CHAPTER 1

Introducing Gender Equity

This chapter provides some basic terms and concepts about gender bias and gender equity, particularly as they relate to schooling in the United States. Gender discrimination and gender bias are discussed in the first part of the chapter, as are the two conceptual frameworks of equal inputs and equitable outcomes, which provide an understanding of the purpose and implementation of gender equity in classrooms. The second part of the chapter introduces eight teachers whose classrooms illustrate a variety of perspectives about gender equity and methods of implementation via the teachers' attempts to make gender equity an integral part of their teaching.

As part of the Education Amendment Act, Title IX was passed into law in 1972 at a time when various groups demanded greater participation and recognition for themselves in American society and for their children in the schools and when substantial numbers of women and men recognized gender discrimination and bias as equal rights issues. The intent of Title IX is expressed in its preamble:

> No person in the United States shall, on the basis of sex be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any education program or activity receiving federal financial assistance (National Advisory Council on Women's Educational Progress, 1981).

Because Title IX has been in effect for approximately twenty years, it would be logical for prospective and practicing teachers to assume that Title IX has done its job; that gender inequities are a thing of the past. However, as discussed in the *AAUW Report: How Schools Shortchange Girls* (1992), apathy as well as ignorance about gender discrimination persist. For example, research by Schmuck and Schmuck (AAUW Report, 1992) illustrates that school administrators, in this case those in rural schools, consid-

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ered gender discrimination concerns to be less than pressing issues. A majority of administrators interviewed expressed attitudes about gender equity in schools that include "'stupid and frivolous' to 'worry about equal opportunities for boys and girls' to 'acknowledgement that their districts complied with the letter of the law but did not go beyond concerns of equal access'" (AAUW Report, 1992). This and other current research (e.g., AAUW Report, 1992; Sadker, Sadker, & Klein 1991) indicate clearly that gender discrimination in schools, denial of access and participation—continues to be a problem. However, because gender discrimination tends to be demonstrated in overt denial of opportunity based on gender, it often is fairly obvious and can be addressed via the enforcement of Title IX.

Less obvious and perhaps more pervasive than gender discrimination is the practice of gender bias. Bias is more subtle than discrimination and therefore more difficult to identify. Gender bias may be defined as the underlying network of assumptions and beliefs held by a person that males and females differ in systematic ways other than physically, that is, in talents, behaviors, or interests (*New Pioneers,* 1975). These beliefs lead the person to make assumptions about others strictly based on gender. For example, a teacher who believes, however unconsciously, that if a child is of a particular gender she or he is likely to do, think, or feel a particular way, these beliefs almost certainly will limit the opportunities of many of the learners in the class.

While not all teachers practice in gender-biased ways, many do. They do so not because they set out to differentiate among their students based on gender but because they do not acknowledge gender equity as an issue in the classroom. By not reflecting upon their own teaching as it may be affected by gender stereotypes and bias, these teachers tend to perpetuate the problem.

There are numerous indicators within our schools and society that point to the conclusion that we as teachers continue to practice gender bias in our classrooms. Among those practices that can be seen as gender-biased are: the extent to which we continue to find occurrences, such as one gender being substantially over- or under-represented in a curriculum offering; teacher expectations related to or affected by student gender; or classroom practices such as teaching methods or discipline that disproportionately affect one gender of student.

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GENESIS OF GENDER BIAS

In discussing gender bias with preservice and inservice teachers and other groups of people over the years, a frequent question is: As a society, how have we come to consider females and males so differently? The answer is complex, and the two principal explanations—innate and socialization differences—are only very briefly addressed here. I have included the information about these two perspectives not to attempt to answer the question definitively but rather to remind the reader that considerable research and several theories exist that seek to explain gender differences in many aspects of life.

Innate Differences

Belief in theories about different innate characteristics of females and males may help perpetuate unconscious assumptions that are behind gender-biased practices. If one holds the assumption that important thinking and behavioral pattern differences exist between the genders and these differences are caused by genetic or hormonal factors, one is quite likely to substitute gender stereotype for consideration of the individual learner. Specifically, if teachers believe that boys and girls have different innately determined ways of thinking and learning, they may develop gender-differentiated teaching practices.

One dominant theory of innate gender differences is that females think differently than males. Richmond-Abbott (1983) and later Sadker, Sadker, and Klein (1991) summarized the latest research that has examined the several theories proposing a relationship between sex-linked genes and hormones, and specific abilities and intelligence. Briefly stated, studies that have examined the possible relationship between male hormones and specific abilities often associated with male learners (e.g., spacial ability) have found no evidence to support such a relationship.

Another theory that seeks to support the belief that males and females innately think differently suggests that gender-specific hormones help shape abilities through brain development. Much of the research on hormones begins with the assumption that the left and right hemispheres of the brain each process information in a different manner. A good deal of this type of research is currently being conducted, much of it on laboratory animals. At best,

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the results of the research are inconclusive. As Richmond-Abbott (1983) states:

> While there may be some effect of sex hormones on the brain, we do not know whether sex hormones are really affecting the brain and, if they are, how they are exercising their effect. We do not know whether any effect begins at birth, is activated at puberty, or never exists at all (*Sex Roles over the Life Cycle, 67)*.

A third theory about innate differences between the genders has to do with behavior. Males often are considered by virtue of their gender to be more aggressive, more competitive, and less nurturing than females. Studies that attempt to examine the relationship between sex hormones and aggression most often are conducted with animals. In the case of humans, however, it is very difficult to separate the effect of the environment from the innate factors some say affect behavior in humans. Taken as a body of research, studies done with human subjects tend to show no particular relationship between sex hormones and aggression. (Sadker, Sadker, & Klein 1991; Richmond-Abbott 1983)

Similarly, research regarding competition and nurturance in humans has found no particular link by gender that could be described as innate. Certainly, competitive and nurturing behavior are more likely to be found in males and females respectively, but many argue that these characteristics are learned within society, which values them in one gender or the other (Sadker, Sadker, & Klein 1991; Richmond-Abbott 1983).

Socialization Differences

Much social science research exists that examines gender differentiation as a result of socialization. A primary assumption is that our society, which is most heavily influenced by Western European culture, tends to hold gender stereotypes based on cultural tradition. For example, the tradition of the dominant culture in North America has been for males to take on roles that require instrumental characteristics. These characteristics, such as independence, assertiveness, and dominance, are also personality attributes that are valued in those in power positions in our society. On the other hand, expressive characteristics generally are assumed to be found more often in females. Dependence, passivity, and submission are traits valued for more nurturing or "femi-

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nine" activities, rather than for those in decision-making positions (Csikszentmihaly 1988).

While traditional views of masculinity and femininity are losing some of their rigidity, the presence of gender bias in our society remains and seems to affect career choices. Despite the fact that women constitute 42 percent of the work force in the United States, they remain substantially under-represented in government, corporate life, and other positions of decision-making power. Similarly, men represent a very small percentage of nurses, elementary teachers, and primary parents and/or homemakers. There are virtually no male preschool teachers (Tittle, in Klein 1985). It is, in part, a traditional view of appropriate roles for females and males that drives us to expect certain things of people according to their gender. This view suggests that gender-related behavioral traits are social constructions.

Perhaps the best-known studies that suggested gender traits are socially constructed were those conducted by Margaret Mead in 1935. Mead believed that cultural relativism (attitudes and characteristics of groups of people, in this case gender groups, according to the cultural group) was the contributing factor for the assumption of gender roles and traits rather than biological differences within a society.

Mead (1935) studied three primitive tribes in New Guinea. She found that the Mountain Arapesh men and women shared equally in the major occupation of the tribe, which was "growing things: children, pigs, and coconut trees" (Muuss 1988, p. 152). Mead described both gender groups in the tribe according to gender traits that typically refer only to females in Western culture: warm, peaceful, and caring about the needs of others.

In contrast, Mead's study of the Mundugumor of the Yuat River revealed people who, regardless of gender, displayed characteristics that traditionally are considered masculine. This tribe, who were cannibals, spent most of their time hunting. In their quest, both men and women displayed aggressiveness, competitiveness, and ruthless disregard for the needs of others, particularly children. In fact, Mead described child bearing and rearing as tasks that women particularly disliked. Mead saw no displays of "maternal instinct."

The third tribe Mead studied was the Lake-dwelling Tchambuli, in which she found yet another set of gender characteristics that varied considerably from those typically found in Western

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culture. These people depended on fishing and bartering for survival. Women did nearly all of the labor. Mead described the women as "stern, dominant, matter-of-fact, and impersonal" (Muuss 1988, 154). The function of men was predominantly ornamental. They spent most of their time decorating themselves, creating dances, and planning ceremonies. Mead described them as "submissive, emotionally dependent, involved in petty bits of insult and gossip, less responsible than the women, but more responsive to the needs of others" (Muuss 1988, 154).

Mead's work in these cases provided examples of cultures in which gender role characteristics were well defined, yet quite different from tribe to tribe as from many other cultures. She believed her research pointed to the conclusion that gender roles and the expectations we associate with them are a cultural phenomenon rather than a biological one.

Much of Mead's work has been criticized over the years. For example, in *Margaret Mead and Samoa: The Making and Unmaking of an Anthropological Myth* (1983), Freeman asserts that Mead's findings regarding Samoan youth, adolescence, and culture overall were patently false. The findings from his six-year study (compared to Mead's nine-month stay in Samoa) suggest Mead's conclusions were erroneous. Unfortunately, having died in 1978, Mead was unable to defend her conclusions. Regardless of the degree of merit one attributes to Mead's work in New Guinea and Samoa, she set the stage for researchers who study human development and the attainment of gender roles through a perspective of socialization rather than the perspective that biology is destiny.

Much research has been conducted that addresses issues of gender stereotyping and gender bias from a theoretical framework of socialization as the principal factor determining gender differentiation in our society. Other research seeks to explain the issue by providing biological evidence of gender differences driven by hormones and/or brain differences. The nature-versus-nurture controversy is certainly not settled. The prevailing wisdom is that an individual's development is influenced by a combination of environmental and biological factors. The explanation as to what causes human differences, for example between gender groups, is elusive due to the complexity of the issue and the endless variables involved.

Perhaps a more interesting part of this issue of male and female differences is not so much the cause of perceived differences but

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that the issue is a point of contention at all. In fact, recent education research indicates little significant variation between genders in academic achievement areas such as math and reading, while considerable variation exists within each gender group in these areas (Hyde & Linn 1986). Even though the research indicates that actual performance differences by gender appear to be minimal and possibly to be decreasing in some academic areas, many continue to think of males and females as being very different. This "differentiated gender thinking" can become gender bias and have detrimental effects on students in classrooms.

The complexity and subtlety of gender bias affects all aspects of classroom life for students. Who dominates the classroom; who interacts more often with the teacher; who generates more learning opportunities; and who is disciplined more frequently are all issues that direct one to the principal issue of who in general is empowered as a learner. One way to structure your thinking about gender issues in your classroom is by developing your understanding of gender equity as an issue of equal inputs or equitable outcomes. The following discussion examines these concepts.

GENDER EQUITY: EQUAL OR EQUITABLE?

Gender equity and related goals can be thought of as working to enhance the aspirations, achievement, talents, and interests of all students independent of their gender (*New Pioneers,* 1975). If asked, most teachers would report that they do their best to meet this general goal. However, approaching gender equity with such a broad, vague statement may result in business as usual, that is, with gender issues not being addressed critically by the teacher. In order to understand how gender equity might work for you in your own classroom, it is important to think through the broader concept of gender equity first, then carefully examine how it can be implemented through your teaching.

The label *gender equity* is used fairly universally to represent ways of thinking and acting that address gender issues. The term *equity* is used to describe the general concept. However, when one begins to consider how gender equity is operationalized, it becomes clear that there are essentially two ways to conceptualize it: within a framework of *equal* (or *equality,* when the term is used as a noun) or within a framework of *equitable*. Gender equity is

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the general term for referring to gender-related practices, but it may be interpreted as *equal* treatment or *equitable* treatment. Although perhaps confusing initially, it is important to differentiate between the terms.

In using the conceptual framework of equality, one is particularly concerned about issues at the beginning, or schooling "inputs," which Secada (1989) defines as

> what a school starts with when educating its students. Those resources—financial (monies), physical (books in a library, science lab equipment), and personnel (its teachers and how qualified they are)—are distributed (i) directly among schools and (ii) indirectly among the students who enroll in those schools (*Equity in Education, 70)*.

The actions of implementing "equal" treatment would involve assuring that students receive the same opportunities for access and participation. A teacher could put this into practice by providing the same or equivalent materials to all learners; being certain all learners participate actively and with the same frequency; assuring that all learners receive equal access to aspects of the curriculum and assuring that all curriculum materials have comparable "male" and "female" characteristics or models. The operative words here are "same," "equal," and "equivalent." Teaching that is sensitive to gender equity practices and that is structured through this conceptual framework is concerned primarily with giving all students, female and male, an equal footing at the start. The idea is to allot all students the *same* level of instruction, attention, and expectation at the beginning (Secada 1989).

Several points are implied through this framework. An approach of equality will enhance the learning opportunities of female and male students. How equal the achievement or attitudes and dispositions of the students will be at the end of the period is fairly open ended. The implication is that with an equal beginning, students will proceed according to their individual capabilities. Some will do better than others or will have different preferences, but there will not be an explicit difference between identifiable groups (Secada 1989).

Gender equity through an "equitable" framework is approached differently. Its premise is that a particular group historically and habitually has been less advantaged within the system than another group. In the case of those committed to teach-

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ing equitably within the context of gender concerns, the group at risk is generally considered to be female learners, although there are certain circumstances within classroom life where it becomes quite clear that some males individually are the victims of gender bias. But when considering students as members of particular groups, females are arguably less advantaged when the final outcomes of academic achievement are measured (AAUW Report, 1992). Indeed, final outcomes tend to be the principal issue of concern when one adopts the framework of "equitable" as opposed to "equal." For instance, a teacher may stress participation of female learners in science over that for male learners if, for example, fewer females enter a science fair or score as highly on science tests as males. Another example of an approach according to an equitable framework might be a teacher who intentionally presses female students more than male students in math, if the teacher believes or has evidence that the female students are not achieving as well as the males. These are two curricula areas that have long been considered male domains. To try to meet the goal of similar achievement in science or math, the teacher practicing equitably begins by consciously acknowledging that one group is at risk for not achieving as well as the other group.

The next step of implementing gender equity through an equitable framework is to enhance opportunities for the at-risk group, sometimes to the point of extending an unequal and greater amount of resources toward that group rather than equalizing the resources between girls and boys. The rationale is that it is fair to work in a somewhat unequal fashion in order to remove the factors that have previously placed this group at risk for unequal achievement in the end. Gender-equitable teaching suggests that without extra or different consideration a particular group will not have the capability and opportunity to finish at the same level as the other group. Equal distribution of inputs, or resources such as quality of instruction, frequency of teacher interaction, and level of teacher expectation, is not sufficient to assure that there will be no significant difference between groups, female and male, when final outcomes are measured. While there is bound to be a range of achievement within each gender category, the ranges for both genders ought to have comparable distributions. Equitable teaching practices cannot assure the same outcomes for all individuals within a category, due to issues such as individuals' interests and levels of motivation. However, the goal is to attempt to

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provide for the possibility of equal outcomes given systematic societal biases.

Several problems are inherent in either approach. The principal problem with an approach to gender equity according to a framework of equality may be that, despite the assurances of equal access and equal participation, substantial achievement and participation differences may continue to exist between the genders. Even though one carefully considers the equal distribution of resources at the beginning, a significant difference by gender may continue to be present in many learning situations at the end. Many would argue that an equal approach is simply not sufficient to correct the effects of gender bias that prevail in society at large.

Taking up gender-sensitive teaching practices according to the equitable concept also is problematic. Intentionally diverting more resources to one group over another may be a difficult action for a teacher to take. There is a strong tendency for a teacher to do his or her best with each student; in a sense treating each student the same is one of the ethical standards that guide teachers and lead them to believe that they are doing the best thing for all students. There is a sense that it would be unfair to single out a particular group for special attention on a consistent basis. The traditional approach is to focus on the inputs and not to consider the broader issue of final outcomes.

A second dilemma inherent in teaching according to an equitable interpretation of gender equity is the reliance upon a teacher's correct assessment of the impact of societal biases in the classroom and in society. The implicit danger is that the teacher may actually do more harm than good through a skewed interpretation of the extent of gender bias. Teacher practice that reflects an extreme interpretation of gender bias (for example, denying its existence or overcompensating for its presence), may result in sexist or reverse-sexist practices. In the final analysis it may be impossible to determine that which is absolutely non-sexist, either in teaching practice or in one's analysis of society. The attempt to do so constitutes a struggle that teachers committed to equitable teaching must pursue.

How then does one integrate gender equity into teaching practice—according to an equal or equitable framework? In the following introductions of the teachers who are profiled throughout the book, you will note that six of the teachers put their commitment to gender equity into practice in their classrooms according to an

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equal framework of equality, while only one does so through an equitable framework. The analysis of Karen's teaching suggests that she may use a combination of the frameworks. The teachers demonstrate their beliefs about and understanding of gender equity practice in their own fashion. All are committed to addressing gender bias in their teaching, but their philosophies and methods vary. In order to gain a greater insight into how gender equity may be practiced in the classroom, the experiences, insights, and daily activities of these teachers will be integrated throughout the book.

In many ways, these teachers are quite typical. They deal with the same problems as teachers everywhere. Severe economic straits plague some of their schools; some teach in culturally diverse schools with students of low socioeconomic levels and with high dropout and pregnancy rates. Several teachers cope with upper middle-class parents who place extraordinary demands on them. These teachers face the same constraints as their colleagues. They are similar to the "average" teacher in other ways—they come from middle-class backgrounds, have traditional teacher training, and none is a person of color.

In other ways, the teachers are more than ordinary. All are considered highly successful teachers by their peers and principals. Their classrooms are well managed, and substantial learning takes place in them. But their most unusual characteristic, and the reason for their inclusion in this book, is their personal and professional commitment to gender equity to ensure that gender bias is not a part of their classroom teaching.

THE TEACHERS

The following introductions to the eight teachers' classroom practice will help illustrate different teaching approaches to, and even different understandings of, gender equity. As you come to know each teacher's perspective and situation, you may begin to develop a personal conception of gender equity as well as some ideas of how you may integrate equity considerations into your own teaching practice.

Each of the teachers was invited to participate in the work that informed the book. The most important factor in determining who was to be part of the project was commitment to gender equity in teaching. All of the teachers felt that they incorporate

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aspects of gender equity into their teaching practice to some degree.

I had known three of the teachers (Beth, Fred, and Bob) when they were graduate students in classes I taught. I was aware of their interest in gender issues in schools from our course activities. I came to know the other five teachers through my contacts with others. Judy, Karen, and Sean were identified as teachers interested in gender equity by a friend and colleague of mine.

I met Mary through a different set of circumstances. Several years prior to my work with this book, a student of mine in an undergraduate teacher preparation course spent a semester observing in Mary's classroom. In class discussions the student often spoke of gender equity-related practices Mary used in her classroom. Mary's principal assured me that I had found an excellent teacher who also placed a high priority on gender equity issues.

Pam's name was given to me by Tim Wernett, a staff person from a grant-supported project that provides, among other things, outreach services to teachers interested in implementing equity-related practices in their classrooms. Tim had known Pam for a number of years and felt she was a good example of a teacher who integrated gender equity into her classroom teaching. As I spent time talking with Pam and in her classroom, the recommendation for her participation in this work increasingly puzzled me. Pam's understanding of and interest in gender equity seemed fairly superficial to me, although she spoke of and demonstrated commitment to gender equity as a female issue, especially through her work in Planned Parenthood. During the initial stages of writing the book, I determined that Pam may reflect the way some teachers think of issues such as gender equity. She knows at some level that the issue is important to integrate into her teaching, but the myriad of other pressing concerns during her day take her time and attention. She is interested in, but cannot quite figure out how to integrate gender equity in ways other than those she currently uses. Because Pam's thinking is similar to that of many other teachers I have talked with over the years, I concluded that the information Pam provided, modest though it is, should remain in the text.

These eight people, who are considered effective teachers in general by their colleagues and/or principals and who are actively involved, to various degrees, in integrating gender equity into their teaching practice, provided the information upon which much of the book is based.

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As you read through the chapters that describe the teachers, their classrooms, and their work with gender equity, it will be useful to keep several things in mind. None of the eight teachers was evaluated formally for either their teaching effectiveness in general or for their integration of gender equity into their teaching specifically. Therefore it is not possible to discuss any of them in terms of being an "expert." Further, in every case where it is presented, the analyses of their teaching is based on my interpretation, that of the teacher, or a combination. Each of the teachers reviewed the sections of the book that described him or her and confirmed that my interpretations were accurate. Nevertheless, it is conceivable that another individual would develop a different interpretation.

Finally, bear in mind that none of the teachers necessarily provides a "best" example of how to interpret gender equity or implement various methods to achieve it. You may find that one teacher does some thing correctly, as you see it, while another uses other methods or materials you like. Perhaps one of the teachers will represent the best of the lot to you. Taken together, these teachers provide a varied picture of "regular" teachers working with gender equity on a daily basis.

Judy's Preschool Class

Judy directs and teaches in a preschool in a medium-sized school district. Small by the standards of many other preschools, the preschool consists of four classes of a maximum of fourteen students each. Special-needs students (those who have been diagnosed as requiring different and extra attention in school due to a handicapping condition) are integrated with non-special needs children. Each classroom has a low adult-to-student ratio: about 1 to 4. A teacher, an aide, and a special education teacher comprise the staff for each class. This ratio is often lowered with the addition of parent volunteers. The socioeconomic composition of the preschool as well as the district overall is generally upper middle class. Very few students of color live in the district or attend the preschool.

Judy's interpretation of equity issues in general and gender equity in particular becomes evident when she speaks of her background.

> I grew up in a family that was very committed to social equality. My mother worked with the war on poverty. The efforts my

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> parents went to; I can remember being a pre-schooler, going to a dentist on the other end of town. My mother wanted me to see a black professional. That was how she could make that happen. I came of age emotionally in the counterculture. Gender equity was part of that.

Judy also credits parental values and messages received at home for shaping her beliefs.

> I'm not somebody who had lots of experiences with frustration with being female and how that has created limits for me. I was born into a family that preferred girls, so I got to be the preferred gender. I had a professional mother, so it was always expected I would go through college and I would be a professional.

Judy's personal experiences as a child and adolescent within the context of her family helped shape her perceptions about her abilities and aspirations. From those experiences as well as others as an adult, Judy has constructed her beliefs about equity. While gender equity is an important issue to Judy, she considers it one of secondary importance to the issues of equity in general. She perceives culture and class conflicts as the broader topics. As these equity concerns are addressed in her teaching, she believes gender issues also should be examined by the students. When one deals with the concept of equity effectively, the goal is to sensitize the student to bias in any form, whether cultural, class, or gender. Therefore, as Judy endeavors to open the minds of her three-, four-, and five-year-olds, she attempts to do so in a way that bias of any kind eventually will be apparent to the student.

There are several aspects of Judy's understanding of gender equity that are unique among this group of teachers. While she shares the framework of equality with a number of the other teachers, her teaching illustrates the most gender neutral practice of all of the teachers. As you will note in chapter 5, in which teacher interactions are discussed, Judy attempts to and succeeds in working with both girls and boys in nearly an identical fashion. Her tone of voice and her words are as similar from one child to the next as she can possibly make them. Judy is the most clear-cut example of the practice of gender neutrality, or commitment to equal inputs.

Another aspect of Judy's interpretation of gender equity that should be pointed out as different from that of the other teachers is

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her steadfast resistance to using what she calls "propaganda." When faced with a situation where a student is clearly demonstrating gender bias, Judy does not directly instruct the child in the "correct" way of thinking or behaving. Instead she enters into a dialogue with the child, questioning him or her about assumptions and how he or she came to a particular way of thinking or acting. She calls this creating "cognitive conflict." She believes that if she can open the way for the child to consider alternative or additional information, when faced with a similar situation at another time, the child may choose to take a different course of action or think differently with regard to bias. Because Judy does not insist on the child coming away from such a discussion with her perspective or way of thinking, many of these dialogues are left somewhat open-ended. A teacher who is not so convinced of the eventual effectiveness of this approach might be uneasy with the lack of closure and assurance that the child understands the point. Judy, however, is confident that this subtle and non-confrontational method is the most productive means of creating change in biased attitudes in the long run. She is similarly committed to incorporating a gender-equity framework of equality in her teaching.

Karen's Kindergarten

Karen teaches kindergarten in a primary magnet school (a voluntary desegregation site), which encompasses kindergarten through third grade students. She has worked in the school since its transition to a magnet school in 1978. The school is in a low-socioeconomic neighborhood with a nearly 100 percent ethnic minority population, drawing half its population from the neighborhood and the other half from voluntary transfer students who must identify themselves as white and non-Hispanic. The population of the school is heterogeneous, culturally and socioeconomically. Karen's kindergarten students mirror the mixture of the school as a whole—half are neighborhood children and half are voluntary transfer children.

Karen believes her most difficult struggles in working with bias in the classroom have to do with class distinction and gender issues. Both of these concerns certainly have to do with equity issues in general, but Karen considers them as distinct entities that should be directly and separately addressed. In a very real sense, she teaches her students about gender issues and gender stereo-

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types. She believes that gender bias comes from many directions, principally the family and the media. But she also recalls some situations from her own schooling experience that she says reflected gender bias.

> Boys got to do the important things. Girls got to do the unimportant things, except in the month of May. In Catholic school the month of May was Virgin Mary's month. Girls got to carry the flag, but we still didn't get to light candles or carry the host to the alter. In high school, boys got to play sports and we didn't, except intramural sports. It wasn't until college that we got to really compete.

In reflecting on these experiences and others, she describes her goal of teaching with equity in mind:

> I'm not sure any of these experiences shaped my current commitment toward gender equity directly at the time. Understanding gender equity was a later acquisition for me. I certainly wanted to make sure there was more fairness around in general.

Much of Karen's interpretation of gender equity can be described as stemming from the framework of equality. While she does not equalize her interactions with her students to the extent that Judy does, she is sensitive about equal access and equal opportunity for males and females. She also is not reticent about nudging her students into particular learning situations if their own preconceived gender biases might deter them. Karen describes her actions this way:

> I will structure it so that all children will have a time specifically with the blocks, for example. Some kids will stake out certain areas and other kids won't go in. Sometimes that's based on gender. Some kids have more familiarity with some things; with blocks or the coloring table. So I structure it at the beginning of the year so that all kids have a chance to get in there. Sometimes I will say, "You know, I haven't seen girls over here for ages," or when we're sitting down, I'll say, "Look at how we're sitting. Is this how we want to sit, girls on one side and boys on the other?"

Karen is concerned with making sure that no student is excluded from any learning or socializing opportunity. She also works from the beginning to make sure her students understand what bias and exclusion mean. To that end, not long after the school year is under way, Karen's students often talk about gender

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issues within the context of their work and play. They demonstrate a sensitivity to gender-bias situations such as very few females portrayed in literature and stereotyped ideas about career opportunities. If one inadvertently should use the pronoun "he" in a generic sense, the children are likely to correct the sexist language.

Karen makes the learners in her classroom active participants in identifying gender bias and uncovering gender-based stereotypes. She is neither subtle nor confrontational, but direct and insistent in her approach. This method, coupled with her framework of equality of opportunity and equivalent distribution of resources works for Karen in meeting her goal of addressing gender equity in her teaching practice.

Mary's Third Grade

Mary has taught third grade in Judy's school district for several years. The same homogeneous quality permeates the elementary school as the preschool; the students for the most part are upper middle-class and white, non-Hispanic. As part of the third-grade team, Mary works within a prescribed curriculum in the content areas. However, despite considerable constraints on time available to deviate from what must be taught, Mary is able to weave threads of gender equity into her teaching. Mary carefully chooses curriculum materials that depict females in areas where they typically are not shown. The use of enrichment materials that intentionally provide a gender balance is one example of Mary's approach to gender equity. In providing materials that display males and females occupied in all activities during any given point in history, Mary is demonstrating her interpretation of gender equity through a framework of equality. To make up for a lack of female characters in the required literature for her class, she inserts readings that do incorporate females. A more balanced representation of males and females is created; the students are exposed to works that portray females as main characters as well those in which male characters dominate. By choosing enriching materials that incorporate female as well as male figures and through other techniques, Mary works to enhance the experiences of all of her students through an understanding of gender equity that focuses on inputs and processes that are meant to provide equal opportunity.

Perhaps more than the other teachers, Mary believes her personal experiences have shaped her commitment to addressing

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gender equity in her teaching. In reflecting upon her own schooling experiences, she remembered this:

> Boys were treated really differently. I remember that. For sixteen years I wanted to be a boy; they were treated so differently. They had all kinds of advantages, certainly in sports and P.E. and things like that. They were also regarded as the scientists. That involved more hands-on. And they were definitely seen as the mathematicians a lot more than the girls. Although we had our math program, it wasn't very exciting. The boys were seen as more capable. They were also seen as more mischievous, and that was more appealing than always being goody-good.

Aside from curricular issues and teacher expectations of academic ability that she recalls as gender biased, she also remembers gender differences in how discipline was handled.

> I went to schools where children were disciplined by hitting them. I was not hit. Even when I'd do relatively awful things. Like in junior high I stole a grade book and I wasn't even suspected. Had I been a boy, I would have been suspected. Another time I brought a toad. It really frightened the teacher. I wasn't disciplined the way I would have been had I been a boy.

In summing up her memories of her schooling and the impact it has brought to her teaching practice, Mary says simply, "I would like to believe I'm more equitable."

Sean's Middle School Art Classes

Of the teachers in the group, Sean has taught school the longest. He began teaching art in elementary school. Ten years later, he moved to middle school, where he has worked with early adolescents for twenty years. The school is in a middle-class neighborhood but reflects a fairly broad socioeconomic range due to mandatory busing as part of a school district desegregation plan.

The principal of the middle school referred to Sean as "Mr. Workshop" when contacted for permission to observe Sean's classes. The affectionate nickname refers to Sean's interest in constantly renewing his teaching, which he does in part through participation in workshops and other types of training. One area of particular interest for Sean over the past several years has been gender equity. He participated in the Gender Expectations and Student Achievement (GESA) project (Grayson & Martin 1988) several

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years ago, and since then has worked to integrate gender equity into his classroom practice. To some extent Sean believes his personal background helped shape his awareness of gender issues.

> Elementary school was a three-room schoolhouse on the south rim of the Grand Canyon. We were pretty much self-segregated [by gender]on the playground. As far as the classroom goes, my impression is we were treated pretty equally; except I felt that some of the girls got more attention. That was probably because they got better grades. In high school, we were definitely separated. I went to a mission high school in Utah. I know shop was definitely a boys' class and cooking was definitely a girls' class. Several of the boys wanted to take cooking and some of the girls wanted to take shop. They definitely wouldn't let that happen.

In thinking back about anything in his schooling experience that might have been particularly good or bad because of his gender, Sean said:

> It was probably in high school. It was a sense of not being one of the group because I didn't participate in the sports activities. Two of us didn't. Leonard and I both convinced the coach that in the winter, rather than take tumbling, something else that we could do was chip the ice off the sidewalk. We said it would be good exercise and good for the school. He let us, and we passed P.E. I was looking forward to the sports program; I wanted to participate. I knew I needed the exercise. But I certainly couldn't match up to the coach's expectations of what was needed on a team. So I definitely was not one of the locker room jocks. I wound up in speech and debate instead. I think because of these experiences I'm more accepting of students who don't conform to some form of preset convention as far as what's expected of them.

Sean experienced exclusion due to preconceived notions of what boys should be able to do, on the part of the teacher or, in the case above, the coach. These experiences have influenced Sean in the way he thinks about gender issues with regard to his students. Sean's perceptions about fairness and his sensitivity are demonstrated in the classes he teaches through an equal framework.

Sean's work with gender equity is done principally through methods of classroom management. While this includes discipline, it focuses on teacher-to-student interactions, monitoring practices, and careful lesson planning. Sean does not teach directly about

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anything that remotely could be considered a gender issue, nor does he shape any of his interactions with students along a gender theme. Instead he is primarily concerned with equalizing access and opportunities to succeed in the classes he teaches.

In a fashion somewhat similar to Judy's, Sean attempts to work with students in an even, equivalent way. His method of interaction is to question and critique, giving each student an equal allotment of his instructional time and attention. He structures his classes so that even the least motivated student can be cajoled into achieving success through completion of the art projects. Largely due to his own level of energy and constant monitoring, he is able to keep all students on task so they virtually have no choice but to finish and succeed.

Fred's Middle-School Social Studies Classes

Fred has taught middle-school social studies for twelve years in his present school, which is culturally and socioeconomically diverse. The social studies curriculum, which Fred helped develop some years ago, focuses directly on issues of racial/ethnic and gender equity. Careful attention is given to varied points of view by culture and gender groups within the prescribed curriculum. This is Fred's principal means of addressing gender equity. A secondary method he uses is *equal* monitoring and questioning. Analysis of the two indicate that Fred's understanding of gender equity is that of identical treatment of females and males. He works to be sure that students, regardless of gender, are represented in the curriculum materials. He also meticulously includes every student in his questioning sessions and during periods of monitoring. Fred is not effusive in his interactions with his students. The interactions are confined to the task at hand. Indeed, he runs a tight ship and maintains momentum throughout class sessions.

Fred shares some characteristics with Judy in implementing gender-equity methods. He relies on the capabilities of his students to take in the information and then figure out the implications or what the different perspectives mean to them. He does not choose materials or methods through which he directly confronts the students about gender bias in their words or behavior. When asked if he would intervene in a situation outside the classroom if exclusion by gender was taking place, say in a game, he responded:

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