

Gender Inclusive Classrooms: Concepts and Lessons

Below, you will find some suggestions for sequencing a program of learning about gender and gender diversity across grade-levels. These assume a proactive approach to the creation of a gender inclusive school setting. As with any curriculum development, the key is to match the needs of the specific context to the materials, activities and resources being used. In some cases, a particular student's or staff member's gender may require additional activities or approaches for supporting the school community to be fully accepting and inclusive of the individual.

Pre-K/Lower Elementary Grades (Pre-K – 2)

Overarching concepts:

There are lots of ways to be boys or girls or something else. Isn't it great?!?!

- Toys are toys, hair is hair, colors are colors, and clothes are clothes
- Sometimes this is confusing. We get messages about some things being for boys and some things being for girls.
- Kids can do or be or like or want anything because they are individuals with hopes and likes and desires. This is not **because** they are boys or girls.

Mid Elementary (2 – 4)

Overarching concepts:

Gender is very complex and not just about bodies. We all have a right to be ourselves.

- Gender includes a relationship between bodies, expression and identity
- Who you are is not about what others tell you, but something you determine for yourself (even when you get messages that say otherwise)
- People deserve to be treated with kindness and respect

Upper Elementary (4 – 6)

Overarching Concepts

Gender Diversity: Binary vs. Multi-dimensional Models of Gender

- Gender in Nature
- Gender in history and across cultures
- Certain types of bodies are thought of as boy and certain types as girl, but that's not true for everyone
- Kids can be boys, girls, both, or neither
- Gender depends on culture and history

Middle School

Overarching Concepts

Social expectations and limitations about gender. What happens to gender non-expansive kids?

Roles and responsibilities within a community; being an ally

- Young Adult Literature
- Portrayals of gender in books
- The biology of gender
- What are some of the pressures to conform to gender expectations, at the school and in general? What happens to kids when they don't?
- Have you ever felt like an outsider, either for your own reasons or because you were treated as such?
- What does being an ally look like?

High School

Overarching Concepts

Gender as a social construct

Gender and civil rights issue

- The complexity of gender is seen across virtually every aspect of society
- How have portrayals of gender in the media affected our understandings of gender?
- What are some of the ways gender is understood in different cultures?
- What is the relationship between gender and issues of power in our society?
- Young Adult Literature
- Portrayals of gender in books
- The biology of gender
- Why is it difficult to come up with solid statistics about transgender people?
- How have issues related to gender diversity shown up over the past 5 – 10 years?
- Gender and Sports
- Debates in Psychology: The DSM-5; Raising Gender-expansive Children