

# Gender inequality in education



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## “ Gender Inequality in Education”

For thousands of years, women have been deprecated for fighting their fundamental right to education. It wasn't until the 19th century that most female students were permitted to pursue higher education. Unfortunately, even when the doors to earn a college degree first opened to women, most campuses and classrooms were male-dominated. Fortunately today, the tables have turned.

According to the National Center for Education Statistics, 134 women earned a bachelor degree for every 100 men in 2018. “ About [60] years ago, the ratio was about 2 men to every 1 woman.” (National Center for Educational Statistics) Simply put, young women are now more likely to enroll in, and graduate from college than young men. But, what has caused this gender reversal?

In his blog post “ Women Graduating”, Professor Claude Fischer concentrates on the “ feminization” of higher education, or what is known as “ The College Gender Gap”. Professor Claude focuses on and analyzes the reasons women have outweighed men in earning higher education degrees. His reasons are as following: “ A wider world of jobs, the feminist movement, diminished discrimination against women, failing male role models, sexism, and birth control”. (Fischer) However, in my opinion, the question that should be asked here is not “ why women have taken the lead”, but “ why men are falling behind”! As a feminist, I believe in Political, Economic, and Social equality of the sexes. Therefore, to close the college gender gap, this issue should be

acknowledged from its roots. Have boys always fallen behind in school? If so, why?

Historically, sexism in schools has protected boys. Girls were often ignored by teachers, sexually harassed, and negatively stereotyped in textbooks. As sexism abated in schools in the late 20th century, girls began to outperform boys. A study done in 2018 reveals that boys underperform girls at school in developed countries. (Chira) Yet, the underperformance of boys is still often misconceived to be associated with the “ Women’s Rights movement”.

Fischer asks his readers: “ Did the women’s movement, designed to establish equality, push the pendulum too far, spark a war against boys, and undermine men, as some suggest?” Fortuitously, scientists have found sufficient evidence to dispute this medieval, misogynistic, and superstitious idea. According to Jay Giedd, a psychiatrist at UCSD, Grey matter in female brains develop faster and girls mature sooner, which leads to them learning more efficiently in the classroom. (Giedd) Sexism may also encourage this as well since girls are often stereotyped as quiet readers and boys as wayward adventurers.

What are some ways to help narrow the college gender gap? In order to inspire more men to go to college, we must start encouraging them from the very beginning, elementary school. We can begin by training teachers to be aware of their own gender biases in the classroom. Encourage girls to explore and adventure outside the classroom, and encourage boys to read more inside the classroom. Next, it is important for teachers to discourage lateness in school while being wary of punishing the kids. Because sometimes punishments can “ further alienate” them from school and

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classwork. Lastly, teachers need to use innovative and creative teaching methods to make school fun! Teachers should never give up on engaging the children since children always respond better when they are interested in the subject. (OECD)

One assumes that since women are earning more degrees, they should be earning more money as well. Which logically makes sense. However, more degrees don't always equal more money. At least not in this unequal world, and, sadly, not for women today. Even though the ratio of the degrees earned by women is higher than men, men with the same qualifications as their female counterparts earn higher wages. (Napolitano) Since the Equal Pay Act was signed in 1963 -when women earned an average of 59 cents for every dollar paid to a man- the gender pay gap has narrowed by less than half a cent per year, to about 80 cents on the dollar today. (National Committee on Pay Equity) Based on its research, the Institute for Women's Policy Research estimated that at this pace, women wouldn't receive equal pay until 2059! Is it fair to just wait another 40 years for pay equality?

To righten this wrong, all women around the globe need to be aware of the extent of the wage gap. Women must also learn to negotiate for higher salaries before the start of a job like their male counterparts. Additionally, governments and businesses in power should also acknowledge the gender wage gap to eliminate it once and for all.

The fight for an equal world continues. As the future generation of our planet, we stand hand in hand, and with each step we take, we are one step closer to a world with equal education and pay for all. Step by step we walk

with hopes to one day reach a peak where our dream of gender equality, has turned into reality.

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