times more often and suspended at a rate of 5 times than their white peers, (Kemp-Graham, 2018). The research suggests that it may be because certain hairstyles or clothing do not conform to “White middle-class female expectations of femininity,” (Kemp-Graham, 2018, p. 32). Often times these infractions are due to the dress code, or the policy maker’s interpretation of the female students being assertive, offensive and confrontational, and therefore, defiant. “It is important to note that these very behaviors that girls are disciplined for are actually behaviors that successful African American women have identified as necessary for success in combating both racism and sexism in society (George, 2015),” (Kemp-Graham, 2018, p. 320).

Long Term Effects of Unequal Discipline

The language used can be very problematic because it can influence how children perceive themselves. A common label is a *bad student*—in this case the focus ends up being on the student and not on the action itself that was disruptive. Students want to be seen as more than just their misbehaviors. Students can get caught in a “reputation cycle” (Robinson, 1992, p. 281). “Repeated suspension has been linked to a variety of negative outcomes for students, including academic

failure, negative school attitudes, grade retention, and school drop-out (Brooks et al., 1999; Nichols, Ludwin, & Iadicola, 1999),” (Mendez, 2003, p. 31). Not only would breaking down gender expectations influence students, but can improve how staff work as well. Male educators may feel more comfortable asking for support, or admitting difficulty controlling their class.

Policy

In addition to educators getting hands-on training on this topic, the larger school or program policy must also reflect these values. It can be here where biases can have a larger impact, and the student may be treated a certain way because of their gender, and not as the individual child they are. “The relatively conservative nature of their attitudes towards sex roles and models of masculinity and femininity will undermine the effectiveness of gender equity initiatives and policies aimed at eliminating some of the sexism in schools,” (Robinson, 1992, p. 285). These equitable environments and policies are increasingly important with more children identifying as a part of the LGBTQ or non-binary community. Educators’ beliefs and attitudes are key to making the classroom a more equitable environment, “however, when educators do not believe they are responsible for educating every child, even those who challenge them, or when educators’ prejudices lead them to dismiss children on the margins, these negative beliefs may impede the success of any initiatives that attempt to change the status quo (Corbett, Wilson, & Williams, 2002),” (Kennedy-Lewis, Murphy & Grosland, 2016, p. 23). Continual development for educators can help avoid these prejudices, and not just present them as abstract ideas that do not directly apply to their daily student interactions.

Looking at the types of material present in the classroom is also important. Many times the main character or hero in books is male. We now understand how important it is for students to see

themselves in the literature they consume. This is part of making the classroom an equitable and comfortable environment.

Conclusion

This is a sampling of the research that is currently available on the interactions of discipline and gender. There are many nuances when exploring how children interpret discipline and gender norms that overlap. Clearly there is still work to be done to ensure that male and female students are treated equally, and are not oppressed by gender norms consciously or unconsciously being pushed on them in institutions of education. The gap must be closed between policy and practice in this regard. The language that educators use when discussing and addressing discipline is crucial to children creating positive relationships with authority and understanding their role in the classroom regardless of gender. Chapter three will include a language-based professional development program for educators to combat some of these biases surrounding gender and discipline and provide guidance when creating an equitable classroom and disciplinary policy.

Chapter 2: Research Design and Analysis

Narrative Theory and Design

The purpose of the study was to attempt to gain access to how educators think about and understand the disciplinary methods they choose and how that changes based on gender of the child being disciplined, if at all. Because of the importance of language, as seen in Chapter One, the goal was to use language as a tool to understand educators' implicit enforcement or compliance of gender roles through the way they chose to discipline.

Questionnaire

The data from the questionnaire included a total of 65 responses from 13 participants. Programs or schools were located mostly in New York State, with 12 participants and 1 in Connecticut. Participants worked with children in grades Pre-K through 8. Programs ranged from general education public schools, afterschools, private schools, special education and ESL programs. The questionnaire was sent to a small list of educators from a variety of programs, and they were encouraged to share the link with other colleagues who may be interested in participating. This snowball method was used because of the need for anonymity. It was also the most convenient way to gather data since participants were not restricted due to specific program or location. This provided the largest pool of participants in an effort to obtain more approaches for analysis. These educators' narratives were analyzed for their content and narrative structure, however the educators' specific demographics or their relationship to the narratives are not included in the analysis.

The questions intentionally prompted narratives because “people use the ordering of events in narrative form to guide perception, expression, and interpretation of those events” (Daiute, 2014, p. 4). The way in which the conflict and discipline is described, and specifically the words used, can

be indicative of the values the educators hold, even unknowingly. The goal of gathering this data was to identify if there were any patterns in these descriptions and narratives, and if so, attempt to understand the rationale behind them and develop ways to prevent it in future instances. These narratives have the context of “an ecology - a system of settings, institutions, physical environments, formal and informal social relations and events,” (Daiute, 2014, p. 34) which all contribute to the knowledge systems individuals have set up in their minds.

The questionnaire was sent via SurveyMonkey.com where data was stored in a password-protected electronic format. No identifying information such as their name, email address, or IP address was collected and responses were anonymous in an effort to get the most honest answers possible. Participants were not compensated in any way. Participants were asked each of the following 5 questions and provided open-ended responses:

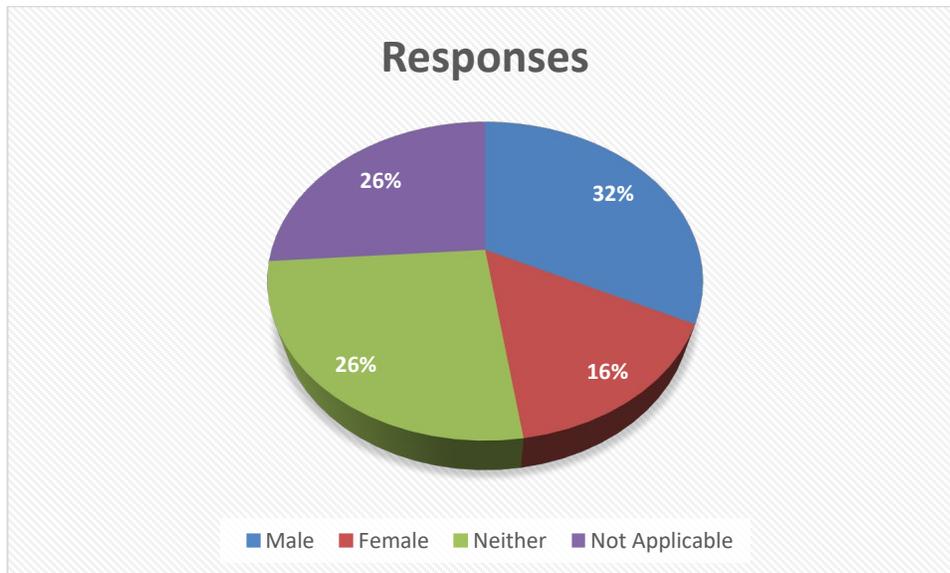
1. Describe a situation when a child came to you about being called names or being made fun of. What happened? Who was involved? How was it resolved?
2. Describe a situation when a child was disciplined for throwing something in the classroom. What happened? Who was involved? How was it resolved?
3. Have you ever witnessed a physical fight between two students? What happened? Who was involved? How was it resolved?
4. Describe an instance when a child violated dress code. What happened? Who was involved? How was it resolved?
5. Describe a situation when one child hit another. What happened? Who was involved? How was it resolved?

The Narratives

It was clear that educators chose to keep students anonymous, which was expected to ensure their privacy, thereby not using any of the children's names. Although some of the respondents used the gender-neutral pronoun *they* to write their narratives, many also used typical male and female pronouns *he* and *she*. The majority of the narratives begin with the negative behavior or action, and then go into how they as educators responded with discipline. On occasion, they also include how the child responded to their discipline or information about the policy at their program or school that enforces the type of discipline used. This included policies like creating posters as visual reminders, prohibiting participation in events or using restorative circle sessions.

Analysis

The responses were organized into three different groups based on names and pronouns indicating gender of the student involved: male-student response, female-student response and neutral response. Of the 65 total responses (5 by 13 respondents), 21 responses were about male students, 10 responses were about female students, and 17 (neither) did not specify the gender of the child, and only used the pronoun *they*. The remaining 17 were responses (not applicable) that indicate the educator had not dealt with that specific scenario, or chose not to share an example. In cases where the students involved were identified as both female and male, they were categorized based on the pronoun assigned to the protagonist of the narrative.



These categorizations were based on the pronouns and nouns used by the educators. Male responses were identified as using *he/his* pronouns or using the word *boy*, and female responses were identified using *her/she* pronouns or using the word *girl*. The analysis involved evaluating how the interaction is described and how children are positioned within their environment of peers and educators; specifically, the way pronouns are referenced, the adjectives used to describe the protagonist or their behavior, and the verbal response given by the educator to the child. Patterns emerged regarding descriptions of the protagonist and the forms of discipline used. Narratives surrounding dress code and name calling also stood out in their pervasiveness either male or female protagonists.

Below are two sample narratives to display some of the terms analyzed.

“A child came to me because **she** was being called a crybaby. **Her** Cousin did not wish to play with **her** so **she** became upset and began to whine. I brought both **girls** together and *explained that name calling was not allowed and that there was a nice way to say that they did not want to play*. I also had to inform the **girl** who was upset that **she** had to understand everything could not always happen **her** way.”

“A child who was not listening threw a book because **he** wanted to go to the park and not be in the library. I had to inform **him** that **his** outburst was unacceptable and that **he** had to sit on the bench in *time out for 10 minutes* while at the park.”

The bold markers indicate where the protagonist is referenced using pronouns as male or female. The underlined markers indicate words that are used to describe the child or their actions. The italicized markers indicate the form of discipline that was used.

Table 2.1. Percentage of Components present in male and female narratives

Component of Narrative	Examples	Male	Female
Description of Protagonist	<i>“began to whine”</i> <i>“calm”</i>	n/a	n/a
Forms of Discipline: Apologizing	<i>“asked [child] to apologize”</i> <i>“forced [child] to apologize”</i>	23%	20%
Forms of Discipline: Speaking to Parents	<i>“His parents were contacted”</i> <i>“The mother was called and informed”</i>	23%	20%
Forms of Discipline: Explaining Rationale	<i>“we discussed why you should not push each other”</i> <i>“why we should never hit others”</i> <i>“I said to put themselves in her shoes”</i>	29%	50%

Note. Numbers represent the percentage of narratives that included these distinct component.

Descriptions of Protagonist

Overall the narratives did not use a large amount of descriptive words such as adjectives to describe the child protagonists themselves. That being said, the words used to describe students

referred to (by names and pronouns) as female are still in line with female gender stereotypes. Students referred to as both genders were depicted as crying in one particular narrative, which is not necessarily surprising given that students are of younger ages. In the female narratives, the female student is called a “crybaby” by her peers, followed by the participant adding she “began to whine”. Although students referred to (by names and pronouns) as male are mentioned crying, there is no similar wording used to describe the male student’s behavior. There was not enough data to speculate why there was more description of the female students crying than male.

The word “calm” was only used in three narratives, and all three were with male students as the subject, describing how the student calmed down after a negative interaction. This can imply that female students do not need to be calmed down, either because they are able to do it themselves, or they do not get as aggressive as male students. Similar to the concept of female students being “used as a “damper” (Odenbring, 2014), the female student is expected to be more calm and help regulate the male student’s behavior just by sitting next to them in the classroom.

These kinds of vocabulary choices can greatly affect how students see themselves and those of the opposite gender. “This is accomplished through subtle yet systematic (but often unconscious) differential treatment of boys and girls-treatment communicating the expectation that certain characteristics and behavior are associated with the boys and that other characteristics and behavior are associated with girl,” (Wilkinson & Marrett, 1985, p. 117). Educators must be aware of the importance of their language choices, because often continuous reinforcement can be enough to turn the gender stereotypes into what seems like a necessary reality.

Forms of Discipline

There were three patterns that appeared through the male and female narratives. The first was apologizing after the negative behavior. 23% of the male narratives mentioned the student

apologizing, and 20% of the female narratives did so. The child was either “asked to apologize”, or more often, the participant *forced* or expected the child to apologize. This raises an interesting concern about how apologies are used, and if they are really meant to instill meaning in the child’s discipline.

One narrative explored a different form of overcoming and moving forward from the conflict.

The educator stated:

Rather than forcing them to apologize, they were told to find a moment in the day where they could do something to show appreciation for one another or help the other out in some way and then at the end of the day I asked what their action was.

This narrative does mention “forcing the children to apologize” and provides an alternative. This implies that “forcing” or “having” the children apologize is something that is common among disciplinary practices at school. In this narrative, we instead see the students either showing appreciation for each other or helping them throughout the day. This is a method that more educators may choose to use when disciplining children.

Speaking to the parents of the child was mentioned in some of the narratives as well. Out of the 12 narratives that mention this disciplinary method, one only mentioned fathers, three only mentioned mothers, and eight mentioned parents as a more general entity. Whether it be fathers or mothers or both, it is important for parents to be involved in the disciplinary practices of their child’s school. This knowledge can help parents understand what is expected of their children when they attend the program or class, and parents can help reinforce the behaviors learned in school. It is also interesting that overall, 23% of the male student narratives mentioned either parents, fathers or mothers, but only 20% of the female student narratives mentioned any parents.

The third pattern was explaining the consequences of their actions, or the rationale behind why their negative behavior was problematic. This could include explaining to the child why their action was wrong, or what the consequences of their action might be to others around them. The following were some of the rationales that were used:

“...privately talked to him about what he said, why he said it, and where he learned about this word. I explained that it is not nice to call people that word.

...We discussed what could happen if the pencil had hit another student, especially in the eye.

...we discussed why you should not push each other and how important it is to use words.

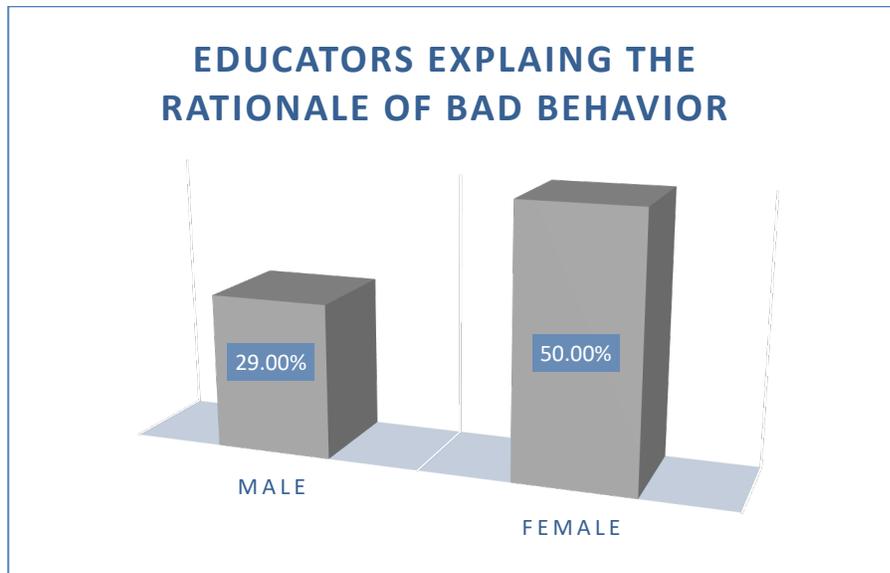
...I addressed both of them about the severity of using offensive language like this by telling them that those around you get offended/hurt when this language is used.

...had a discussion with them about hitting and why we should never hit others.

...I said to put themselves in her shoes and understand that life is a learning process and it is not nice to make fun of anyone.

...talk to them about being mean to each other and discuss better ways to handle being angry with each other.”

An interesting difference was that only 29% of responses about male students included the educators explaining their rationale, where as 50% of the responses about female students included it.



Considering that overall there were more responses about male students, this could suggest that educators more often explain the rationale behind their discipline to female students than they do with male students. Educators appear to explain why the negative behavior is disliked to female students almost twice as often as they do to male students. This can vary from explaining how other children may get hurt, to how their choice of language can be offensive.

On the other hand, the following narrative about a male child mentions that the child did the misbehavior-in this case throwing a pencil- “for no reason”. This is one of two narratives that mention a lack of rationale behind the behavior and both were about male students. This could indicate a pattern but more narratives would need to be analyzed.

A child threw a pencil across the room for no reason. The children around him reported it immediately. We discussed what could happen if the pencil had hit another student, especially in the eye. Once the danger of throwing the pencil were discussed, we put throwing pencils on the list of bad choices to make and agreed it should not be done again.

This can be seen in the opposite view of helping the child understand the rationale behind the action. Everything is done for a reason, and therefore that must have been the case with this child throwing a pencil. It may be beneficial for educators to not only help the child learn the rationale behind refraining from the negative behaviors, but to also try to understand the child's rationale for completing the negative behavior.

These themes are important because it shows “how the story unfolds in a certain way that indicates some of why the story is meaningful,” (Daiute, 2014, p. 7). Considering the stories that participants chose to share can provide clues about their thought patterns on discipline and how it impacts the children they work with.

One narrative showed a different train of causation than the others. The educator states:

A little boy hit another girl with an umbrella causing them to fight. He was upset because she stepped on him.

The blame is placed on the male student, for causing them to fight by hitting the female student with the umbrella. In the next sentence, the educator states that the reason for the male students hitting her was because she stepped on him. Although they later state that it was an accident, the narrative does not state that first, and instead uses the male student's action of hitting her with the umbrella as the catalyst for the altercation.

The following two narrative topics appear to separate themselves from the remainder of the analysis. Both dress code and name calling were two topics which formed their own patterns.

Dress Code

The majority of dress code narratives were about female students, which does coincide with the research noting that female students are subjected to stricter dress code discipline than male

students. That being said, almost half of participants mentioned that they have never had issues with dress code. The results suggest that dress code at this young age, is more for their physical safety, such as not wearing *flip flops* to run outside for fear of tripping. This may be because this study was focused on grades Pre-K-8, and dress codes often become stricter and further-biased as children progress through the school system. There was one response that stood out the most. One participant mentioned that “girls come in too sexy for their age”. One can infer this means students have come to class with clothing that is too revealing or formfitting. This is one-way dress codes are biased against female students. However much the educator is trying to protect the students by trying to help them “avoid harassment or unwanted attention”, this onus should never be placed on the female student to begin with. Adults should not feel the need to make their child conform to certain styles of dress in order to avoid harassment. They should be safe from that harassment simply on the merits of being a child.

Name Calling

Of the 13 narratives about name calling, seven were about male students behavior. The common theme was that the name calling revolved around strong gender norms. One student was made fun of because they came in wearing nail polish. That narrative later states that both the subject of the bullying and the aggressor were male students, suggesting that the male student was made fun of by his male peer because he exhibited behavior that is traditionally thought of as feminine.

In another narrative, a male student calls another male student a “fag”. In a third narrative, a male student is teased because of his sexual orientation. This theme of gendered pressure from other students only appears in the male-focused narratives. None of the female students in these narratives were made fun of for going against female gender norms.

One narrative also suggests that it is helpful to have educators of both genders present in the classroom. This may allow students to empathize more with the opposite gender, if they are able to see and interact with a respected adult of the opposite gender. An educator mentioned that they explained to the child that the name calling “not only affected her but myself also.” A positive relationship with a member of the opposite sex can act as a template for future relationships.

Gender Neutral

The group of responses that did not specify the gender of the children also yielded some interesting patterns. Out of these 17 responses, five of them mentioned bringing in or calling parents as a disciplinary method. All five included “parent(s)” as a gender neutral entity. Mothers nor fathers were specifically identified. This can be for a number of reasons, the first being that the participant is keeping in line with their practice of using gender neutral terms for the privacy of the child. It may also be that educators are using the more general “parents” as they might in their classrooms, as to avoid singling or leaving out any child who may not have specifically a mother or a father. Some of the participants may also have been speaking in more general terms, and describing the policies that are followed, instead of reflecting on a specific incident with a specific child.

These types of responses were also a potential limitation when conducting the survey. The questions did not ask participants about the gender of the children involved, in an effort to limit self-editing and not skew the data.

Limitations

One of the primary limitations in this study was the method of acquisition. Although typing into an anonymous survey may allow participants to answer more freely, I believe there would

have been more detail in the narratives if I had conducted in-person or even over-the-phone interviews. This would have also allowed the opportunity to ask follow-up questions, and perhaps lessen the time participants had and pressure to self-edit.

Some participants used gender neutral pronouns. This is most likely to respect the privacy of the students which is important as the role of the educator, but this is another point where clarifying questions could have provided more data. This may also be to be respectful of the LGBTQ community, in an effort to deemphasize gender, or the students may have already specified that *they* is their correct pronoun. This analysis was also conducted with the assumption that the gender pronouns used by educators are the same as those the children were born with. If any of the protagonists were asking educators to use pronouns that did not match their birth-assigned gender, this could potentially skew the results, and further analysis would be required to understand how that might affect the discipline they receive.

Discussion

The analysis of these narratives did unearth some interesting patterns. There were a number of differences in how male and female students were described, but perhaps the largest discrepancy was whether the educator explained the rationale of the bad behavior to the student. 50% of the responses about female students included explaining the rationale to the student whereas that was the case in only 29% of responses about male students.

The areas of dress code violations and name calling were also dramatically tipped towards a specific gender. All of the dress code violation narratives were about either female students or the child's gender was withheld. Because every participant did not mention dealing with a dress code violation, it indicates that this might not be as big of a disciplinary issue for younger students. A little over half of the name-calling narratives were about male students. Of those, many of them

dealt with challenging a student's sexuality or gender, which implies that conforming to gender norms may be a larger issue for male students than female students.

These results are evidence that educators characterize male and female students differently when disciplined, and suggest that they are treated differently in times of conflict as well. These narratives support the claim that male and female students are not always treated fairly when disciplined, and perhaps altering the educators' responses could lessen the chances of repeat behavior. The results about name-calling also suggest that in order to discipline students equally, they must first be aware of the pressures and challenges surrounding the negative behavior, and this may provide insight into how to fairly structure the disciplinary practices. These experiences can have lasting effects and build a pattern of interaction with authority figures that students can take with them into adulthood, which is why educators must do work to ensure policies are equitable.

Chapter 3: Gender and Discipline Professional Development Program

Rationale for Implementing this Program with Educators

A variety of studies have shown that students are still treated differently based on their gender. This was also evident in the narratives collected from the survey responses. Being that this inequity still exists, the goal of this professional development program is to ensure educators can identify gender biases they may hold and prevent children from being disciplined with gender bias.

The gender binary forced upon male and female students has been in place for generations, and although staff may make efforts to treat students the same, it continues to control a lot of what we do and how we create the environments around us. Most people can find an example or two in their everyday lives when examined. “We perceive each other through gendered eyes, expecting others to behave in certain ways simply because of their sex, with the values and prescriptions that culture assigns to gender affecting our personal, social, and professional lives” (Gamble & Gamble, 2015, p. 7). This gender binary presents itself in many inconspicuous ways and is ingrained in our everyday communication with each other, requiring us to question its effects. This curriculum will allow educators to take a deeper look at how they communicate with those they teach and examine how their disciplinary practices may be affected by these strong binary concepts. Disciplinary practices can include microaggressions, since “gender biases reflect taken-for-granted patterns in communication and are often subtle, therefore students and faculty may not notice such behaviors (Allan & Madden, 2006),” (McCabe, 2009, p. 136. Educators need to be cognizant that children react to educational experiences in different ways (Wilkinson & Marrett, 1985, p. 111), depending on how that material is delivered. Teaching styles can be very personal, and “even those teachers who may want to change long-standing patterns may find it difficult to do so. They may find the experience threatening, experience role confusion, or encounter other problems that may occur

when established coping styles break down,” (Wilkinson & Marrett, 1985, p. 139). This is why it is crucial that this program be explained as a way to combat the biased binary that we as a society have been suffocated by.

Continuous professional development is necessary “to create for the students a learning environment that radiates positive emotions, fosters tolerance and understanding, and promotes active engagement.”; prompting “an imperative for good teaching that requires high teacher competencies, modern teaching methodology, intercultural sensitivity, and teacher self-efficacy” (Daiute, 2017, p. 176). Maintaining an inclusive and educational classroom can be the foundation for an engaging and effective place where students can unlearn negative or unproductive thoughts and behaviors.

These kinds of engrained biases can include things such as addressing a group of students as *you guys*, or using gendered terms for occupations, such as *fireman*, or *mailman*. This can also be seen when asking certain students to move larger items around the room, or help distribute materials to the group, demonstrating how gender factors into our choice of words. It is important to remember that “general classroom climate may play an important role in reinforcing sex differences in achievement attitudes, beliefs and performance” (Wilkinson & Marrett, 1985, p. 111). Regardless of what messages children are receiving at home, educators can have a profound impact on their development, and in some cases, the classroom environment may be the only place children are receiving these positive messages to undo negative gender norms. Educators must also see their behavior and methods of discipline as a form of storytelling. “Storytelling socializes young people via cultural values shared during routine events that parents, teachers, employers, and others repeat and reinforce,” (Daiute, 2014, p. 6). Students may reflect back on how conflict was handled and create a script in their mind of how to deal with these challenges in the future.

Participants

Participants will be staff members of afterschool and summer camp programs. They often range in age from 18 to 24. This program can be applied to any program which serves elementary age children, though it can be adapted for higher grades. This can also be used for programs that serve single-gender groups, as these gender expectations permeate these groups as well. Most nonprofits have very limited funds available for supplies and trainings, and for this reason the intervention and materials are provided free of charge. This program can be completed by licensed Board of education educators as well, but it is more focused on non-licensed staff, such as those in afterschool or summer camp programs. Because many of these educators have not yet completed their degree, or have not had adequate experience, this group in particular is in greater need of the resources.

Materials

Each participant will receive a folder of worksheets including the following:

It would follow from what you report in Chapter two that you might pull in the participants with some narrative examples, illustrative of the findings, generative for re-writing, etc.

Descriptions Worksheet

Program Evaluation Survey

Gender Role Boxes Worksheet

New York Times article *Breaking Gender Stereotypes in the Toy Box*

Current Disciplinary Procedures Worksheet

Verbs correlated with gender in 100,000 plot descriptions Bar Graph

Pre and Post Analysis of Current Disciplinary Procedures Worksheet. Participants will create a narrative of a time they disciplined a child on the first day of the program. They will then analyze it again on the last day, to identify any changes they could have made to make the description more neutral. This will help them identify if they partake in any biased behavior, and how that can be reduced or eliminated going forward.

Descriptions Worksheet. Participants will complete a worksheet in which they identify adjectives that are more commonly used with male and female students. This sheet helps participants notice trends in the adjectives that are most commonly used for male and female students.

Program Evaluation Survey. Participants will respond to a survey after completion of the program. This will consist of multiple choice and open-ended questions about how the program has impacted them. This data is used by the facilitators to measure the effectiveness of the program and suggestions will be incorporated for future trainings.

Gender Messages Worksheet. Participants will complete a worksheet that explores the messages that male and female students hear and see from influences outside the classroom. This sheet helps participants identify the pressures placed on male and female students, and how educators can work to negate negative messages.

Verbs correlated with gender in 100,000 plot descriptions Bar Graph. This bar graph is an analysis of verbs correlated with he or she pronouns from 112,000 plots of stories downloaded from English language Wikipedia, seen in books, movies, TV episodes and video games. It helps to show the participants some qualitative data surrounding word choices used when describing individuals of certain genders, and how children can be surrounded by stereotypically gendered language all the time.

New York Times article *Breaking Gender Stereotypes in the Toy Box*. This article is to get participants thinking more about how gendered toys and toy marketing can be. It is a prime example of how gender stereotypes are pushed onto children from every angle, and how these expectations can follow them around, even when that's not the intention.

Procedure

The curriculum is broken down into five modules, each totaling one hour. The simplest organization holds one module each day, Monday through Friday, for one week. This can be done before program time, if in an afterschool program, or after if a summer camp. This design is to ensure staff can participate, as well as allowing them time to process the previous day's lesson. There will be two facilitators that will lead participants through each module, and each module takes 60 minutes.

Each day will start off with a short activity, followed by instruction. The instruction portion will be help explain how to identify biased reactions, and how to create a more equitable and inclusive classroom/learning space. It will also provide guidance to create a classroom that does not hold students to typical gender expectations, by their staff, peers or environment. Each module also includes 10 minutes at the end for participants to discuss the material and ask any questions they may have. All activities are either done in pairs, or discussed as a group, in order to open up a dialogue about how children can be treated differently based on their gender.

This program can help show educators that their role is not only supporting academic achievement but can also allow them to be a very influential character in a child's life. It underscores the idea that their interactions with the children, combined with the environment they provide can be key in undoing students negative or self-destructive thoughts about their gender or their potential based on their gender. Educators will want to gain these skills in order to improve

the environment in their classroom, and have the most positive impact they can. Breaking down these stereotypes can possibly lessen future friction between students as they age, but further research would need to be done.

Figure 3.1 Schedule

Day	Starting Activity	Instruction
Module 1	Recall behavioral incident (15)	Discuss any patterns and frequency seen between descriptions of males and females. (10) Review current disciplinary procedures, and discuss how often they are followed in their entirety. (25) Questions/Reflection/Discussions (10)
Module 2	Descriptions worksheet and discussion (10)	Gender Neutral Article and discussion (Appendix A) (20) Analysis of narrative and review of gendered language (20) Questions/Reflection/Discussions(10)
Module 3	Brainstorm differences seen between male and female student behavior (10)	How to encourage agency in children’s activities, regardless of gender (15) Are there any gendered things done in the classroom without knowledge? (10) Gender Messages worksheet (15) Questions/Reflection/Discussions(10)
Module 4	Recall a time when a bad problem had a solution you were very happy with (15)	Watch YouTube clip of interaction and explain it from each perspective (15) https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NqdfWduLmYE How to get children involved-get their side of the story (20) Questions/Reflection/Discussions(10)
Module 5	Revise activities from first day-how would you change your description? (10)	Recap of week and share how this can affect your program (20) Questions/Reflection/Discussions (20) Program Evaluation Survey (10)

Module 1

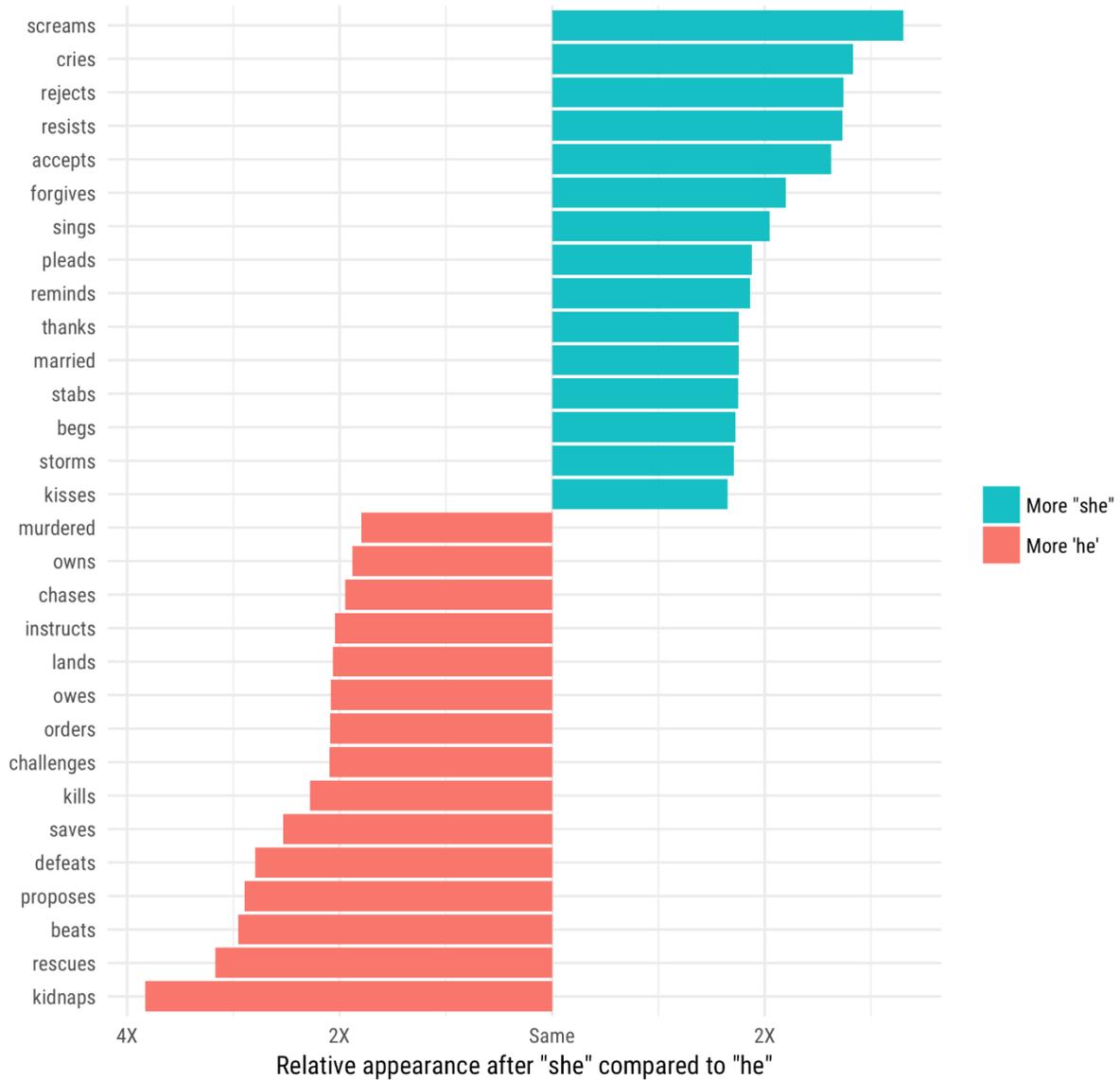
Module 1 will be focused on introducing the overlap of gender and discipline, and how we can find this interaction in our current environment. To start, staff will be asked to select one of the 5 prompts, and recall a time when they disciplined a child (preferably some of the most difficult behavior they've encountered). They will not be told to emphasize gender initially. Participants won't receive any background information prior to this activity, in an attempt to get an impartial response. The questions in Figure 3.2 are the same ones that were asked in the study from chapter two, and as such will be engaging and require them to create narratives of the various situations. They will record this on their paper, and then examine the narrative on their own to see if there are any differences in how male and female students were treated. This will then be opened up to the group for discussion, although participants will only share their narratives if they choose. The goal is to notice if they describe the children's actions or behavior differently if it was a male or female protagonist. Participants will also examine and discuss Figure 3.3 and take note if the language used in their narratives fall in line with the data presented. This bar graph is an analysis of verbs correlated with he or she pronouns from 112,000 plots of stories downloaded from English language Wikipedia. These plots are from books, movies, TV episodes and video games.

For the second portion, the group will discuss any patterns of treatment or frequency they see when disciplining students in their classrooms. They will explore why they think this is, and what effect it can have on future behavior management.

Figure 3.3

Verbs correlated with gender in 100,000 plot descriptions

Words with at least 200 uses after he/she, 12 most skewed in each direction.



Robinson, D. (2017) Verbs correlated with gender in 100,000 plot descriptions. [Bar graph]. Retrieved from <http://varianceexplained.org/r/tidytext-gender-plots/>

Module 2

Module 2 will begin with an article from the *New York Times* (appendix A). After reading, the group as a whole will discuss the article, and how they can make conscious decisions about the gendered language they use, or hear used in their classroom. Teachers passively reinforce sex-typed decisions made by students (Wilkinson & Marrett, 1985), and educators must understand that they may need to break this pattern of reinforcement that children deal with on a daily basis.

Next, the participants will work on the Descriptions worksheet (Figure 3.4), which includes a list of adjectives. They will use three different color markers to circle words that they have found themselves using more often with or heard used to describe either male or female students, or words that they don't commonly associate with either. This will then be discussed as a group. After discussion, participants will look at the Narrative Analysis Worksheet (Figure 3.5) and take note of any words that were also present on the descriptions worksheet. They will answer the questions on the worksheet and discuss as a group the best way to alter the narrative to avoid using such terms. If technology is accessible for the training and if there is time remaining, the *Gendered Language in Teacher Reviews* (<http://benschmidt.org/profGender>) interactive chart will be presented to the group, during which time participants can use words from the worksheet, or suggest others, to put into the chart.

Figure 3.4

Descriptions Worksheet

Impulsive	Enthusiastic
Active	Efficient
Organized	Pretty
Perfectionist	Patient
Anxious	Honest
Careless	Emotional
Helpful	Alarming
Undisciplined	Adorable
Caring	Beautiful
Considerate	Obnoxious
Mature	Affectionate
Motivated	Challenging
Passive	Confident
Extroverted	Sensitive
Impulsive	Cooperative
Brave	Protective
Talkative	Reserved
Angry	Shy
Crazy	Bossy
Bubbly	Rude
Whiney	Aggressive
Stubborn	Polite
Gentle	Responsible
Outspoken	Hostile
Lovely	Clever
Thoughtful	Sassy

Figure 3.5

Narrative Analysis Worksheet

Read the narrative and answer the questions below.

“One child was so frustrated he ended up throwing a big building hollow block. I made a big exclamation like a gasp and quickly ran to the child. With a sturdy tone I said “stop”. I wanted to show a big emotion to demonstrate how serious this situation was. I explained that I understood he was upset but throwing such a large object can hurt another child. I offered the child a hug and went for a walk. The child seemed to be calm after.”

Analyze this narrative by taking note of any words that were also on your description worksheet, or that could fall into those types of categories.

Who are the characters? How are their genders enacted? _____

What are the events as narrated in sequence? What are the causes and consequences described?

What was the disciplinary strategy? _____

How does this fit within an overall view about discipline? _____

Module 3

Module 3 will start with a group brainstorm on differences the staff notice in the behavior and language of female and male students in their classrooms. This can also include patterns of behavior or language they see fellow staff using. Participants may reference Figure 3.4 to look for any vocabulary that is both on the chart, and that they find themselves using in discussion. They will then move into exploring how to encourage agency in children activities, regardless of gender by asking such questions as: How can we interact with children without pushing gender norms? They will also discuss gendered things they do in the classroom that they may not be aware of (addressing the group or lining up procedures, for example).

After focusing on examples they have experienced, the gendered messages that female and male students face will be broken down a bit more. Individually, staff will complete the Gender Messages worksheet (figure 3.6). After five minutes, they will briefly discuss with a partner and then discuss as a larger group. This can help staff understand the messages students may be receiving from outside the classroom and how these messages may harbor expectations. This is also an activity that can be adapted and brought into the classroom to explore messaging with the students themselves.

Figure 3.6

Gender Messages Worksheet

Messages students may be receiving from the media	Messages students may be receiving from home	Messages students should be receiving from their educators

Gender Expectations Activity Guidance for Facilitators

Remember that this exercise seeks to look at stereotypes, not at individual behavior.

Each educator should take 10 minutes to complete the activity on their own. They will then have the chance to share their responses on a board or chart paper.

Educators are to use post it notes, and write down messages male and female students may be hearing from outside sources. They will then include possible messages children should be receiving from their school or program environment, and why that message is positive and important.

Media can include TV, video games, the internet, social media, and advertisements.

Home can include family like parents or siblings, neighbors, or others in their community.

Reflection Questions:

- a. How do their outside influences have power over children? How much power do you think they have over them?
- b. How aware do you feel your students are about these messages? Do they notice them and if so, do they see them as problematic?
- c. How can we change these gendered expectations?

Module 4

Module 4 will focus more on the discipline itself, and how to make the disciplinary procedures more equitable and standardized. They will start by recalling a time when a child had a problem, and the solution made both parties very happy. This could be in their professional or personal lives. What made those solutions effective? This will be followed by a YouTube clip (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NqdfWduLmYE>) of two children fighting. One third of the group will describe the event from child A's perspective, another third from child B's perspective, and the last from an educator's perspective. Students need to be "viewed as active creators of their own schooling environments, not simply passive responders to influences encountered in these settings (Anyon, 1983; Apple, 1979; Giroux, 1981)," (Wilkinson & Marrett, 1985, p. 58). Exploring these three perspectives will help staff see how each child's actions are described, and whether that changes depending on the student's gender. It can also shed light on how much power children can actually have in these conflicts and how they can use that power to solve their problems in a fair way. This will be concluded by discussing how they can make student voices heard more often when being disciplined.

Module 5

Module 5 will conclude the training with a discussion on what educators have learned, and how it may impact their interactions with students on a daily basis. Participants will review the narrative they created on the first day, and explore if they would alter it in any way after having gone through the program. Everyone will discuss what practices or concepts they plan to bring into their classrooms, and if they will attempt to make or improve any larger changes in program-wide disciplinary practices. Participants will also brainstorm how they can try to pass what they have learned onto their students' families. Families can also be reinforcing these stereotypes without being aware of it and this can create a lasting impression on the children that they then bring into the classroom.

Lastly, all participants will complete the Program Evaluation Survey (Figure 3.7), which will help the program grow, and provide suggestions for improvements. These surveys will be incorporated into future versions of the training, and will help to keep the program current, and responsible for tending to educators needs.

Figure 3.7

Program Evaluation Survey

1. Do you feel completing this program has benefited you?

- a. Yes
- b. No

2. Did you feel the materials provided were sufficient?

- a. Yes
- b. No

3. How thoroughly were the following topics covered?

a. Discipline and gender

Very thoroughly	Just enough	Not thoroughly
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b. Agency in the classroom

Very thoroughly	Just enough	Not thoroughly
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c. Creating an equitable learning space

Very thoroughly	Just enough	Not thoroughly
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d. Gendered language

Very thoroughly	Just enough	Not thoroughly
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e. Influencing student/parent behavior

Very thoroughly	Just enough	Not thoroughly
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4. What are three things you will take from this program and use in your own classrooms?

- a. _____
- b. _____
- c. _____

5. Did you discover that you had participated in any biased behavior towards female or male students? If so, what was it, and how will you work on that going forward?

- a. _____

6. Is there anything you would suggest including in future trainings?

- a. _____

7. Was there anything you felt should be removed from this program in the future?

- a. _____

8. Would you recommend this program to others?

- a. Yes
- b. No

Follow up

There will be a follow up survey conducted two months after the training is complete. This will ask participants how they felt the training impacted their interaction with students, and if they have made any long term improvements in their classrooms, or disciplinary policy. The data collected from this survey will be used to improve upon the modules. Facilitators can add or remove portions of the training based on the participants' experiences. Because gender bias and discrimination is still something that much of the United States is working towards combating, it is crucial to keep the material up to date. Many educators are also still learning how to best support LGBTQ and non-binary students in the classroom, requiring these modules to be updated and even expanded as time goes on.

Limitations

One of the largest limitations in a study/intervention of this kind is cultural relevance. Patterns in the treatment of male and female students in the classroom can vary greatly depending on the geographical location, and even the socioeconomic status of the program, staff and its participants. Many of the activities are based on the experiences and perceptions of the staff and this should keep activities revolved around the language normally used in those groups.

Another major limitation is the time allowances for these staff members. Many educators of afterschool programs have additional jobs or responsibilities, which can make finding time for this program difficult. Time directly before or after is often used for lesson planning or necessary administrative tasks. The facilitators can work with the program director to find the best time for their staff to complete this. It can also be difficult to get staff to commit to the time if they are not compensated in some way. One way to avoid this is for the program administration to encourage this learning, or even make it mandatory. Ideally, the program itself would pay staff their usual

hourly rate to attend these training sessions. Programs also vary in their time allowances, in which case these modules can be spaced out as necessary within the semester, though it is recommended that they are all completed within five months.

Results may also be limited depending on how the curriculum is framed and presented. Staff may not believe there are any improvements to be made in their teachings. This is an increasing concern with educators who have been in the field for numerous years. It is important to frame the modules as an opportunity to undo some of the gender norm learning that everyone in America has grown up with for decades. Educators must have self-awareness, so they can understand their own biases and how those can affect their decision making process. “Negative educator beliefs can impede positive change toward more equitable discipline practices through deficit-oriented paradigms and implicit bias,” (Kennedy-Lewis, Murphy & Grosland, 2016, p. 23). After the first module is complete, participants will also be acutely aware that their biases will be examined. This may skew the responses that staff provide, in an effort to conceal any biases.

Lastly, additional demographic data can be collected from participants to identify any patterns. The difficulty would be deciding which information to obtain, be that gender, ethnicity, languages spoken, or years spent teaching.

Other Resources

There are some organizations that also work to create more equitable classrooms, providing resources and materials for educators. “Students are the primary actors in peer networks that powerfully affect classroom life and support, mediate or contradict influences emanating from teachers and other school personnel,” (Wilkinson & Marrett, 1985, p. 58) and therefore it is important that educators try to pass along some of the awareness to the students themselves. Some

organizations provide material just for the educator's development, but some also provide material that can be brought directly into the classroom, such as this one.

Edutopia understands the importance of education for a productive future, and was founded by filmmaker George Lucas in 1991. They provide a wide range of materials for educators including articles and videos. This includes information on how to analyze data in an equitable way, and free posters of women in STEM.

UNESCO (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization) uses programs to progress their Sustainable Development Goals. They provide online resources for educators in early childhood care, primary and secondary education. These material cater to each age group, and include free training books, videos and infographics.

The HRC (Human Rights Campaign) Foundation's Welcoming Schools is one of the largest groups that provide professional development trainings to educators in elementary schools and districts. Their materials cover gender and LGBTQ inclusion, supporting non-binary students and embracing family diversity.

Conclusion

Discipline is one of the most important tools in a classroom, because it teaches children about what is expected of them, how adults think about them, how to interact with others, in this case peers and staff. If this tool is skewed by the pressures of gender expectations, children may be receiving messages that subconsciously force them into stereotypical male or female boxes.

Researchers have been looking at the impact of gender in school discipline for the last few decades, and although most research shows a difference in how male and female students are treated, it does not appear that this is particularly reinforced as educators continue their careers. This has become increasingly important in recent years, when some students of younger ages may not like to be identified as a specific gender, and educators should not make them feel restricted to certain behaviors or reactions because of how they are treated based on their assigned or assumed gender.

Gendered patterns of discipline were seen in narratives gathered for this study. Male and female students were depicted as spoken to differently across most disciplinary topics. Female students were more often explained the rationale behind their discipline or negative behavior than male students. This can potentially make it more difficult for male students to understand why they are disciplined, and how to avoid it in the future. The majority of narratives about dress code included female student protagonists, whose bodies are sadly often objectified by others, and their sexuality is emphasized specifically in one narrative. Lastly, around half of the name calling narratives depicted male student protagonists, and were often focused around the pressure to conform to male norms by their peers.

This research all suggests that educators need to put forth more effort to treating students with equitable discipline. Because “narrating is the interaction of expressions and contexts in ways that render relationships among characters and events prominent,” (Daiute, 2014, p. 2), these

responses provided important insight into how educators think about discipline, and particularly, the story they may create surrounding these conflicts based on the child's gender. The professional development program in chapter three provides guidance in addressing gender biases and how to unlearn them and display that when interacting and disciplining children.

This study has its limitations in that it was a small sample of educators and was restricted to grades Pre-K through 8. Larger patterns may be found if the sample was much larger or spanned a greater geographic area. These participants were restricted to the Tri-State area in an attempt to lessen the amount of cultural variation, although gender roles are deeply rooted in the majority of America. Future research can use participants from a variety of states. It would also be interesting to compare those results to international participants, or policy makers.

Future research can focus on how to pass these lessons onto the children the educators work with. A program could also be developed that involves the children's parents, in an effort to ensure children are receiving consistent and positive messages about gender roles. As educators and society as a whole learn to learn to interact with the LGBTQ and non-binary community in the most constructive and supportive way possible, research can be done on how these students are discipline, and what message they feel is communicated by their staff. Lastly, narratives can be collected from the student's themselves, and can be examined for inconsistencies that adults may not even be aware of.

Appendix A

THE CHECKUP Breaking Gender Stereotypes in the Toy Box

<https://www.nytimes.com/2018/02/05/well/family/gender-stereotypes-children-toys.html> 1/3

By Perri Klass, M.D.

Feb. 5, 2018

Did you conscientiously buy dolls for your son and trucks for your daughter, or did you try to avoid the whole thing and give them both gender-neutral artisanal wooden objects, only to be shanghaied by the princess industry and superhero underpants?

Looking at how children play with toys that fall into gender stereotypes gives us a window on children's developing sense of what goes along with being a boy or a girl.

But it can also be an important indicator of what skills young children are acquiring as they play, and of whether their academic and professional horizons are comparatively wide — or whether they are already starting to rule things out for themselves.

A new study suggests the potential power of words and images to counter gender stereotypes and open up what children see as possible interests and activities for themselves. And experts say that those choices are significant because they can influence the skills children learn and the possibilities they see for themselves.

Lauren Spinner, a developmental psychologist at the University of Kent in England, was the first author on a study published in January in the journal *Sex Roles*, which looked at the effect of showing 4- to 7-year-olds images of children playing with either stereotypic or counter- stereotypic toys.

A researcher read aloud the words that were printed in a bubble beside the image. In one experimental group, the children followed gender stereotype: “Hello! My name is Sarah, and my favorite toy is My Little Pony! I have lots, and play with them every day.” “Hello! My name is Thomas, and every day I like to play with my cars. They’re my favorite toys!” For the other experimental group, Sarah had the car and Thomas had My Little Pony; the language was otherwise identical.

After they had seen the pictures, the children in the study were shown a set of toys, chosen to be stereotypically masculine and feminine (baby doll, jet fighter, tool kit, tea set) and asked who should play with which toy, and the children who had seen the counter-stereotypic pictures were more flexible in their answers, more open to the idea that both girls and boys might like toys from both sides of the conventional aisle.

They were also less rigid when they were asked which children from the pictures they wanted to play with; exposure to Sarah-with-the-car and Thomas-with-the-pony meant that children were more open to playing with representatives of the other gender. So the toys in the pictures affected who the children wanted as playmates.

Dr. Spinner pointed out that seeing the photos did not open up the children’s preferences for what toys they themselves wanted to play with; they were more likely to say that other boys and girls could play with a variety of toys, but the two experimental groups were equally unlikely to make those counter-stereotypic choices themselves. On the other hand, she said, it was only one exposure, and it’s possible, if there were more of those counter-stereotypic images around, that children might become more open to enjoying the whole spectrum of toys.

Laura Zimmermann, a developmental psychologist who is a professor of psychology at Shenandoah University in Virginia, was the first author on a study published last year in the

Journal of Children and Media, which looked at preschool children's responses to toy commercials. Children are showing more flexibility than they used to, she said, in terms of who they thought the ads were meant for, responding that both boys and girls, for example, could like Batman, or like the "female" line of Lego building blocks.

"Their behavior got much more stereotypical when they were asked their own preferences," she said, and the boys especially were unwilling to say that they liked any of the ads aimed at girls.

But the ads themselves, she said, continue to reflect the same old stereotypes. "My concerns are that children's ads shape and reinforce stereotypes," Dr. Zimmermann said. "They are obviously not working alone; we have wider societal influences at work, but ads are powerful."

This is not about taking away the doll, or banishing the train. "If they aren't interested in engaging in non-stereotypic gender play that is O.K. too," Dr. Zimmermann said in an email. "Children should be free to play with the toys they enjoy — toys should not be 'assigned' by gender."

But there is also research to say that when the lines are drawn too strictly, children's worlds become not only more divided, but also more limited. Traditionally masculine toys like blocks and puzzles, Dr. Spinner said, encourage visual and spatial skills, while traditionally feminine toys encourage communication and social skills.

"If children only play with one, then they are missing out on a whole host of skills," she said.

They are also limiting their own interests and the scope of their futures.

"We know that these stereotypes that are being shaped and reinforced can be linked to a lot of different things from educational and occupational goals to academic ability to social development," Dr. Zimmermann said. "It is really important to have children get this broad range of experiences."

As children grow up, Dr. Spinner said, they do tend to become more flexible about what boys and girls can do; 7-year-olds are less rigid than 4- or 5-year-olds. But the messages they get from their environment are important, and so is the chance to play with toys — and with other children — in ways that don't box them in too tightly.

“Mixed gender play is really important, getting boys and girls to play with one another and recognize behavioral similarities,” Dr. Spinner said. “Children can overcome their anxieties about playing with other-gender children if you can get them to understand there are a lot of similarities in what they like to play with, rather than focusing on the gender of the child.”

Somewhere between the ages of 2 and 3, children figure out whether they are boys or girls, developmental psychologists say, often citing Lawrence Kohlberg's theory of gender identity development; they go on from there to identify the people around them as male or female, and to create rules and categories of what behaviors and interests and habits go with which identity.

“The good news or bad news is, experience makes a difference,” Dr. Zimmermann said. The images children see can reinforce stereotypes and limit their horizons, but they can also open up possibilities and lead kids to believe that they have more choices. Children are actively seeking clues about what their gender identities mean; toys and play should give them space, not narrow their choices.

Many parents have stories of a girl who insisted on rocking a toy train to sleep, or a boy who pushed a doll along the floor, making train noises, foiling well-meaning parental attempts to foster non-stereotypic play. And parents don't have to “eradicate” all stereotypical play, Dr. Zimmermann said in an email message.

“After all, a princess can play with worms. And ninja cupcakes are quite tasty.”

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