

## Considering Our Differences Lesson Plan

### Objective:

Students will reflect on gender differences that are genetic and stereotypical (for example: men have more muscle mass vs. men are stronger), and acknowledge that we are all different. The hope from today's lesson is to inspire students to accept our differences in order to build empathy, stop bullying, harassment, hate, etc.

### Time & Materials:

Option #1: Individual Activity 5-10 minutes (*writing only*)

Option #2: Small Group Discussion 10-15 minutes to answer questions, discuss (*think-pair-share activity*)

Option #3: Large Group Discussion 15-20 minutes to answer questions, discuss (*think-pair-share in addition to whole class discussion*)

Option #4: Video/Article and Large Group Discussion 25-30 minutes to answer questions, show video, and discuss (*think-pair-share in addition to whole class discussion*)

### Option #1

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#### Anticipatory Set:

##### *Feel free to say to the following:*

"Take a few minutes to think about how males and females are different from one another." Provide students about a minute to reflect *on their own silently*.

#### Activity:

**Step One:** Feel free to say, "Now, write down four words/phrases that you think of immediately that describes a characteristic that is specific to males and specific to females." Feel free to provide an example for the students.

- Possible Examples:  
*Males:* physical, strong, athletic, blue, etc.  
*Females:* verbal, emotional, athletic, pink, etc.

**Step Two:** Ask students if they believe all these response are true. Allow for discussion:

- Looking at their responses on their paper, what is similar or different about males and females?
- Does your gender influence your list? Why or why not?
- Would your responses change if you were around your group of friends and not in a classroom? If yes, explain how.
- How could some of the responses affect how people behave?
- How could some of our responses be seen as hurtful?
- How can we learn to accept our differences, and not expect different genders to act a certain way?

### Option #2

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**Prior to activity:** Generate "Group Norms" to make the following discussion to take place in a safe environment. Here are some ideas:

- Allow people to say mistakes
- Allow people to say the wrong words
- Do not judge
- What is said here stays here
- Ask class for others...

#### Anticipatory Set:

##### *Feel free to say to the following:*

“Take a few minutes to think about how males and females are different from one another.” Provide students about a minute to reflect *on their own silently*.

**Activity:**

**Step One:** Feel free to say, “Now, write down four words/phrases that you think of immediately that describes a characteristic that is specific to males and specific to females.” Feel free to provide an exam for the students.

- Possible Examples:

*Males:* physical, strong, athletic, blue, etc.

*Females:* verbal, emotional, athletic, pink, etc.

**Step Two:** Have students share their responses with a partner or a group of 3 students.

**Step Three:** Have students in partners place an asterisk next to the phrases that the students believe are genetic differences between the genders.

**Step Four:** Ask students if they believe all these response are truly genetic or learned through society. Allow for discussion in partners:

- Looking at our responses we've recorded on the board, what is similar or different about them? Why?
- Does your gender influence your list? Why or why not?
- Would your responses change if you were around your group of friends and not in a classroom? If yes, explain how.
- How could some of the responses affect how people behave?
- How could some of our responses be seen as hurtful?
- How can we learn to accept our differences, and not expect different genders to act a certain way?

**Step Five:** Ask students to reflect on actions they can take to stop judgment of people based on their gender. Ask students to individually and quietly write down one thing they can do different.

*Option #3*

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**Prior to activity:** Generate “Group Norms” to make the following discussion to take place in a safe environment. Here are some ideas:

- Allow people to say mistakes
- Allow people to say the wrong words
- Do not judge
- What is said here stays here
- Ask class for others...

**Anticipatory Set:**

*Feel free to say to the following:*

“Take a few minutes to think about how males and females are different from one another.” Provide students about a minute to reflect *on their own silently*.

**Activity:**

**Step One:** Feel free to say, “Now, write down four words/phrases that you think of immediately that describes a characteristic that is specific to males and specific to females.” Feel free to provide an exam for the students.

- Possible Examples:

*Males:* physical, strong, athletic, blue, etc.

*Females:* verbal, emotional, athletic, pink, etc.

**Step Two:** Have students share their responses with a partner or a group of 3 students.

**Step Three:** Generate a list of students' responses on the board. Have each partner set write one characteristic (for males and females) up on the whiteboard (you can use left side of board for males, and right side of board for females)

**Step Four:** Once all characteristics have been recorded, have students place an asterisk next to the phrases that the students believe are genetic differences between the genders.

**Step Five:** Ask students if they believe all these response are truly genetic or learned through society. Allow for discussion:

- Looking at our responses we've recorded on the board, what is similar or different about them? Why?
- Does your gender influence your list? Why or why not?
- Would your responses change if you were around your group of friends and not in a classroom? If yes, explain how.
- How could some of the responses affect how people behave?
- How could some of our responses be seen as hurtful?
- How can we learn to accept our differences, and not expect different genders to act a certain way?
  
- *Note: hopefully something about societal pressures or societal traditions comes up in discussion*

**Step Six:** Ask students to reflect on actions they can take to stop judgment of people based on their gender. Ask them to quietly write down one thing they can do different.

**Step Seven:** Discuss students' responses as a class.

#### *Option #4*

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**Prior to activity:** Generate "Group Norms" to make the following discussion to take place in a safe environment. Here are some ideas:

- Allow people to say mistakes
- Allow people to say the wrong words
- Do not judge
- What is said here stays here
- Ask class for others...

#### **Anticipatory Set:**

***Feel free to say to the following:***

"Take a few minutes to think about how males and females are different from one another." Provide students about a minute to reflect ***on their own silently***.

#### **Activity:**

**Step One:** Feel free to say, "Now, write down four words/phrases that you think of immediately that describes a characteristic that is specific to males and specific to females." Feel free to provide an exam for the students.

- Possible Examples:  
*Males:* physical, strong, athletic, blue, etc.  
*Females:* verbal, emotional, athletic, pink, etc.

**Step Two:** Have students share their responses with a partner or a group of 3 students.

**Step Three:** Generate a list of students' responses on the board. Have each partner set write one characteristic (for males and females) up on the whiteboard (you can use left side of board for males, and right side of board for females)

**Step Four:** Once all characteristics have been recorded, have students place an asterisk next to the phrases that the students believe are genetic differences between the genders.

**Step Five:** Ask students if they believe all these response are truly genetic or learned through society. Allow for discussion:

- Looking at our responses we've recorded on the board, what is similar or different about them? Why?
- Does your gender influence your list? Why or why not?
- Would your responses change if you were around your group of friends and not in a classroom? If yes, explain how.
- How could some of the responses affect how people behave?
- How could some of our responses be seen as hurtful?
- How can we learn to accept our differences, and not expect different genders to act a certain way?
  
- *Note: hopefully something about societal pressures or societal traditions comes up in discussion*

**Step Six:** Ask students to reflect on actions they can take to stop judgment of people based on their gender. Ask them to quietly write down one thing they can do different.

**Step Seven:** Discuss students' responses as a class.

**Video:**

- Share the following video that discusses the need for more females in executive positions in corporate businesses.

**About video: (15 minutes)**

Facebook COO Sheryl Sandberg looks at why a smaller percentage of women than men reach the top of their professions -- and offers 3 powerful pieces of advice to women aiming for the C-suite.

*Video link:* [http://www.ted.com/talks/sheryl\\_sandberg\\_why\\_we\\_have\\_too\\_few\\_women\\_leaders.html](http://www.ted.com/talks/sheryl_sandberg_why_we_have_too_few_women_leaders.html)

**Debrief Video:**

- Ask students to answer the following question: "What are your thoughts on what Sheryl Sandberg has to say? Do you agree? Disagree? Explain your reasoning."
- Provide students 5 minutes to write.
- Have students share their responses with a partner.
- If you would like, have partners report out their initial feelings to the video to the class.
- Ask the class one last question: "How can we move past societal gender differences?"

<b>Additional resources and lesson plans:</b>
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1. Video clip of Sesame Street activity of "One of these things is not like the others":  
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tZIVgQ9ik48&feature=fvw>
2. Korean scientists believe they have found the gene that dictates sexual preference in mice.  
<http://www.popsci.com/science/article/2010-07/has-gay-gene-been-found-female-mice>
3. Lesson plan on the birth of the Environmental Movement and how ethnicity is involved:  
<http://www.tolerance.org/activity/environmental-justice-birth-movement>

4. Classifications of mental disorders, and its affect on society's perceptions. Start class about how science classifies mental disorders...homosexuality was once seen as a mental disorder...why do you think so? why not?...take quiz...discuss how people's perceptions might change if science says homosexuality is a "mental disorder"...

<http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/pages/frontline/shows/assault/etc/quiz.html>