

AN ABSTRACT OF THE THESIS OF

Catherine L. Hostetler for the degree of Master of Arts in Interdisciplinary Studies in Speech Communication, Education, and English presented on May 2, 1995. Title: Gender Bias & Teachers: College Students' Perceptions of Sexual Discrimination in Their High School.

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The field of gender bias indicates that teachers are a significant source of gender-role socialization for students. This study focuses on *post hoc* recollections of college students' perceptions of gender bias exhibited by their high school teachers. Specifically, this study asks students to define sex discrimination, as well as describe instances of sex discrimination they experienced or observed exhibited by their high school teachers. Several unanswered questions emerged from a review of the literature: (1) students' reports of the extent to which they experience sex discrimination exhibited by their teachers; (2) students' observations of sex discrimination exhibited toward students of the same sex, as well as toward students of the opposite sex; (3) students' reports of the sex of teacher involved in the sexually discriminative instances they describe; (4) students' definitions of sex discrimination; and (5) students' descriptions of their own experiences of sex discrimination. Consequently, one hypothesis and five research questions are posed to investigate these unanswered questions in the literature. A survey instrument incorporating both closed and open-ended questions explores

the hypothesis and research questions. Participants for this study include 149 undergraduate students (63 females, 86 males) in introductory communication and psychology courses at a western university. Results of the survey are analyzed using both qualitative and quantitative methodologies. The closed-ended questions reveal that male and female students experienced and observed sex discrimination exhibited by their teachers with similar frequency (in this case 'Very Rarely'). The open-ended questions indicate that males and females experienced and observed their teachers exhibiting different types of sexually discriminative behaviors toward male and female students (e.g., females described being treated as if they were unintelligent; males described being disciplined more strictly than females). Both male and female students' definitions of sex discrimination are very similar. In addition, the sex of the teacher described exhibiting sex discrimination appears to make a difference. Although previous research seems to suggest that male and female teachers are equally biased in their display of sexually discriminative behavior toward male and female students, this study's results show that both male and female students perceived male teachers to be more biased toward female students than female teachers.

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**Gender Bias & Teachers: College Students' Perceptions of
Sexual Discrimination in Their High School.**

by

Catherine L. Hostetler

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Catherine L. Hostetler, Author

**This thesis is dedicated to my parents,
Bill and Sandy, for their neverending
belief in my abilities.**

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

	<u>Page</u>
I. INTRODUCTION	1
Purpose of This Study	5
Preview of Subsequent Chapters	5
II. LITERATURE REVIEW	7
Key Constructs	8
Gender-Biased Language in Society	10
Male-Biased Curriculum Materials	12
Student Identity and Gender Roles	14
Teacher Expectations and Responses	15
Questions Emerging from the Literature	23
Hypothesis and Research Questions	27
H1	27
RQ(1)	27
RQ(2)	28
RQ(3)	28
RQ(4)	29
RQ(5)	29
III. METHODS	30
Subjects	30
Research Instrument	30
Procedure	32
Data Analytic Procedures	33
Quantitative Methods	33
Qualitative Methods	33

TABLE OF CONTENTS (Continued)

	<u>Page</u>
IV. RESULTS	34
Students' Reports of the Frequency to Which They Experienced Sexual Discrimination	34
Students' Observations of Sexual Discrimination Exhibited Toward Other Students of the Same Sex ...	37
Students' Observations of Sexual Discrimination Exhibited Toward Students of the Opposite Sex	40
Correlation Coefficients for $H(1)$, $RQ(1)$, & $RQ(2)$	43
Students' Reports of the Sex of Teacher Exhibiting Sexually Discriminative Behavior	45
Students' Definitions of Sexual Discrimination	47
Students' Descriptions of Sexually Discriminative Events They Experienced or Observed	48
Females' Experiences of Sex Discrimination	50
Males' Experiences of Sex Discrimination	51
Females' Observations of Sex Discrimination Exhibited Toward Other Female Students	54
Males' Observations of Sex Discrimination Exhibited Toward Other Male Students	56
Females' Observations of Sex Discrimination Exhibited Toward Male Students	58
Males' Observations of Sex Discrimination Exhibited Toward Female Students	59
V. CONCLUSIONS	63
Discussion of Hypothesis and Research Questions	65
Hypothesis One	65
Research Question One.....	66
Research Question Two	67
Correlation Analyses for $H(1)$, $RQ(1)$, & $RQ(2)$	68
Research Question Three	69
Research Question Four	71
Research Question Five	72

TABLE OF CONTENTS (Continued)

	<u>Page</u>
Themes in Students' Open-Ended Responses	74
Themes Relating to Females	74
Theme 1: Females Treated as if Unintelligent	74
Theme 2: Females Treated Unfairly in P.E. Classes	75
Theme 3: Females Received Higher Grades	75
Theme 4: Negative Comments/Remarks Made Toward Females	76
Theme 5: Inappropriate sexual behavior toward females	76
Themes Relating to Males	77
Theme 6: Males Called Upon More Often/Received More attention from teachers	77
Theme 7: Males Disciplined More Strictly	77
Theme 8: More Opportunities Given to Males	78
Theme 9: Males Treated Unfairly in P.E. Classes ...	78
Theme 10: Males Given Higher Grades	79
Summary	79
Suggestions for Dealing With Gender-Bias	82
Discussion of Limitations Concerning the Representativeness and Generalizability of This Study's Findings	85
Suggestions for Future Research	88
BIBLIOGRAPHY	91
APPENDICES	96
Appendix A Survey Questionnaire	97
Appendix B Human Subjects Approval Form.....	104
Appendix C Informed Consent Document.....	106
Appendix D Comprehensive List of Open-Ended Response Categories	108

LIST OF FIGURES

<u>Figure</u>	<u>Page</u>
4.1 Students' Definitions of Sex Discrimination	49
4.2 Females' Experiences of Sex Discrimination Exhibited by Their High School Teachers	52
4.3 Males' Experiences of Sex Discrimination Exhibited by Their High School Teachers	53
4.4 Females' Observations of Sex Discrimination Exhibited Toward Other Female Students	55
4.5 Males' Observations of Sex Discrimination Exhibited Toward Other Male Students	57
4.6 Females' Observations of Sex Discrimination Exhibited Toward Male Students	61
4.7 Males' Observations of Sex Discrimination Exhibited Toward Female Students.....	62

LIST OF TABLES

<u>Table</u>	<u>Page</u>
4.1 Frequency of Response, Mean, & Standard Deviation for Students' Experiences of Sex Discrimination	35
4.2 Measures of Central Tendency (by Sex & Number of Students in Graduating Class) for Students' Experiences of Sex Discrimination	36
4.3 Measures of Central Tendency (by Sex & Age) for Students' Experiences of Sex Discrimination	36
4.4 Frequency of Response, Mean, & Standard Deviation for Students' Observations of Sex Discrimination Exhibited Toward Students of the Same Sex	38
4.5 Measures of Central Tendency (by Sex & Number of Students in Graduating Class) for Students' Observations of Sex Discrimination Exhibited Toward Other Students of the Same Sex ..	39
4.6 Measures of Central Tendency (by Sex & Age) for Students' Observations of Sex Discrimination Exhibited Toward Other Students of the Same Sex ..	39
4.7 Frequency of Response, Mean, & Standard Deviation for Students' Observations of Sex Discrimination Exhibited Toward Students of the Opposite Sex	41
4.8 Measures of Central Tendency (by Sex & Number of Students in Graduating Class) for Students' Observations of Sex Discrimination Exhibited Toward Students of the Opposite Sex	42
4.9 Measures of Central Tendency (by Sex & Age) for Students' Observations of Sex Discrimination Exhibited Toward Students of the Opposite Sex	42
4.10 Summary Table of Pearson's Correlations for Questions #2, 3, & 4	44

LIST OF TABLES (Continued)

<u>Table</u>	<u>Page</u>
4.11 Summary Table of Pearson's Correlations (by Sex) for Questions #2, 3, & 4	44
4.12 Students' Reports of the Frequency With Which Their Male and Female Teachers Exhibited Sexually Discriminative Behavior	46

Gender Bias & Teachers: College Students' Perceptions of Sexual Discrimination in Their High School.

CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

Throughout much of United States history, women have fought for the right to participate fully in the American educational system. For almost two hundred years, females were barred from school because society regarded the educational path as the right of males, not of females (Sadker & Sadker, 1994). During this century, females have made progress by achieving the right of equal access to education. American society seemingly recognized the need for women to receive education and equal opportunities in the classroom. However, just because females are in the classroom today does not necessarily mean that they are being treated equally and fairly. In reality, equal opportunity of education for women has not yet been achieved.

Researchers Myra and David Sadker have studied gender and sex discrimination in education for more than twenty years. In their recent book, Failing at Fairness, the Sadkers claim that although school systems seem committed to equality:

An open-door policy does not by itself result in fair schools. Today's schoolgirls face subtle and insidious gender lessons, micro-inequities that appear seemingly insignificant when looked at individually but that have a powerful cumulative impact. These inequities chip away at girls' achievement and self-esteem (1994, p.ix).

Females are not receiving the same educational experiences and opportunities in our society as males (Lips, 1991; Sadker & Sadker, 1994). In fact, Serbin and O'Leary (1975) claim that "teachers actually teach boys more than they teach girls, with boys twice as likely as girls

to receive individual instruction in how to do things” (cited in Lips, 1991, p.78).

Academic institutions, as one of the primary agents of socialization, have a huge impact on the potential classroom success of students. As discussed in the popular text Women's Ways of Knowing (1986), the majority of academic institutions have been, and continue to be, designed and run by men. As a result, feminists have questioned the educational structure (i.e., curriculum, pedagogical practices) of such institutions (Belenky, Clinchy, Goldberger & Tarule, 1986, p.190). Bate (1988) supports the notion that our educational institutions are influenced by males:

Our social world has historically been organized on the basis of sex, race, and class distinctions. One consequence of these distinctions is that educators of children--teachers, textbook writers, administrators, and even designers of school buildings--operate according to certain assumptions that expand and enforce the traditional gender symbols and expectations of the dominant social groups (p.131).

Embedded in our traditional educational structure is an “objective masculine curriculum” that both males and females are expected to adhere to and learn from (Belenky et al., 1986, p.209). In addition, research (e.g., Hall & Sandler, 1982; Sadker & Sadker, 1994; Wood, 1994) has revealed that many of the differences that males and females experience in school are affected by gender-biased teaching strategies, giving males an advantage over females in the classroom.

Theorists maintain that a student's identity is often influenced by the gender roles and expectations he/she experiences in the classroom; this is especially true for females (Bate, 1988; Belenky et al., 1986; Lips, 1991; Sadker & Sadker, 1994). The teenage years are recognized as a particularly influential and turbulent time for students (Williams &

McGee, 1991, p.325). Thus, it is imperative that educators, and the public alike, recognize the damaging impacts that traditional gender roles and expectations have had for many students, both males and females. Gilligan (1982) also identifies significant differences between males' and females' socialization. She claims that adolescence is a critical time when a female's identity hinges on development, and "the girl arrives at this juncture either psychologically at risk or with a different agenda" than males (p.11). Hilary Lips (1991), recipient of the 1992 Distinguished Publications Award from the Association for Women in Psychology for her text, Women, Men, and Power, claims that through the difference in male and female socialization, boys are taught that failure is a part of the learning process. Males are raised to believe that their success is linked to the amount of effort they produce rather than the amount of skill or knowledge they possess. Females are frequently raised without such confidence in their abilities. Girls may grow up believing that their failure or success is based upon their competence and intelligence (Lips, 1991).

In the classroom, sexist messages may often be subtle or even transmitted unintentionally; nevertheless, they are "constant and pervasive" (Mann, 1994, p.79). After receiving years of gendered socialization, sexist messages often have a strong influence on childrens' perceptions of their own identity, ability, and self-esteem. In fact, Lips (1991) asserts that how we feel about ourselves, both as children and as adults, has a stronger influence on our experiences than do the actual situations we experience.

Wood (1994) suggests that both females and males progress in atmospheres that promote and affirm their styles of behaving, thinking,

and communicating. Nevertheless, by placing a high value on strong visual-spatial and problem-solving skills as well as assertive and independent behavior--all qualities associated with the learning styles of males--society has created learning atmospheres that cater to males rather than females. As a result, males are frequently groomed to feel more comfortable and confident in the current educational atmosphere, and so they excel. According to Sadker & Sadker (1994), schools that engage in gender-bias ultimately promote a wealth of opportunities for males while restricting the future of females. However, females are not the only ones disadvantaged by the current male-dominant approach to education.

Males are also being denied the full-advantage of their educational opportunities and possibilities (Bate, 1988; Belenky et al., 1986; Lips, 1991; Sadker & Sadker, 1994; Sheridan, 1982; Stewart, Stewart, Friedley & Cooper, 1990). Although males appear to be the preferred gender in our society, the existence of gender-bias is a "two-edged sword":

Girls are shortchanged, but boys pay a price as well. While boys rise to the top of the class, they also land at the bottom. Labeled as problems in need of special control or assistance, boys are more likely to fail a course . . . or drop out of school (Sadker & Sadker, 1994, p.197).

Noddings (1984) also recognizes that the male-dominant educational system dehumanizes both male and female students by favoring and promoting only one style of learning--frequently resulting in a loss of the feminine perspective (cited in Belenky et al., 1986). The existence of gender-bias in education is potentially damaging for all students, regardless of sex. Sexist teaching practices may greatly influence students' self-concept, self-esteem, curricular choices, and occupational choices (Stewart et al., 1990). In other words, teachers and educational

environments can, and often do, shape or limit the academic achievement of all students.

Arliss (1991) states, “the terms sex and gender are often used interchangeably, in everyday speech and in scholarly writing . . . we treat sex and gender as synonymous” (p.9). For the purposes of this study, the basic definitions of these terms will be outlined in Chapter Two; however, the terms gender-bias and sex discrimination will be regarded as synonymous.

Purpose of This Study

As evidenced by relevant literature in the field of gender-bias, teachers are a significant source of gender-role socialization for students. This study focuses on *post hoc* recollections of college students’ perceptions of gender-bias exhibited by their high school teachers. Specifically, this study asks students to define sex discrimination, as well as describe instances of sex discrimination they experienced or observed exhibited by their high school teachers.

Preview of Subsequent Chapters

Chapter Two reviews relevant literature in the field of gender-bias. The discussion is divided into three sections: Section one identifies and defines key constructs relevant to this topic, section two describes four major themes outlined in the literature, and section three addresses unanswered questions emerging from a review of the literature and poses one hypothesis and five research questions for this study.

Chapter Three provides a description of the methodology used in this investigation. The chapter discusses the subjects selected for this study, the research instrument used, the procedures followed for data

collection, and the data analytic procedures (identifying both quantitative and qualitative methods) applied to the research findings.

Chapter Four presents the results gathered from the study according to the hypothesis and research questions guiding the investigation.

Chapter Five addresses the overall findings and conclusions of the study. The chapter begins with a brief summary of the entire investigation. Second, there is a discussion of research findings and conclusions. Third, a portion of the chapter is devoted to suggestions for dealing with gender-bias as presented in the literature. Fourth, the study's limitations, representativeness, and generalizability are addressed. Lastly, suggestions for future research are provided.

CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

Literature concerning gender-bias in the high school indicates that sex discrimination plays a significant role in contributing to the gender socialization of individuals. Schools send a variety of messages through language use, curricular materials, texts, and teacher behaviors that communicate and reinforce cultural stereotypes, giving male students an advantage over female students. For example, males are encouraged to be “dominant, independent, and achieving,” whereas females are encouraged to be “subordinate, passive, deferential, and unachieving” (Wood, 1994, p.207). Another area of concern in the literature is the influence that gender-biased teaching practices have on students’ perceptions of their own ability levels and self-concept.

The first section of this literature review will be devoted to the definition of key constructs relevant to this topic. The second section will be broken into four recurring themes identified through a review of the literature: (a) the nature of gender-biased language in American society, (b) male-biased curriculum materials and their influence in the classroom, (c) student identity/self-concept as influenced by traditional gender roles in society, and (d) common effects of teacher expectations and responses regarding gender-bias. Section three will address unanswered questions emerging from the literature and pose one hypotheses and five research questions to guide this study.

Key Constructs

Over the past twenty years, the topics of gender-bias and sex discrimination in education have been widely researched and documented (Belenky et al., 1986; Lips, 1991; Sadker & Sadker, 1994; Wood, 1994). Studies and texts addressing these issues include a variety of definitions of key terms and constructs. Nine essential terms appear repeatedly in the readings: **communication, stereotype, sex stereotypes, sex, gender, gender-bias, sexist, sexism, and sex discrimination.**

Communication is “a dynamic, systemic process in which meanings are created and reflected in human interactions with symbols” (Wood, 1994, p.124). A **stereotype** is a “broad generalization about an entire class of phenomena based on some knowledge of some aspects of some members of the class” (Wood, 1994, p.131). **Sex stereotypes** refer to “society’s standards for determining maleness and femaleness” and are often based on myths and misconceptions (Arliss, 1991, p.9). Many theorists discuss the differences between the terms **sex** and **gender** (Arliss, 1991; Jonathan, 1983; Sadker & Sadker, 1982). For instance, Delamont (1980) claims that:

‘sex’ should properly refer to the biological aspects of male and female existence. Sex differences should therefore only be used to refer to physiology, anatomy, genetics, hormones and so forth. ‘Gender’ should properly be used to refer to all the nonbiological aspects of differences between males and females--clothes, interests, attitudes, behaviors and aptitudes, for example--which separate ‘masculine’ from ‘feminine lifestyles (cited in Jonathan, 1983, p.13).

However, the term **gender** has a slightly different meaning when it is connected with the term **bias**. The concept of **gender-bias** is regarded as, “A set of beliefs or attitudes that indicates a primary view or set of

expectations of people's abilities and interests according to their sex" (Stitt, 1988, p.3). In relation to communication in the classroom, **gender-bias** is often demonstrated through "unequal expectations, responses, and distinct interactions with males and females" (Wood, 1994, p.75).

The terms **sexist** and **sexism** are identified in different ways. Carelli (1988) defines the term **sexist** as "discriminating on the basis of a person's gender; assuming that because you know a person's gender, you automatically know something about her or his abilities, aspirations, strengths or shortcomings" (p.76). **Sexism** is viewed as, "the subordination of women and the assumption of the superiority of men solely on the basis of sex" (Cyrus, 1993, p.6). Although the terms **sex** and **gender** are defined differently, the term **sexist** (as Carelli describes it) refers to gender-biased, rather than sex-biased, practices (1988). Finally, **sex discrimination** concerns actions that disadvantage individuals stemming from sex and/or gender prejudices and stereotypes (Cyrus, 1993, p.6).

In the literature, many of these terms are used in conjunction with one another (e.g., Arliss, 1991; Carelli, 1988; Jonathan, 1983; Sadker & Sadker, 1982; Wood, 1994). Arliss (1991) asserts, "the terms sex and gender are often used interchangeably, in everyday speech and in scholarly writing . . . we treat sex and gender as synonymous" (p.9). For the purposes of this review and study, the basic definitions of these terms have been outlined; however, the terms gender-bias and sex discrimination will be regarded as synonymous.

Gender-Biased Language in Society

Wood's (1994) definition of "communication" includes the word "symbols" (p.124). One distinguishing characteristic of humans is our ability to recognize symbols and interact with them. According to Langer (1979), "our nature as symbolic beings transforms us from biological creatures . . . into thinking beings who interpret, interact with, and remake our world through symbols" (cited in Wood, 1994, p.125). This being the case, then language can be interpreted as possessing the capability to selectively shape an individual's perceptions and understanding of the world in which he/she interacts (Wood, 1994).

One well-known theory, the Sapir-Whorf hypothesis, features the term "linguistic determinism." This concept posits that an individual's perceptions are greatly shaped by the words he/she knows how to use (Richmond & Gorham, 1988). Richmond and Gorham (1988) have applied this concept of linguistic determinism to the criticisms of the pronoun "he." They conclude that in such a context, "individuals who learn alternatives for communicating about persons of unspecified gender will perceive those persons differently than a person who learns to refer to them only as 'he'" (p.142). In addition, scholars have identified the influence that our language use has on our thoughts and perceptions (Arliss, 1991; Gastil, 1990). Gastil (1990) asserts that the masculine generic "he" has served as a subtle, yet powerful, reinforcement of sexist attitudes and behaviors.

Research suggests that the masculine generics employed in our language (e.g., "he," "his," & "him") are considered as references to men, not women (Bate, 1988; Martyna, 1980; Safir, Hertz-Lazarowitz, BenTsvi-Mayer & Kupermintz, 1992; Sheridan, 1982; Wood, 1994).

Combining males and females under the umbrella term “he” perpetuates the traditional notion that females are not afforded the same status as males. In their study of schoolchildrens’ perceptions of the prominence of girls and boys in the classroom, Safir et al. (1992) state:

In the school context, where most instructional materials are often not gender equitable, consistent research findings indicate that for students (preschool through college) the use of male generic language often results in male associations, while neutral language forms, or forms including both sexes, yield gender-balanced associations (p.442).

These findings support the belief that the masculine generic form of “man” tends to render women invisible (Sheridan, 1982).

The uses of masculine generics and sexist language are not new arenas of discussion and investigation. Debates over the influence of male-based language use have been going on for more than twenty years. “The concerns of the early 1970’s led to official statements on the part of several publishers and professional organizations, including the National Council of Teachers of English, dictating the use of nonsexist language” (Richmond & Dyba, 1982, p.265). In 1980, Martyna claimed that feminists were concerned that the use of sexist language served not only as a reflection of society’s sexist attitudes, but also as a “form of social behavior in itself, one which helps to create and maintain an atmosphere of inequality” (p.69). More than ten years later, the issue received a significant amount of attention due to the fact that gender-biased and sexually discriminative practices toward females have occurred with significant frequency (Arliss, 1991).

The representation of males and females through language and literature can be regarded as a perpetuation of society’s misconceptions of the sexes (Sheridan, 1982). This, in addition to the fact that many

theorists (e.g., Arliss, 1991; Sadker & Sadker, 1982; Wood, 1994) agree that male generic language tends to exclude females, leads to the conclusion that language reinforces sexist cultural stereotypes.

Male-Biased Curriculum Materials

Several researchers have identified and discussed the existence of gender-bias in texts and classroom materials (Romatowski & Trepanier-Street, 1987; Sheridan, 1982; Stitt, 1988; Weiner, 1985; Wood, 1994). According to Wood (1994), the problem of sexism in instructional materials used in teaching and educational settings has existed for well over twenty years.

Curriculum materials may be gender-biased in many ways. For example, females are frequently excluded in educational texts. Text materials generally present males as central characters and place an emphasis on the types of interests and activities that have traditionally appealed to males (Sheridan, 1982). Another issue of gender-bias is the perpetuation of female exclusion through the use of male generic terms in text language. Texts that exclusively use terms such as “he,” “him,” and “man,” convey the message that the population is composed of males only (Weiner, 1985). A third issue of gender-bias in curriculum materials is evidenced by the unequal quantitative representation of male examples and pictures (Klein, 1985; Sadker, Sadker, & Steindam, 1989; Stewart et al., 1990; Stockard & Schmuck, 1980; Wood, 1994). Currently, two-thirds of the images in books are male, thereby fostering a belief that males are more standard than females (Wood, 1994).

In their text, Sex Equity Handbook for Schools, the Sadkers identify a “hidden curriculum,” which they define as “the messages children receive about themselves and others of their sex and race

through the illustrations, language, and content of textbooks, films, and visual displays" (1982, p.10). Several theorists (e.g., Carelli, 1988; Kessler, Ashenden, Connell, & Dowsett, 1985; Stitt, 1988; Weiner, 1985; Wood, 1994) refer to the Sadkers in their discussions of gender-biased curriculum materials and agree that the "hidden curriculum" influences and shapes students' self-concepts.

In the literature, a consensus emerges that gender-biased texts and curriculum materials are potentially damaging to students' perceptions of their own abilities and self-worth (Jett-Simpson & Maslund, 1993; Weiner, 1985; Wood, 1994). In addition, such gender-biased materials perpetuate sex-role stereotypes and values (Sadker & Sadker, 1982; Kessler, et al., 1985; Stitt, 1988). Presenting gender-biased materials in the classroom limits students' role models to one point of view--male. Ultimately, students receive incomplete information about the human experience as a whole and are denied the benefit of a variety of perspectives and experiences (Sheridan, 1982). In Building Gender Fairness in the Schools, Beverly Stitt echoes Sheridan's views regarding gender-biased materials:

In short, textbooks too often depict both males and females as sex-role stereotypes rather than as multi-dimensional human beings. Such stereotyping denies the reality of individual differences and prevents readers from understanding the complexity and the diversity that exists within groups. The selectivity and imbalance found in textbooks is unfair to students (1988, p.105).

For example, every time a female is subjected to a "womanless history," her worth as a person is devalued and the message of women as being "less than males" is reinforced (Sadker & Sadker, 1994, p.13). Such gender-bias in educational texts and curriculum materials may affect

students' learning abilities, self-perception, and academic performance--especially those of females.

Student Identity and Gender Roles

Societal norms regarding gender-appropriate behavior have had a significant impact on children as well as educators (Nadler & Nadler, 1990). According to Wood (1994), "Early awareness of cultural disregard for females, coupled with ongoing elaboration of that theme, erode the foundations of self-esteem and self-confidence" (p.86). The perceptions students hold of themselves, and what they believe others hold for them, greatly shape and direct not only their self-esteem and classroom behavior, but their potential educational and career choices (Sadker & Sadker, 1994).

Studies have repeatedly asserted that society regards females as quieter, more passive, and dependent, and boys as more active and aggressive (Carelli, 1988; Houston, 1985; Sadker & Sadker, 1982; Wood, 1994). Children perceive and internalize these societal gender roles and stereotypes with surprising consistency at a young age (Arliss, 1991; Wood, 1994). In a study conducted by Tavris and Baumgartner (1983), both genders recognized that girls' activities are subjected to greater restrictions than boys' activities (cited in Wood, 1994).

There are some powerful and disturbing themes regarding childrens' gender socialization. First, at an early age, children are aware of the differences in treatment and expectation of males and females in our society (based on gender). Second, children are often aware that male-biased patterns of interaction (focused on assertion, competition, and individual initiative) in the educational setting are the accepted "norm" (and females may believe they are not capable of performing to

such male-focused standards). Third, children recognize that society, on the whole, supports and maintains these patterns of behavior for males and females.

Research indicates that children do perceive strong gender-messages and expectations concerning their behavior and how males and females are supposed to behave. "Children pick up on these subtle cues and internalize the attitudes of adults" (Sadker & Sadker, 1994, p.96). Thus, it is not surprising that children enter the world of education with preconceived notions of appropriate female and male behavior (Carelli, 1988; Leach & Davies, 1990; Sadker & Sadker, 1982). Carelli (1988) claims that by the time children enter school, they have spent years observing and internalizing their socially appropriate gender roles. In fact, some theorists believe that gender roles and stereotypes are taught at home before children learn about other categories (Fiske & Stevens, 1993).

However, family structures are not the only significant source of gender socialization. Educational institutions, specifically teachers, are also powerful reinforcers of gender roles. Teachers, for example, are often regarded as the "primary agents for effecting change in the sex-role stereotyping that exists in American education" (Stewart et al., 1990, p.172). Many theorists have acknowledged the significance of the roles teachers play in establishing and maintaining cultural stereotypes of gender-appropriate values, capabilities, and behaviors (Butler & Sperry, 1991; Good, 1981; Stewart et al., 1990; Wood, 1994).

Teacher Expectations and Responses

Researchers maintain that gender clearly impacts the classroom setting (Hall & Sandler, 1982; Pearson & West, 1991; Sadker & Sadker,

1985). For example, BenTsvi-Mayer, Hertz-Lazarowitz, & Safir (1989) conducted a study of teachers' perceptions of their pupils. The study determined that teachers held traditional gender-stereotyped perceptions of their students. Theorists are concerned about the differing amounts of attention teachers give males and females in the classroom (Hall & Sandler, 1982; Shakeshaft, 1986; Wood, 1994). Studies indicate that teachers may devote more time, individualized instruction, and attention to male students than they give to female students (Hall & Sandler, 1982). The differences in time and attention given to males and females poses a serious problem for females' development:

Each time a teacher passes over a girl to elicit the ideas and opinions of boys, that girl is conditioned to be silent and to defer . . . when female students are offered the leftovers of teacher time and attention . . . they achieve less (Sadker & Sadker, 1994, p.13).

The literature frequently identifies females as being subjected to the most potential, long-term, danger from exposure to gender-biased teaching practices (Lips, 1991; Sadker & Sadker, 1994; Wood, 1994).

As noted earlier, it has been suggested that the educational processes males and females experience may be quite different. For example, intellectual development is encouraged more in males than in females (Wood, 1994). Research indicates that teachers regard males and females as distinct groups which maintain different gender-characteristics and abilities:

Girls are perceived as conformist, obedient, neat, and dependent; boys are perceived as unable to adjust to the conformist atmosphere of school and to the teacher's demand for good behavior . . . Despite the discipline problems characteristic of boys, teachers tend to admire their brightness, activeness, interest, openness, and independence. Girls are preferred, if at all, only for their compliant behavior (Safir et al., 1992, p.440).

Teachers often reinforce these different gender roles in male and female students through a variety of behaviors.

Hall and Sandler's (1982) essay, The Classroom Climate: A Chilly One for Women, has been a common reference for other theorists (Carelli, 1988; Nadler & Nadler, 1990; Pearson & West, 1991; Wood & Lenze, 1991). Hall and Sandler claim that the communication behaviors of teachers can greatly influence students' interaction, confidence, and expectations of their abilities (1982). For example, Wood's (1994) studies of college classrooms have shown that the following teaching behaviors have a devaluing effect on female students:

- Professors are more likely to know the names of male students than female ones.
- Professors ask more challenging questions of male students.
- Professors give longer and more significant verbal and non-verbal responses to males' comments than to those of females.
- Faculty call on male students more often.
- Female students' contributions are interrupted, ignored, or dismissed more often than those of males.
- Faculty extend and pursue comments by male students more than those of female students (p.218).

These studies solidify the connection between teachers' gender-expectations and female students' classroom experiences, which include levels of participation, self-confidence, and identity.

The link between teachers' gender-expectations and students' self-esteem and achievement is significant. Safir et al. (1992) studied the relationship of females' self-concept to their future educational and occupational successes:

In sum, our findings raise concern, for they reveal that schoolchildren perceive girls as inferior to boys, as early as second grade and even more so in sixth grade. This has serious implications for girls' chances of developing positive self-concept in accordance with their actual abilities, and for their chances of becoming successful achievers (p.451).

Students spend many years of their lives in school--in direct contact with teachers. The bulk of formal education occurs during students' developmental (adolescent) years, when students look to teachers as role models for appropriate behavior.

It is important to recognize that teachers' responses and expectations are not mutually exclusive. The responses a teacher gives in the classroom may directly reflect the expectations that teacher has toward a student, and vice versa. However, gender-biased messages may be more more subtle. For instance, Stockard & Schmuck (1980) claim that educators may hold different expectations for male and female behavior without directly enforcing it. In fact, the teachers may not even be aware of the gender roles and preferences that they hold for their students. However, children may perceive that a teacher holds certain expectations for them (based on sex) and adapt their behavior to fit that teacher's preference (Stockard & Schmuck, 1980). These findings lend support to Good's (1981) assertions that the different responses teachers give to students, based on gender, will "shape students' self-concepts, achievement motivation, and levels of aspiration" (p.417).

The disadvantages males and females experience in the educational realm are not identical; these gender-messages are often very different in content and scope. Students learn to attribute their success to different sources. For example, males are taught that failure is a part of the learning process (tied to the amount of effort they invest), whereas females are taught that failure is a sign of inability (tied to the intelligence they possess) (Lips, 1991). Sadker & Sadker claim that girls are raised to underestimate their intelligence and ability:

Study after study has shown that adults, both teachers and parents, underestimate the intelligence of girls. Teachers' beliefs that boys are smarter in mathematics and science

begin in the earliest school years . . . These perceptions persist throughout every level of education and are transmitted to the children. Girls, especially smart girls, learn to underestimate their ability (1994, p.95).

Again, it is necessary to reiterate that both males and females may be disadvantaged by biased educational atmospheres. Males, too, experience sex discrimination in school. Research shows that males are more likely to be labeled as “troublemakers” and “delinquents” (Sadker & Sadker, 1994, p.201). In fact, much of the extra attention teachers give to male students is negative, “managerial and disciplinary in nature” (Lindow, Marrett, & Wilkinson, 1985, p.3). However, the gender-biased messages males and females receive do not hold the same impact. Females are at a greater risk of developing low self-esteem and underestimating their academic potential.

So, why would teachers partake in gender-biased teaching practices? Many researchers assert that educators, as a whole, do not purposefully engage in sexually discriminative behaviors toward their students (Brophy, 1985; Lips, 1991; Sadker & Sadker, 1982). In fact, most teachers may not even be aware of the impacts of their behaviors (that they are exhibiting gender-biased teaching behaviors). Jonathan (1983) suggests that gender-bias is so deeply embedded in our society, it naturally follows that gender-bias will exist in the classroom:

Gender stereotyping is not a process society imposes on its members and which will cease when positive pressures towards it are removed. It is built into the fabric of society and generates its own momentum. Schools are staffed and attended by individuals who are part of society, and demands for equality will not have egalitarian outcomes when there are other intervening variables (p.18).

In essence, teachers are susceptible to cultural gender-biases because they are members of society, members who have themselves been

influenced by gender-bias in one way or another (Arliss, 1991; Brophy, 1985; Sadker & Sadker, 1982). Sadker and Sadker (1982) further support these claims:

Obviously, teachers would not consciously and intentionally stereotype students. Most teachers work very hard and are extremely conscientious; they try to treat both girls and boys fairly and equitably . . . however, educators, like members of other professions, have been raised in a society where sexism is prevalent . . . when teachers are able to recognize the subtle and unintentional sex bias in their behavior, they can make positive changes in their classrooms--and in the lives of their students (p.97).

Teachers do have a strong impact on their students, and educators may unintentionally perpetuate traditional sex roles and stereotypes through favoring male forms of communication (Wood, 1994). However, teachers who may “unwittingly” engage in sexually discriminative teaching methods are still responsible for the potential impacts (serious implications) their teaching may have on their students (both male and female).

The literature lacks a consensus on how a teacher’s gender affects classroom interaction and displays of gender-biased teaching methods. Several studies indicate that the sex of the teacher really has no significant bearing on the frequency with which teachers exhibit sexually discriminative behavior toward male and female students (BenTsvi-Mayer et al., 1989; Brophy, 1985; Ivy & Backlund, 1994; Richmond-Abbott, 1983). These studies indicate that both male and female teachers hold the same sorts of gender expectations and biases toward their male and female students, and they are no more likely to discriminate against students of the opposite sex than students of the same sex. For example, Brophy’s (1985) research involving sixteen junior high school teachers (8 male, 8 female) revealed that:

Male and female teachers can be expected to model the characteristics and behavior expected of males and females (respectively) in the society . . . Thus, male teachers as a group can be expected to model somewhat different behaviors than female teachers (although in general, male and female teachers are much more alike than different) (pp.116-117, cited in Wilkinson & Marrett, 1985).

Other theorists provide a different view. Wood's (1994) study of female and male university and college professors indicated that there are consistent differences in the gender-stereotyped behaviors displayed by male versus female teachers. For example, female teachers, "tend to be less biased against female students, are more able to recognize females' contributions and intellectual talents, and are more generous in giving them academic and career encouragement" (p.75). Wood (1994) maintains that female students exhibit more active and equal participation behavior when attending classes taught by a female instructor. Ivy & Backlund also question the influence that a teacher's sex may have on the "interaction patterns that emerge within a classroom" (1994, p.385).

Another area of investigation is the belief that male and female teachers may be perceived differently by their students. Stewart et al. (1990) highlight some of these differences in perception:

Women teachers are better liked . . . more discussion oriented . . . students equate a structured teaching strategy (such as a lecture rather than a discussion) with competence, and male teachers are more likely to use structured teaching strategy . . . male teachers are perceived as more sexist than female teachers (pp.162-163).

In criticism of the literature, few recent studies (with the exception of BenTsvi-Mayer, 1989; Ivy & Backlund, 1994; and Wood, 1994) focus on the relationship of teacher sex versus student sex regarding the frequency and type of sexual discrimination that is exhibited.

Furthermore, none of the studies investigate the influence that a teacher's sex has on high school students' experiences.

Although research has supported the idea that children enter the classroom with beliefs about what types of characteristics and behaviors are "normal" for males and females, the literature still suggests that schools can promote gender-equity. Educators can potentially counteract traditional gender roles and stereotypes that limit students' perspectives and opportunities (Carelli, 1988). Teachers have the opportunity to either perpetuate traditional stereotypes of male and female behavior (which often regard females as invisible), or they may work toward breaking down these gender stereotypes and exposing the myths of gender-bias.

Lastly, it is important to acknowledge that gender is not the only variable that influences people's lives. There are many interlocking dimensions that shape our lives (e.g., race, class, gender, age, sexuality, etc.); gender is but one of these. Each is worthy of individual study, and it is equally important to investigate the ways in which these variables work together to create a person's experiences and perceptions. However, it is difficult to study the many interlocking variables as a group.

The study of gender should be regarded as only a small piece of the puzzle of overall human experiences; nonetheless, it is a very important piece. What is unique about the study of gender is that gender crosses all boundaries. Regardless of one's race, class, age, sexuality, gender has a significant influence. Fiske & Stevens (1993) claim that people not only have "more experience with gender categories than other categories, people also learn gender categories earlier than other categories" (p.180). Therefore, this study focuses on the influence of gender categories in

education by investigating students' perceptions of sex discrimination as exhibited by their high school teachers.

Questions Emerging from the Literature

This section of my analysis will address unanswered questions which emerged from a review of the literature, as well as pose a hypothesis and researchable questions for this investigation.

One unanswered question in the literature concerns students' perceptions of sexual discrimination exhibited by teachers toward students of the same sex, as well as toward students of the opposite sex. Stewart et al. (1990) investigated whether students' hold different perceptions of their male and female teachers; however, their study did not explore student's perceptions of sex discrimination exhibited toward other students.

There needs to be more research regarding the relationship between teacher sex versus student sex and the types of discriminative actions that take place. Are teachers more likely to discriminate against students of the opposite sex? A few studies claim that the sex of the teacher really has no bearing on the degree of sexual discrimination exhibited toward male and female students (BenTsvi-Mayer, 1989; Brophy, 1985; Richmond-Abbott, 1983). Wood's (1994) research contradicts these studies by suggesting that the sex of the teacher does seem to influence the degree of sexual discrimination he/she exhibits toward male and female students. However, Wood's (1994) study focuses on college-aged students rather than high school students. Do high school students' perceive that they experience more sexually discriminative behavior exhibited by their male versus their female teachers? Are college students more likely to recognize sexually

discriminative teaching behaviors exhibited by their male and female teachers than are high school students?

In the literature, researchers and teachers define sexual discrimination in the educational sphere, but how do students define these behaviors? Are students able to recognize when sexually discriminative teaching is taking place? Belenky et al. (1986) and Sadker & Sadker (1994) investigate high school students' perceptions of sex discrimination they experienced; however, none of the theorists studied how high school students specifically defined sex discrimination. The lack of research comparing students' perceptions of how sex discrimination is defined in comparison to teachers' and scholars' definitions of sex discrimination creates a gap in the literature. Do teachers and students define sex discrimination in the same way? Does the concept of sex discrimination have the same meaning and significance for high school students that it has for college students?

Additionally, there were few studies relating to high school students' perceptions of gender-bias exhibited by their teachers. From a student's perspective, how often does sexual discrimination take place? Do students perceive that they experience more sexual discrimination exhibited by teachers of the opposite sex? Overall, gender research appears to focus more on college-aged students, or elementary school students, than on high school students. The majority of the literature reviewed fell into one of three categories: (1) elementary school studies (2) undergraduate/graduate studies, and (3) general (gender-biased) classroom information, surrounding males and females, that do not identify a specific age-range of study. High school students' experiences and perceptions often appear to be overlooked. Why would high school

students' perceptions and experiences receive less attention than those of elementary or college-level students? More research investigating students' perceptions of their own gender-biased experiences is needed.

Numerous studies have been conducted with elementary school children (Good, 1981; Romatowski & Trepanier-Street, 1987; Richmond & Gorham, 1988; Sheridan, 1982). The literature suggests that children enter the educational system with preconceived notions about gender-appropriate behavior. Scholars may focus on elementary school children (ages 6-11), because these are the years when most children have their first real classroom experiences (excluding pre-school, etc.). Thus, it would seem important to study this population of students, in order to understand how gender-bias in the classroom first begins to shape childrens' behavior and thought processes.

Several studies have addressed undergraduate and graduate students' attitudes, beliefs, and perceptions of the existence of gender-bias in the educational setting (Nadler & Nadler, 1990; Natelle, 1991; Pearson & West, 1991; Wrigley, 1992). Most of these studies involve self-reporting as the primary method of gathering information. Many researchers may study this age-range of students because these students are considered "adults" (who have most likely formed strong beliefs regarding gender-bias in the classroom). It would be intriguing to investigate the impacts that teachers' gender-biased messages would have on students over the span of time between elementary school and graduate school. Although a longitudinal study would prove to be insightful, such a study would be difficult to conduct.

Other literature appears to be non-age specific. Many theorists discuss issues surrounding the umbrella term "gender-bias" (which

includes: sex-bias, sex-discrimination, sexism, sexual stereotypes, sexual harassment, etc.) in the classroom (Carelli, 1988; Houston, 1985; Lea, 1992; Stitt, 1988; Wilkinson, 1982; Wood, 1994). None of these sources specify a particular age-range of study. Most of the information is divided into one of two categories: 1) characteristics of female behavior (how females are perceived and treated), and 2) characteristics of male behavior (how males are perceived and treated). Although these sources are helpful in describing the different forms of gender-bias that males and females often experience in the classroom, they appear to disregard the significance of studying each age-range and comparing it to others.

Three studies focused specifically on secondary-aged students (Pottker & Fishel, 1977; Kessler, et. al., 1985; Richmond & Gorham, 1988). Richmond and Gorham (1988) take a very narrow scope of investigation. They only measure female students' reported self-use of masculine referents. The study by Kessler et al. (1985) measures the dynamics of class and sex groupings in a secondary educational setting. Much of the information in this report describes the sex inequality existing in education; however, this study was not conducted in the United States. Rather, the research concerns gender relations (in secondary schooling) in Australia. The third study, by Pottker & Fishel (1977), investigates the perceived advantages students feel that boys have over girls in the educational system (e.g., P.E., Home-Ec., industrial arts, and guidance counseling). Like Richmond and Gorham's study (1988), Pottker & Fishel's (1977) research maintains a fairly narrow focus. None of the researchers have attempted to conduct any sort of longitudinal study to measure the long-term effects that gender-biased teaching practices have on students.

After reviewing these sources, it is clear that many unanswered questions emerged in the literature. This study investigates college students' *post hoc* recollections of gender bias exhibited by their high school teachers.

Hypothesis and Research Questions

In light of research in this area (gender-bias/sex discrimination in the high school), this study features one hypothesis and five research questions.

H₁: Female students will report having experienced sexual discrimination exhibited by their teachers more frequently than male students.

Research suggests that although both sexes may experience some form of sexual discrimination exhibited by their teachers, female students experience sexual discrimination with greater frequency and intensity than do male students. This study will investigate whether or not female students really do report experiencing sexual discrimination exhibited by their teachers more often than male students.

RQ(1): To what extent do students report observing sexual discrimination exhibited by teachers toward other students of the same sex?

The literature describes common instances of sexual discrimination that male and female students often experience exhibited by their teachers. The readings also mention that males and females are socialized in very different ways and thrive in different learning atmospheres. Therefore, this study questions the extent to which students are able to observe and describe instances of sexual discrimination that other students of the same sex may be experiencing.

RQ(2): To what extent do students report observing sexual discrimination exhibited by teachers toward students of the opposite sex?

Few studies describe students' perceptions of their own experiences of sexual discrimination exhibited by teachers (e.g., Belenky et al., 1986; Sadker & Sadker, 1994). However, none of the literature seemed to address students' perceptions of sexual discrimination teachers exhibit toward students of the opposite sex. Are students able to recognize and describe instances of sex discrimination when they occur to students of the opposite sex, and what types of sexually discriminative behaviors might they describe? Research question two explores the extent to which students report observing sexual discrimination exhibited by teachers toward students of the opposite sex.

RQ(3): To what extent do students report male and female teachers exhibiting sexual discrimination?

The literature regarding the effect teacher sex has on the amount of sexual discrimination he/she exhibits toward male and female students does not agree. Several studies indicate that the sex of the teacher makes little difference as to the amount of sex discrimination that occurs in the classroom (e.g., BenTsvi-Mayer et al., 1989; Brophy, 1985; Richmond-Abbott, 1983). Whereas, other research suggests that the sex of the teacher does affect the amount of sexual discrimination that is displayed toward male and female students (e.g., Wood, 1994). This study seeks to discover the extent to which students report male and female teachers exhibiting sexual discrimination in their teaching practices.

RQ(4): How do male and female students define sexual discrimination?

The literature does not address the ways in which students perceive and define the term sex discrimination. It appears that theorists and researchers can understand and describe what sorts of actions, beliefs, and behaviors constitute sex discrimination in the high school, but none of the literature seems to question the students' ability to do so. This study will examine the ways in which male and female students define what they believe sexually discriminative behavior to be.

RQ(5): How do students describe the sexually discriminative events they experienced and/or observed exhibited by their teachers?

Few studies addressed students' perceptions of sexually discriminative events they experienced and observed exhibited by their teachers. The majority of the the literature describes ways in which male and female students are socialized differently in school. However, only two sources in the literature seemed to address students' accounts of sex discrimination they experienced and observed exhibited by their teachers (e.g., Belenky et al., 1986; Sadker & Sadker, 1994)--in their own words. This study will investigate the ways in which students describe the sexually discriminative events they experienced and/or observed exhibited by their teachers during their last two years of high school.

CHAPTER THREE: METHODS

This study is designed to assess students' perceptions of sexual discrimination exhibited by their high school teachers. The research instrument includes questions relating not only to students' perceptions of their own experiences of sex discrimination, but also instances where they observed sexual discrimination exhibited toward students of the same sex and of the opposite sex.

Subjects

A total of 186 undergraduate students participated in this study. Of those, 149 usable questionnaires were collected (63 females and 86 males) from students between the ages of 18-20 years. Subjects for this study were selected according to age (revealed in their responses to the survey's demographic questions). Data from subjects outside of these age parameters were discarded. The purpose of limiting the age of usable respondents was to increase the likelihood of accuracy of recall and, consequently, enhance the validity of the study.

Subjects were solicited from introductory communication (n=101) and psychology courses (n=48) at a western university. Respondents in this study were volunteers and remained anonymous. Students in the introductory psychology classes received nominal extra credit for their participation. Communication students did not receive extra credit.

Research Instrument

Subjects filled out an 11-item survey questionnaire designed to assess the participants' perceptions of sexual discrimination exhibited by teachers in their high school. A copy of the instrument is in Appendix A.

The research instrument developed for this study incorporated a dual-method approach--including both Likert scale questions as well as open-ended questions. Key items of the instrument involved three 7-point unipolar Likert scale questions dealing with the frequency of experience with, or observation of, sexual discrimination (e.g., 1 = never felt sexually discriminated against, increasing in intensity to 7 = felt sexually discriminated against a considerable amount of the time).

The instrument included open-ended questions asking the students to describe their experiences and perceptions in as much or as little detail as they preferred. These questions asked the subjects to respond in their own words.

In addition to the Likert scale questions and the open-ended questions, the research questionnaire incorporated demographic items pertaining to the sex of the teacher in each instance of sexual discrimination described as well as demographic information about the respondents.

Two versions of this survey questionnaire were prepared; one for females, the other for males. The instructions and overall content of the questionnaires were comparable, but the wording of the questions were modified to fit the particular sex of the student responding.

Questions were created to investigate issues that have not been clearly described or researched in the literature. For example, prior scholarship has not emphasized students' definitions of sex discrimination--what actions, beliefs, and/or behaviors they perceive as sexually discriminative. In addition, very few studies specifically addressed students' perceptions of sex discrimination exhibited by teachers toward students of the same and of the opposite sex. Therefore,

the questions were included in this survey instrument to investigate these issues.

The questionnaire was developed based on gaps identified in the literature, as well as by consultation with colleagues. The questionnaire was approved by the University Human Subjects' Committee, and was subsequently distributed to a group of lower division communication students as part of a pilot study (a copy of the Human Subject's Approval Form is provided in Appendix B). These participants were invited to review the research instrument and provide comments pertaining to any part of its design. Minor revisions were made to the research instrument.

Procedure

All subjects were asked to complete the survey questionnaire regarding their perceptions of sex discrimination exhibited by teachers in their high school. Participants were instructed to recount the frequency and types of sexual discrimination they experienced and/or observed, if any, from teachers during their last two years of high school.

Participants took, on average, fifteen minutes to complete the questionnaire. To maintain uniformity of instruction and procedures during the distribution, completion, and collection of the survey questionnaire, the primary researcher was present for all data collection.

At the beginning of each session, the researcher read an informed consent document, distributed the questionnaire, and provided oral instruction (refer to Appendix C for a copy of the Informed Consent Document). Although male and female participants received slightly different versions of the same questionnaire, they were tested together in large groups.

Data Analytic Procedures

Quantitative Methods

An SPSS/PC program was used to analyze the Likert scale data. As reported in Chapter 4, Measures of Central Tendency, Correlations, MANOVA, and Multiple Regression analyses were conducted.

Qualitative Methods

For the purposes of this study, the students' qualitative responses were analyzed by means of manifest coding (Weisberg & Bowen, 1977). According to Weisberg & Bowen (1977), "manifest coding" refers to the substance of a respondent's answer rather than the style of the answer (known as "latent coding"). Specifically, a "contextual approach" to the creation of coding categories was used; an approach in which the researcher identifies the categories that respondents appear to use and utilize them in the overall coding scheme (Weisberg & Bowen, 1977).

An overall list of response categories was compiled for each open-ended question according to sex. The categories identified in this analysis emerged from close readings of the answers. A copy of the list is provided in Appendix D. Both males' and females' response categories for each open-ended question were compared to student (male and female) trends in behavior and perception noted in the current body of literature. Additionally, the response categories (for each question) were compared according to sex in order to ascertain whether or not there exist significant differences in the types of sexual discrimination males and females perceive, experience, and observe for themselves as well as others.

CHAPTER FOUR: RESULTS

The focus of this study was to investigate college students' *post hoc* perceptions of gender bias exhibited by their high school teachers. In order to investigate this question, data were collected using the study's multi-method survey questionnaire (refer to Appendix A). Following the data collection procedures, a series of statistical analyses and coding procedures were conducted. Statistical analyses run on the closed-ended questions include: frequencies, Measures of Central Tendency, Correlations, Multiple Analysis of Variance (MANOVA), and Multiple Regressions. All statistical procedures were run using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS/PC) program. The open-ended questions were coded according to the procedures outlined in Chapter Three (p.33).

The discussion of results will be organized according to the hypothesis and five research questions presented at the end of Chapter Two (pp.27-29).

Students' Reports of the Frequency to Which They Experienced Sexual Discrimination

Hypothesis #1 asserts that female students will report having experienced sexual discrimination exhibited by their teachers more frequently than male students. Level of frequency, Mean, and Standard Deviation were calculated for students' reports of having experienced sexual discrimination exhibited by their teachers. Overall, male and female students both reported experiencing sex discrimination with low frequency (i.e., 'Very Rarely'). The mean and standard deviation

calculations were very similar. For a detailed listing of levels of frequency, mean, and standard deviation see Table 4.1.

Table 4.1 Frequency of Response, Mean, & Standard Deviation for Students' Experiences of Sex Discrimination

Level of Frequency	Female		Male		Raw # Total
	#	(%)	#	(%)	
Never	25	39.7	40	46.5	65
Very Rarely	14	22.2	28	32.6	42
Rarely	13	20.6	7	8.1	20
Once in a While	4	6.3	8	9.3	12
Occasionally	6	9.5	3	3.5	9
Somewhat Frequently	1	1.6	0	0.0	1
Frequently	0	0.0	0	0.0	0
No Response	0	0.0	0	0.0	0
Total # of Respondents	63		86		149

	Female	Male	# of Cases
Mean (\bar{x})	2.29	1.91	149
Standard Deviation (S.D.)	1.38	1.11	149

Measures of Central Tendency were run to investigate whether the size of a student's graduating class revealed differences in the level of frequency with which students reported experiencing sex discrimination. Results indicate that there are slight variations in male and female students' scores depending upon their class size; however, these differences are not significant enough to indicate that the size of graduating class affects the level to which students report experiencing sex discrimination. Table 4.2 reflects these results.

Likewise, Measures of Central Tendency were run to examine the mean and standard deviation scores for male and female students according to their age. Findings show that a student's age makes little

difference in the overall level of frequency with which he/she reports experiencing sex discrimination. Table 4.3 presents this outcome.

Table 4.2 Measures of Central Tendency (by Sex & Number of Students in Graduating Class) for Students' Experiences of Sex Discrimination

# of Students in Graduating Class	Female		Male		# of Cases	
	\bar{x}	S.D.	\bar{x}	S.D.	Female	Male
1 to 250	2.41	1.58	1.93	1.09	27	42
251 to 500	2.19	1.20	1.84	1.13	31	38
501 & Greater	2.00	1.73	2.17	1.33	3	6
Overall Average/ Total # of Cases	2.28	1.38	1.91	1.11	61*	86

* (2 missing cases)

Table 4.3 Measures of Central Tendency (by Sex & Age) for Students' Experiences of Sex Discrimination

Age of Student	Female		Male		# of Cases	
	\bar{x}	S.D.	\bar{x}	S.D.	Female	Male
18 Yrs.	2.46	1.37	1.90	1.08	37	31
19 Yrs.	1.93	1.22	1.97	1.19	15	34
20 Yrs.	2.18	1.66	1.81	1.08	11	21
Overall Average/ Total # of Cases	2.29	1.38	1.91	1.11	63	86

A MANOVA program was run to determine main and interaction effects for a number of different variables (i.e., Sex, Age, & Number of Students in Graduating Class). The results of this analysis indicate no significant main effects were found. The frequency with which students report having experienced sex discrimination did not vary significantly between males and females. As Table 4.1 indicates, most of the students

who reported experiencing sex discrimination reported it at a low level of frequency (i.e., 'Very Rarely'). This is further illustrated by the mean values that appear for both males and females (females \bar{x} =2.29, s.d.=1.38; males \bar{x} = 1.91, s.d.=1.11). However, the interaction between Age x Sex proved to be statistically significant [Sig. of F = .044, $p < .05$]. In addition, the interaction of Age x Sex x Number of Students in Graduating Class approached significance [Sig. of F = .069, $p < .05$]. A Multiple Regression Analysis (incorporating the variables Age, Sex, and Number of Students in Graduating Class) indicated that none of the variables serve as significant predictor variables for the dependent variable (Q#2). The only variable to approach significance as a predictor variable was Sex [Sig.T = .102, $p < .05$].

Overall, the data collected from these statistical analyses do not confirm this hypothesis. No significant difference was found between males' and females' reports of experiencing sex discrimination exhibited by their high school teachers.

Students' Observations of Sexual Discrimination Exhibited Toward Other Students of the Same Sex

The first research question addresses the extent to which students report observing sexual discrimination exhibited by teachers toward other students of the same sex. Level of frequency, Mean, and Standard Deviation were calculated for students' reports of having observed sexual discrimination exhibited by teachers toward other students of the same sex. As Table 4.4 reveals, the majority of students who reported observing sexual discrimination toward other students of the same sex reported it at a low level of frequency (i.e., 'Very Rarely'). The mean values for both males and females confirm this finding (females \bar{x} = 2.21,

s.d. = 1.28; males \bar{x} = 1.91, s.d. = .98). See Table 4.4 for a complete listing of these findings.

Measures of Central Tendency were run to explore whether the size of a student's graduating class influenced the level of frequency with which students observed sex discrimination exhibited toward other students of the same sex. The results of the analyses indicate that the mean and standard deviation values for males and females varied very little with regard to size of graduating class. These values are reflected in Table 4.5.

Table 4.4 Frequency of Response, Mean, & Standard Deviation for Students' Observations of Sex Discrimination Exhibited Toward Students of the Same Sex

Level of Frequency	Female		Male		Raw # Total
	#	(%)	#	(%)	
Never	19	30.2	37	43.0	56
Very Rarely	21	33.3	27	31.4	48
Rarely	12	19.0	16	18.6	28
Once in a While	3	4.8	5	4.8	8
Occasionally	6	9.5	1	1.2	7
Somewhat Frequently	0	0.0	0	0.0	0
Frequently	0	0.0	0	0.0	0
No Response	2	3.2	0	0.0	2
Total # of Respondents	63		86		149
	Female		Male		# of Cases
Mean (\bar{x})	2.21		1.91		149
Standard Deviation (S.D.)	1.28		.98		149

Table 4.5 Measures of Central Tendency (by Sex & Number of Students in Graduating Class) for Students' Observations of Sex Discrimination Exhibited Toward Other Students of the Same Sex

# of Students in Graduating Class	Female		Male		# of Cases	
	\bar{x}	S.D.	\bar{x}	S.D.	Female	Male
1 to 250	2.26	1.46	1.83	.88	27	42
251 to 500	2.13	1.09	2.00	1.07	31	38
501 & Greater	2.67	2.08	.00	.00	3	6
Overall Average/ Total # of Cases	2.21	1.29	1.91	.98	61*	86

* (2 missing cases)

Measures of Central Tendency were also run to investigate the mean and standard deviation scores for male and female students according to their age. Outcomes of this analysis show very few differences in the mean and standard deviation scores for males and females (ranging from 18-20 yrs. of age). Refer to Table 4.6.

Table 4.6 Measures of Central Tendency (by Sex & Age) for Students' Observations of Sex Discrimination Exhibited Toward Other Students of the Same Sex

Age of Student	Female		Male		# of Cases	
	\bar{x}	S.D.	\bar{x}	S.D.	Female	Male
18 Yrs.	2.38	1.28	2.06	1.00	37	31
19 Yrs.	2.07	1.28	1.88	1.09	15	34
20 Yrs.	1.82	1.33	1.71	.72	11	21
Overall Average/ Total # of Cases	2.21	1.28	1.91	.98	63	86

The MANOVA analyses indicate that the main effects for the independent variable Age were statistically significant [Sig. of F = .005, $p < .01$]. In addition, Age x Number of Students in Graduating Class proved to be significant [Sig. of F = .013, $p < .05$]. None of the other variables were significant.

The results of the Multiple Regression Analysis reveal that none of the variables reach statistical significance. The only variable to approach significance was Age [Sig. T = .076, $p < .05$]. Overall, none of the variables serve as significant predictor variables for the dependent variable (Q#3).

Findings show that both male and female students report observing sexual discrimination exhibited by teachers toward other students of the same sex with very low frequency (i.e., 'Very Rarely').

Students' Observations of Sexual Discrimination Exhibited Toward Students of the Opposite Sex

The second research question investigates the extent to which students report observing sexual discrimination exhibited by teachers toward students of the opposite sex. Level of frequency, Mean, and Standard Deviation were calculated for students' reports of having observed sexual discrimination exhibited by teachers toward students of the opposite sex. Table 4.7 demonstrates that the majority of respondents reported observing sexual discrimination exhibited toward students of the opposite sex with relatively low frequency (i.e., 'Very Rarely').

Table 4.7 Frequency of Response, Mean, & Standard Deviation for Students' Observations of Sex Discrimination Exhibited Toward Students of the Opposite Sex

Level of Frequency	Female		Male		Raw # Total
	#	(%)	#	(%)	
Never	35	55.6	29	33.7	64
Very Rarely	12	19.0	30	34.9	42
Rarely	10	15.9	12	14.0	22
Once in a While	2	3.2	5	5.8	7
Occasionally	0	0.0	8	9.3	8
Somewhat Frequently	2	3.2	2	2.3	4
Frequently	0	0.0	0	0.0	0
No Response	2	3.2	0	0.0	2
Total # of Respondents	63		86		149
	Female		Male		# of Cases
Mean (\bar{x})	1.73		2.29		149
Standard Deviation (S.D.)	1.19		1.36		149

Measures of Central Tendency were conducted to explore whether the size of a student's graduating class revealed differences in the level of frequency with which students observed sex discrimination exhibited toward students of the opposite sex. The results of the analyses reveal that there is a slight difference between the mean and standard deviation values for females depending upon the number of students in their graduating class. For example, female students from a class size of 1 to 250 show mean and standard deviation scores ($\bar{x} = 2.07$, s.d.= 1.52) that are slightly higher than those of female students from a class size of 501 & greater ($\bar{x} = 1.00$, s.d.= .00). The size of graduating class for males showed little difference in mean and standard deviation values. Table 4.8 reflects these results.

Additionally, Measures of Central Tendency were run to examine the mean and standard deviation scores for male and female students' reports according to their age. Findings indicate that few differences in mean and standard deviation values exist for male and female students between the ages of 18-20 yrs. See Table 4.9.

Table 4.8 Measures of Central Tendency (by Sex & Number of Students in Graduating Class) for Students' Observations of Sex Discrimination Exhibited Toward Students of the Opposite Sex

# of Students in Graduating Class	Female		Male		# of Cases	
	\bar{x}	S.D.	\bar{x}	S.D.	Female	Male
1 to 250	2.07	1.52	2.43	1.36	27	42
251 to 500	1.48	.81	2.05	1.29	31	38
501 & Greater	1.00	.00	2.83	1.72	3	6
Overall Average/ Total # of Cases	1.72	1.20	2.29	1.36	61*	86

* (2 missing cases)

Table 4.9 Measures of Central Tendency (by Sex & Age) for Students' Observations of Sex Discrimination Exhibited Toward Students of the Opposite Sex

Age of Student	Female		Male		# of Cases	
	\bar{x}	S.D.	\bar{x}	S.D.	Female	Male
18 Yrs.	1.59	1.07	2.26	1.39	37	31
19 Yrs.	2.07	1.44	2.29	1.43	15	34
20 Yrs.	1.73	1.27	2.33	1.28	11	21
Overall Average/ Total # of Cases	1.73	1.19	2.29	1.36	63	86

An examination of the MANOVA analysis shows that none of the variables proved to be statistically significant. However, the variable Gender did approach significance [Sig. of F = .066, $p < .05$].

Of all the Multiple Regression Analyses conducted, Gender was the only variable to reach statistical significance [Sig. T = .015, $p < .05$]. With the exception of Gender, when dealing with question #4/RQ(2), none of the variables serve as significant predictor variables.

Results of the statistical analyses indicate that students observe sexual discrimination exhibited by their teachers toward students of the opposite sex with relatively low frequency (i.e., 'Very Rarely').

Correlation Coefficients for H(1), RQ(1), & RQ(2)

The Pearson's R correlation coefficient measures the strength of linear relationship, correlation, between variables. The value may range between +1 or -1. The higher the positive value, the stronger the correlation between variables (+1.0 to .6 = very strong; .5 to .4 = strong; .3 = somewhat strong; .2 to -1.0 = no strong correlation).

Pearson's R correlation coefficients were calculated to evaluate the relationships among questions #2, 3, & 4 and/or the gender of the respondent. Q#2 x Q#3 [Pearson's R = .71], and Q#2 x Q#3 x Sex (female) [Pearson's R = .80] indicated very strong correlations among the variables. Q#2 x Q#3 x Sex (male) [Pearson's R = .59], and Q#4 x Q#2 x Sex (female) [Pearson's R = .50] showed strong correlations among the variables. All remaining correlations (with the exception of Q#3 x Q#4 x Sex (male) [Pearson's R = .20]) proved to be somewhat strong [Pearson's R between .21-.41]. All correlations (with the exception of males in Q#3 x Q#4) reached strong statistical significance [$p < .05$ or less]. See Tables 4.10 and 4.11.

Table 4.10 Summary Table of Pearson's Correlations for Questions #2, 3, & 4

Questions Correlated	Pearson's R value	Approx. Sig.
Q#2 by Q#3	.71	.000***
Q#3 by Q#4	.21	.009**
Q#4 by Q#2	.40	.000***

Significance at alpha:

* $p < .05$

** $p < .01$

*** $p < .001$

Table 4.11 Summary Table of Pearson's Correlations (by Sex) for Questions #2, 3, & 4

Questions Correlated by Sex	Pearson's R value	Approx. Sig.
Q#2 by Q#3 by Sex		
Female	.8	.000***
Male	.59	.000***
Q#3 by Q#4 by Sex		
Female	.32	.01**
Male	.20	.07
Q#4 by Q#2 by Sex		
Female	.50	.000***
Male	.41	.000***

Significance at alpha:

* $p < .05$

** $p < .01$

*** $p < .001$

Students' Reports of the Sex of Teacher Exhibiting Sexually Discriminative Behavior

The third research question concerns the extent to which students report male and female teachers exhibiting sexual discrimination. Frequency counts were run for questions #2, 3, & 4 regarding the sex of teacher reported exhibiting sexually discriminative behavior toward male and female students. These frequencies are reported in Table 4.12. Overall, male teachers were identified as being responsible for exhibiting sexual discrimination in more than 60% of students' (male and female) accounts of experiences and observations.

Female students report experiencing sex discrimination exhibited by male teachers 80.56% of the time, and by female teachers 19.44% of the time. Whereas male students report experiencing sex discrimination exhibited by male teachers in 46.81% of the cases, and by female teachers in 53.19% of the cases.

Regarding students' observations of sex discrimination toward other students of the same sex, female students identify male teachers in 89.47% of their reports, and female teachers in 10.53% of their reports. Male students identify male teachers 42.22% of the time, and female teachers 57.78% of the time.

Students also report observing sex discrimination exhibited by teachers toward students of the opposite sex. Female students' reports indicate that male teachers exhibited sexually discriminative behavior toward male students in 39.13% of the cases, and female teachers in 60.87% of the cases. Male students identify male teachers as exhibiting sexually discriminative behavior toward female students in 87.23% of the reports, and female teachers in 12.77% of the reports. All frequency (%) findings are outlined in Table 4.12.

Table 4.12 Students' Reports of the Frequency With Which Their Male and Female Teachers Exhibited Sexual Discriminative Behavior

Sex of Student	Male Teacher		Female Teacher		Total # of Responses
	#	(%)	#	(%)	
Female					Female
Q#2 (experienced)	29	80.56	7	19.44	36
Q#3 (observed same sex)	34	89.47	4	10.53	38
Q#4 (observed opposite sex)	9	39.13	14	60.87	23
Male					Male
Q#2 (experienced)	22	46.81	25	53.19	47
Q#3 (observed same sex)	19	42.22	26	57.78	45
Q#4 (observed opposite sex)	41	87.23	6	12.77	47
Overall Total of Students' Responses	Male Teacher		Female Teacher	No Response	Total # of Cases
Q#2 (experienced)	51		32	66	149
Q#3 (observed same sex)	53		30	66	149
Q#4 (observed opposite sex)	50		20	79	149

Students' Definitions of Sexual Discrimination

Research question #4 asks students to define what sorts of actions, beliefs, and/or behaviors they believe constitute sex discrimination. Males' and females' definitions of sex discrimination have been incorporated into Figure--4.1. Research question #4 (survey Q#1--see Appendix A) was the only open-ended item in which the responses given by males and females appeared to be virtually the same. Therefore, the responses of both sexes were combined for analysis.

As Figure 4.1 demonstrates, both males and females identified "favoritism shown toward one sex" and "putting down someone (e.g., physically, mentally) because of his/her sex" as the most common attitudes, beliefs, and/or behaviors associated with the definition of sex discrimination.

For example, one female student described "favoritism shown toward one sex" as:

When the teacher favors the opposite sex and, therefore, always focuses on them and saying rude comments (meant to be funny), towards the other gender.

Another female claimed that sex discrimination is defined as: "Favoring one sex more than the other. Such as guys are a lot stronger, and females seem to be too sensitive." A male student described similar types of actions in his definition of sex discrimination: "Teachers favoring one sex over the other when taking volunteers, questions, or when giving grades."

The second-most commonly reported behavior associated with sex discrimination was described as teachers "putting one sex down (e.g., mentally, physically)." One of the male respondents identified this type of behavior as: "When teachers make comments like, 'It's about time a

girl set the curve,' and in effect put down the male sex." Likewise, another male student described "putting down one sex" as: "When the teacher makes any degrading comments about either sex regarding intelligence or academic performance." Similarly, a female student defined sex discrimination as:

Making demeaning comments or using examples in which one gender is seen as inferior or stereotyped negatively and unjustifiably.

Overall, male and female students described essentially the same types of actions, beliefs, and behaviors in their definitions of sex discrimination.

However, two striking differences did emerge when all male and female responses were coded and compared. Males identified "strict discipline toward one sex" and "ignoring a student because of his/her sex" as additional behaviors associated with sexual discrimination; whereas, females did not identify these behaviors. Figure 4.1 provides a complete listing of the combined male and female response categories, as well as brief examples of each of these response types.

Students' Descriptions of Sexually Discriminative Events They Experienced or Observed

The fifth research question focuses on how students describe the sexually discriminative events they experienced or observed exhibited by their high school teachers. This study includes three open-ended questions to address this issue (i.e., Q#2b, #3b, & #4b--see Appendix A). Analysis of subjects' responses reveals distinct differences between females' and males' descriptions. Consequently, the data are reported here separately by gender (refer to Figures 4.2-4.7).

Male and Female Responses	(# of Responses)	Examples of Responses
• Favoritism (advantage) toward one sex	(51)	• Valuing the opinions of one sex over another, holding higher expectations for one sex
• Putting down one sex (physically/verbally)	(43)	• Making sexist jokes, rude comments, ridiculing
• More attention/opportunities given to one sex	(31)	• Giving more responsibility, praise, feedback to one sex
• Higher grades/points given to one sex	(27)	• Regarding one sex as intellectually superior
• Inappropriate touching/comments made	(17)	• Making comments about one's physical appearance, flirting, making sexual advances, unwanted touching/hugging
• Leniency toward one sex	(14)	• Regarding one sex as "better," more patience and/or favors.
• One sex called upon more often	(10)	• Asking more questions, valuing one sex's responses more than the other's
• Other	(9)	• (Refer to Appendix D)
• No response	(4)	

Figure 4.1 Students' Definitions of Sex Discrimination

Females' Experiences of Sex Discrimination

As Figure 4.2 illustrates, females noted “being treated unfairly in Physical Education (P.E.) classes” and “being talked down to/treated as if they were unintelligent” as the most frequent instances of sexually discriminative behavior that they experienced exhibited by their high school teachers. For example, one female claimed:

During P.E. the teacher made sure the top male students were on one team or the highly experienced team while the rest (mostly women) were ‘fill-ins’.

Another female student recalled being treated unfairly in P.E. class:

“When in P.E. class, if we play softball, the girls were always the last ones to bat and had to stand out in the field if they wanted to play.”

One female claimed that her teacher went so far as to tell the female students that they could not earn A's in weight training class:

In my weight training class, my teachers said that no girl would get an A out of the course, because it was a guy's class and no girls should be in it.

However, being treated unfairly in P.E. class was not the only instance of sex discrimination that female students recalled experiencing. The second-most frequent description of sexually discriminative behavior females remembered experiencing was being “talked down to/treated as if they are not intelligent.” For instance, many females described being put-down or treated as if they were not intelligent in their math classes. One female claimed:

In my math class, the teacher (a male) would treat all of the females in the class like they were not as ‘smart’ as the males. When he explained something (like if I asked him a question) he would talk down to me and almost make it a joke that I didn't understand. Also, if we were to answer questions that he would give us, and we would raise our hands, he picked males the majority of the time. Yet, if he knew a female didn't understand, he'd pick her as if to make her feel unintelligent.

Another female student related a similar experience she had in her math class:

In my calculus class and pre-calculus class (same teacher in both), my teacher tended to put down females more than males. He would make fun of us if we didn't know something that the majority of the males did.

Other findings and brief descriptions of experiences are presented in Figure 4.2.

Males' Experiences of Sex Discrimination

Figure 4.3 displays the most frequently reported sexually discriminative experiences male students recalled experiencing exhibited by their high school teachers. These include, "higher grades being given to females" and "more attention being shown to females."

One male stated: "In my English class, more girls were in the higher grade bracket when they actually did not get better grades." Another male claimed: "My history teacher was a much easier grader on his female students than his male students."

Regarding the issue of more attention being shown to females, a male student expressed:

One of my teachers who was a male, always helped the girls in our class more than he helped the guys. He was more willing to help the girls. It made me feel like I wasn't supposed to ask him questions.

Another male student described: "A teacher would spend more time with, or be more sympathetic with, the women." The nature of males' responses and summary of examples are provided in Figure 4.3

Female Responses	(# of Responses)	Examples of Responses
• Females treated unfairly in P.E. classes	(12)	• Males' interests/abilities favored, female sports seen as less important, teachers more lenient with male athletes
• Talking down to females, treating them as if they are not intelligent	(9)	• Treating females as if they are less capable than males (specific references to math/science classes)
• More attention/opportunities given to males	(7)	• Calling on males more often, offering more scholarship opportunities to males
• Inappropriate physical comments, jokes, gestures	(5)	• Making comments such as, "Girls are only designed for having babies," "Bimbo," "Hussy," or "Dumb blonde"
• Asking only males to do certain tasks/activities	(3)	• Assuming males are only able to complete certain tasks (e.g., lifting things)
• Leniency toward female students	(3)	• Singling out a student as the "teacher's pet"
• Lower grades given to females	(2)	• Giving females lower grades for same work as males
• Other	(5)	• (Refer to Appendix D)
• No response/can't recall	(27)	

Figure 4.2 Females' Experiences of Sex Discrimination Exhibited by Their High School Teachers

Male Responses	(# of Responses)	Examples of Responses
• Higher grades given to females	(11)	• Giving males lower grades for equal work, assuming that females are smarter/better students (e.g., English class)
• More attention given to females	(11)	• Calling on females more often, more time spent with/more sympathetic to females
• Teachers (male) favor good-looking female students	(5)	• Seating girls at the front of the class, giving extra attention/help to pretty girls
• Stricter policies/rules for male students	(4)	• Accepting late/make-up work from females, but not from males with same circumstances
• Leniency toward female students	(4)	• Allowing more opportunities (e.g., different dress codes), different/easier rules and policies for females (e.g., P.E. class)
• Teachers (female) flirting with male students	(2)	• Making inappropriate comments toward male students, giving higher grades than were earned
• More opportunities/higher grades given to males	(2)	• Assuming males are better at Chemistry/math
• Other	(6)	• (Refer to Appendix D)
• No response/can't recall	(41)	

Figure 4.3 Males' Experiences of Sex Discrimination Exhibited by Their High School Teachers

Females' Observations of Sex Discrimination Exhibited Toward Other Female Students

In response to survey question #3b, female students identified observing the same types of behaviors exhibited by teachers toward other female students that they described experiencing themselves (refer to Figures 4.2 and 4.4) The most frequent types of behaviors they recognized are “being talked down to/treated as if they are unintelligent” and “being treated unfairly in P.E. classes.”

One female indicated that she observed her teacher treating other females as if they were unintelligent, the same sorts of behaviors she described experiencing herself:

(Same answer as #2) My male math teacher would treat all females like they weren't as smart as the males. Talk down to the females, make a joke out of their not understanding, and make them feel unintelligent.

Another female recalled a teacher making demeaning statements like: “Wow, that's pretty good for a girl.”

Additionally, female students reported being “treated unfairly in P.E. classes” as the second-most common type of sex discrimination they observed teachers exhibiting toward other females. One female stated that females were singled out in P.E. class:

During P.E., my teacher put all the girls on one team and all the boys on the other because, ‘girls can't play sports like boys’.

Similarly, another female described an instance of gender-role stereotyping she observed in one of her P.E. classes: “One of my teachers talked about activities that he thought only men could do (sports). Girls were too fragile.”

Female Responses	(# of Responses)	Examples of Responses
• Talking down to females, treating them as if they are not intelligent	(11)	• Making fun of females' intelligence/abilities, making rude/sexist comments
• Females treated unfairly in P.E. classes	(7)	• Putting down females' abilities (e.g., "Girls can't play sports like boys"), pitting the males against the females
• Inappropriate comments/actions toward females	(5)	• Making sexual innuendoes, flirting with/touching female students
• More attention given to males	(5)	• Calling on males more often, valuing males' answers/opinions more than females' (e.g., math/physics classes), ignoring females in class
• Males' work graded easier than females	(4)	• Giving females fewer points/lower grades for the same amount of effort/work
• Discipline more lenient toward females	(3)	• Allowing females to make-up work/absences, giving females more freedom with rules/policies
• Activities/opportunities separated by gender	(3)	• Assuming/labeling certain tasks/activities as being male or female-oriented
• Other	(4)	• (Refer to Appendix D)
• No response/can't recall	(26)	

Figure 4.4 Females' Observations of Sex Discrimination Exhibited Toward Other Female Students

Males' Observations of Sex Discrimination Exhibited Toward Other Male Students

The most frequently reported types of sexually discriminative behavior male students remembered exhibited toward other male students were “discipline was more lenient toward females” and “more attention being given to females.” The observation of “more attention being shown toward female students” appeared in both males’ own experiences of sex discrimination, as well as in their observations of sex discrimination exhibited toward other male students (see Figures 4.3 and 4.5). The occurrence of “discipline being more lenient toward females” appeared as the second-most frequent type of sex discrimination males observed exhibited toward other males; however, male students did not identify this as being one of their top two most frequent experiences of sex discrimination. In males’ descriptions of their own experiences, the category of “discipline issues/school policies being more lenient toward females” appeared as the fourth-most frequent type of sexually discriminative behavior they experienced (refer to Figures 4.3 and 4.5).

Many males indicted that they observed teachers being more strict about policies and disciplinary issues with male students than with female students. One male recalled a teacher accepting a late assignments from females, but not from males: “A teacher that I had wouldn’t let some guys hand in late assignments but then turned around and accepted one from a girl.” In another instance, a male student described observing differences in discipline procedures: “A guy got kicked out of class for messing around in class, but if a girl did it the teacher would do nothing.”

Male Responses	(# of Responses)	Examples of Responses
• Discipline more lenient toward females	(13)	• Allowing females to make-up work/absences, giving females more freedom with rules/policies, giving males harsher punishments for same actions as females.
• More attention given to females	(10)	• Calling on females more often, giving females more help
• Favoring females' opinions/work	(7)	• Listening to females' opinions more, regarding females as being smarter/better students
• Talking down to males, treating them with less respect than females	(5)	• Making rude comments, jokes (especially by female teachers) toward males (e.g., "Just a bunch of dumb jocks")
• Females given higher grades	(2)	• Giving males fewer points/lower grades for the same amount of effort/work (e.g., English class)
• Males treated unfairly in P.E. classes	(2)	• Females expected to do less work/effort, males expected to participate more for the same grade
• Other	(6)	• (Refer to Appendix D)
• No response/can't recall	(44)	

Figure 4.5 Males' Observations of Sex Discrimination Exhibited Toward Other Male Students

Male students also identified “more attention being given to females” as a common type of sex discrimination they observed exhibited toward other males. For instance, one male student described an instance of sex discrimination he observed his teacher exhibiting toward males in his Spanish class:

Well, in one class (Spanish 2) there was a period of time when the instructor wanted girls to do more of the talking than boys because they didn't talk. This deprived the boys of time to practice their skills fairly, the girls voluntarily didn't raise their hands to volunteer.

Figure 4.5 presents a summary of males' response categories and an example of each of these categories.

Females' Observations of Sex Discrimination Exhibited Toward Male Students

The most frequently reported types of sexual discrimination females observed exhibited toward males include “teachers favoring female students” and “teachers making degrading remarks/put-downs toward males.”

A number of females recalled instances when their teachers favored female students rather than male students. For instance, one female remembered her teachers displaying different expectations regarding the participation of her male and female students: “Sometimes I would observe female teachers calling on girls more often.” Another female had this to say: “I have an English teacher who heavily favored women (especially pretty girls).” Similarly, one female described an instance where female students were receiving special treatment and opportunities: “The girls in drafting class would get picked more often to run errands for the teacher. Overall, we would get treated better.”

Female respondents also observed teachers making “degrading remarks/put-downs” toward their male students. One such description came from a female student who had this to say about a teacher: “The teacher would sometimes talk to the guys like they were stupid.” Another female claimed her teacher openly referred to females as being smarter than males:

A teacher of mine always referred to women as the more intelligent gender and always preferred having them answer questions rather than the guys.

Figure 4.6 provides a listing of the response categories identified for this question, as well as offer some brief examples of behaviors associated with each category.

Males’ Observations of Sex Discrimination Exhibited Toward Female Students.

Results demonstrate that the most frequent sexually discriminative behaviors males observed exhibited toward female students are “being treated as if they are unintelligent,” and “being treated unfairly in P.E. class.” Analysis of these responses, in comparison to the responses gathered for the other questions, reveals that male and female students both identified “being treated as if they are unintelligent” and “being treated unfairly in P.E. class” as the most frequently types of sexually discriminative behavior teachers exhibit toward female students (see Figures 4.2, 4.4, and 4.7).

Several male students described observing situations in which a teacher made fun of a female student’s intelligence when she was confused about the subject-matter. For example, one male recalled a teacher: “Teasing a girl in chemistry class about not understanding what we had to do.” Similarly, another male remembered a teacher putting-

down female students: "I had a teacher joke around with a girl saying that 'men were the dominant species'."

The other type of sexually discriminative behavior exhibited that males frequently observed female students experiencing was "being treated unfairly in P.E. class." One male student's response suggests that his P.E. teacher made no secret of his feelings about females' athletic abilities:

I was involved in a P.E. class that was taught by a male instructor. The class was primarily girls (only 2 boys in the class). We asked if we could play basketball, but the teacher's reply was 'no.' Although he didn't say why, everyone knew he didn't want us to because he didn't think the girls could play up to his standards.

Similarly, another male student identified P.E. class as being an arena where sex discrimination occurred for females: "Our teacher ignored girls in P.E. class. Didn't let the girls play as much as the boys." Other findings and brief descriptions of observations are outlined in Figure 4.7.

Female Responses	(# of Responses)	Examples of Responses
• Teachers favoring female students	(7)	• Regarding females as smarter/better students (e.g., English class), giving female students more attention/opportunities, calling on females more often
• Making degrading remarks/put downs toward males	(7)	• Questioning males' intelligence/abilities
• Discipline more strict toward males	(3)	• Regarding males as "trouble-makers," imposing stricter punishments on males for the same behavior as females
• Teachers favoring male students	(3)	• Regarding males' opinions as more valid
• Teachers more lenient toward females	(2)	• Allowing females to make-up work, accepting late work
• Females given higher grades	(2)	• Giving females higher grades for the same amount of work/effort
• Other	(5)	• (Refer to Appendix D)
• No response/can't recall	(37)	

Figure 4.6 Females' Observations of Sex Discrimination Exhibited Toward Male Students

Male Responses	(# of Respondents)	Examples of Responses
• Teachers treating females as less intelligent/able than males	(18)	• Making rude jokes, comments, put-downs regarding females' abilities
• Females treated unfairly in P.E. classes	(12)	• Discriminating against females' abilities (e.g., setting lower standards for females, giving females less attention, "girls can't compete with guys")
• Inappropriate sexual comments/actions toward females	(8)	• Making sexual comments, flirting, touching female students
• Favoring male students	(3)	• Giving male students special favors/opportunities (e.g., male athletes), calling on males more often/favoring opinions
• Teachers more lenient toward males	(3)	• Allowing males (especially athletes) to make-up work, excusing absences, accepting late papers
• More attention given to females	(3)	• Offering females more privileges/help
• Allowing different activities/opportunities for males	(2)	• Catering to males' interests, separating activities/options according to gender
• Females given higher grades	(2)	• Giving females higher grades for the same/or less amounts of work/effort, grade policies easier for females
• Other	(3)	• (Refer to Appendix D)
• No response/can't recall	(39)	

Figure 4.7 Males' Observations of Sex Discrimination Exhibited Toward Female Students

CHAPTER FIVE: CONCLUSIONS

The purpose of this investigation was to examine college students' *post hoc* perceptions of sex discrimination exhibited by their high school teachers. A review of pertinent literature in the field of gender-research revealed several gaps: (1) students' reports of the extent to which they experience sex discrimination exhibited by their teachers, (2) students' observations of sex discrimination exhibited toward students of the same sex, as well as toward students of the opposite sex, (3) students' reports of the sex of teacher involved in the sexually discriminative instances they described, (4) students' definitions of sex discrimination, and (5) students' descriptions of their own experiences of sex discrimination. Consequently, the hypothesis and five research questions presented in this study sought to examine the gaps addressed upon review of the literature. A survey instrument incorporating both open and closed-ended questions was created specifically to address the the hypothesis and research questions.

Volunteers for this study were 149 undergraduate students (63 females, 86 males) in introductory communication and psychology courses. Results of the survey were analyzed using both qualitative and quantitative methodologies. The findings of the analyses were discussed in relation to the hypothesis and research questions guiding this investigation.

The dual-method approach used in the survey instrument contributed to the validity of the study's results. The data collected from the different methods (open-ended responses versus closed-ended/Likert scale responses) produced a more complete view of students' perceptions than would have been gathered by using only one of these methods. For

example, the data gathered from the closed-ended questions (Likert scale) indicated that male and female students reported experiencing and/or observing sex discrimination exhibited by their teachers with similar frequency (i.e., 'Very Rarely'). This finding alone might suggest that male and female students' experiences of sex discrimination are very similar.

In contrast, the information gathered from the open-ended questions reveals that males and females perceive and experience very different types of sexually discriminative behaviors. However, the open-ended data, by itself, do not indicate the degree of frequency with which males and females experience sex discrimination in school. Therefore, this study benefited by using of both methods of inquiry--ultimately creating a more precise understanding of these students' experiences.

Surprisingly, both males and females' definitions of sex discrimination were very similar. Findings reveal that students, regardless of gender, identified "favoritism shown toward one sex" and "putting someone down (e.g., physically/mentally) because of his/her sex" as being the most frequent types of behaviors associated with sex discrimination.

In addition, the sex of teacher described exhibiting sex discrimination appears to make a difference. Although previous research seems to suggest that male and female teachers are equally biased in their display of sexually discriminative behavior exhibited toward male and female students, this study indicates that both male and female students perceive male teachers to be more biased toward female students than female teachers.

Discussion of Hypothesis and Research Questions

Hypothesis One

Hypothesis one stated that females would report experiencing sexual discrimination exhibited by their teachers more frequently than would males. However, this was not the case. Results indicated that the majority of respondents, both males and females, described experiencing sex discrimination to some degree. In fact, their reports of experiencing sex discrimination were surprisingly similar. Statistical analyses show that males and females reported experiencing sex discrimination with corresponding frequency (i.e., 'Very Rarely'). Overall, the level of frequency for males and females was fairly low; however, the majority of respondents (60.3 % of the females, 53.5% of the males) indicated that they experienced some degree of sex discrimination exhibited by their high school teachers (refer to Table 4.1, p.35).

This study questioned whether the size of a student's graduating class or the age of the respondent would influence the level of frequency with which students reported experiencing sex discrimination. The results of this inquiry reveal that neither of these independent variables play a significant role in determining the extent to which students report experiencing sex discrimination by their teachers (these results are reflected in Tables 4.2 and 4.3, p.36). Males and females of all classes sizes and ages (i.e., 18-20 yrs.) experienced similar levels of sex discrimination.

Although the literature acknowledges that both males and females are disadvantaged by sexually discriminative teaching practices, the focus of most theorists is on females and the ways in which they are

disadvantaged by sex discrimination (e.g., Belenky et al., 1986; Lips, 1991; Wood, 1994). Therefore, the implied conclusion from the literature was that females would describe experiencing sex discrimination to a greater degree than males. This hypothesis was not confirmed. This study concludes that both males and females are experiencing sex discrimination exhibited by their high school teachers with equal frequency.

Research Question One

Research question one investigated the extent to which students would report observing sex discrimination exhibited by their teachers toward other students of the same sex. Statistical analyses revealed that both male and female students reported observing sex discrimination exhibited toward other students of the same sex at a similar level of frequency (i.e., 'Very Rarely'). Table 4.4 indicates these findings, p.38. Like Hypothesis One, results show that the overall level of frequency reported was fairly low; however, over fifty-percent of the respondents (69.8 % of the females, 57.0 % of the males) indicated that they observed some degree of sex discrimination exhibited by their high school teachers toward other students of the same sex.

Furthermore, this study examined what influence, if any, the size of a student's graduating class or the age of the respondent had on the level of frequency with which he/she reported observing sex discrimination exhibited toward other students of the same sex. The results of these analyses reveal that neither of these independent variables significantly influence the extent to which students report observing sex discrimination (see Tables 4.5 and 4.6, p.39). To some degree, males and females of all classes sizes and ages (i.e., 18-20 yrs.)

observed sex discrimination exhibited toward other students of the same sex.

The literature did not address students' observations of sex discrimination exhibited by teachers toward other students of the same sex. Therefore, the results gathered from research question one provide a general understanding of the extent to which male and female students perceive sex discrimination to be a frequent occurrence for other same-sex students. The conclusion of this researcher is that although the degree of sex discrimination students reported observing toward other students of the same sex was fairly low; nevertheless, the majority of students who responded to this survey indicated that that sex discrimination is occurring in the high school.

Research Question Two

Research question two explored the extent to which students reported observing sex discrimination exhibited by their teachers toward students of the opposite sex. Statistical procedures determined that both male and female students reported observing sex discrimination exhibited toward students of the opposite sex at a similar level of frequency (i.e., 'Very Rarely'). These values are represented in Table 4.7, p.41. Parallel to the findings of Hypothesis One and Research Question One, results from this inquiry indicate the the overall level of frequency reported was fairly low; however, over forty-percent of the respondents (44.4 % of the females, 66.3 % of the males) indicated that they observed some degree of sex discrimination exhibited by their high school teachers toward other students of the same sex.

This study also questioned the possible influence that other variables (i.e., the size of a student's graduating class, the age of the

respondent) may have had on the degree of frequency with which students reported observing sex discrimination exhibited toward students of the opposite sex. The outcome of these analyses show that students' reports were not significantly influenced by the size of their graduating class, or by their age (see Tables 4.8 and 4.9, p.42). To some degree, males and females of all classes sizes and ages (i.e., 18-20 yrs.) observed sex discrimination exhibited toward students of the opposite sex.

Similar to research question one, previous research has not addressed students' observations of sex discrimination exhibited by teachers toward students of the opposite sex. Therefore, the results gathered from research question two help to narrow a void in the literature. This study indicates that the degree of sex discrimination students reported observing toward other students of the same sex is fairly low; however, the majority of students who responded to this question expressed that sex discrimination is occurring to some degree.

Correlation Analyses for H(1), RQ(2), & RQ(2)

Correlation analyses were calculated to evaluate the association between variables among survey questions #2, 3, and 4 (i.e., H(1), RQ(1), and RQ(2) respectively). Findings show that Q#2 x #3 produced a correlation coefficient of .71, suggesting that there is a strong linear relationship between these questions (see Table 4.10, p.44). This implies that students who reported experiencing sex discrimination (Q#2) were likely to report observing similar degrees of sex discrimination exhibited toward other students of the same sex (Q#3).

Similarly, correlation coefficients were measured to investigate the relationship between the independent variables Q#2, 3, and 4 (i.e., H(1), RQ(1), and RQ(2) respectively) and the dependent variable Sex. Results

indicate that several of the survey questions showed strong correlations according to the sex the student responding (see Table 4.11, p.44). For example, Q#2 x Q#3 x Sex produced strong linear relationships between these questions and the sex of the student responding [Pearson's R for females = .80, Pearson's R for males = .59]. These findings suggest that both males and females who report experiencing sex discrimination are likely to report observing sex discrimination exhibited other students of the same sex. However, the Pearson R values also reveal that females are slightly more inclined to report both experiencing sex discrimination (Q#2) and observing sex discrimination exhibited toward other students of the same sex (Q#3) than are males.

Similarly, the relationship between Q#4 x Q#2 x Sex (female) [Pearson's R = .50] and Q#3 x Q#4 x Sex (male) [Pearson's R = .20] indicated strong-somewhat strong correlations among variables (refer to Table 4.11, p.44). Females were likely to report both experiencing sex discrimination and observing sex discrimination exhibited toward male students. Also, males seemed somewhat likely to report both observing sex discrimination exhibited toward other males, as well as observing sex discrimination exhibited toward females.

Research Question Three

Research question three studied the extent to which students reported male and female teachers exhibiting sex discrimination in the sexually discriminative accounts they described experiencing and observing.

The results gathered from this research question were very unexpected. As mentioned in Chapter Two, the literature in this area does not reach a consensus. The majority of studies that investigate the

relationship between teacher sex and student sex suggest that the sex of the teacher has no significant influence on the degree to which teachers discriminate against their male and female students (e.g., BenTsvi-Mayer et al., 1989; Ivy & Backlund, 1994). Wood's (1994) work challenged these studies by indicating that the sex of the teacher does influence the degree to which he/she will discriminate against male and female students.

Interestingly enough, the results of this study support both Wood's (1994) research, as well as the studies that contradict Wood's (1994) findings. The sex of teacher described exhibiting sex discrimination appears to have a definite influence on male and female students' perceptions of sex discrimination exhibited toward female students. Students' reports indicate that male teachers were the ones responsible for discriminating against female students in the majority of instances described (in over 80% of the reports), by both male and female students (see Table 4.12, p.46). These results reflect Wood's (1994) claims that teachers are more likely to discriminate against students of the opposite sex.

In contrast, it appears as though students (both males and females) perceived male and female teachers discriminating against male students with similar frequency (refer to Table 4.12, p.46). This finding supports previous research (e.g., BenTsvi-Mayer et al., 1989; Ivy & Backlund, 1994) conducted in this area.

Thus, a significant finding of this study is that both males and females recognized that female students were discriminated against more by male teachers than by female teachers. This conclusion creates further disparity in the literature regarding the influence a teacher's sex

might have on the degree to which he/she discriminates against male and female students. Clearly, more research needs to be conducted in this area.

Research Question Four

Research Question Four asked students to define what sorts of actions, beliefs, and behaviors they believe constitute sex discrimination. An unexpected result of this analysis showed that male and female students' definitions of sexually discriminative behavior are almost identical. For example, both males and females identified "favoritism shown toward one sex" and "putting down someone (e.g. physically, mentally) because of his/her sex" as being the most frequent types of behaviors associated with sex discrimination (see Figure 4.1, p.49). The descriptions that students offered for sex discrimination reflect the definitions and examples offered in the literature. For instance, Cyrus' (1993) definition of "sex discrimination" concerns actions that disadvantage individuals stemming from sex and/or gender prejudices and stereotypes (p.6). The students' descriptions serve as examples supporting these, and other, definitions and theories offered by researchers.

Of all the open-ended response categories that were found for research question four (Appendix D provides a comprehensive listing of these categories, p.108), there were only two response categories identified by males that were not identified by females (e.g., "strict discipline toward one sex," and "ignoring a student because of his/her sex"). It is not surprising that males perceived "strict discipline toward one sex" to be a behavior associated with sex discrimination because the literature recognizes that males are often labeled as "troublemakers" and

“delinquents” by their teachers and are subjected to tougher discipline policies than females (Sadker & Sadker, 1994).

These results suggest several conclusions: (1) that male and female students are both aware of what attitudes, beliefs, and behaviors are associated with sex discrimination; (2) that students’ definitions of sex discrimination support claims and definitions asserted in the literature; and (3) that both male and female students perceive sex discrimination to be defined in similar ways. These findings are encouraging because they indicate that the majority of students surveyed, both males and females, maintain a basic awareness and understanding of the existence of sex discrimination in their high school.

Research Question Five

Research question five asked students to describe any sexually discriminative events they experienced or observed exhibited by their high school teachers. Figures 4.1-4.7 (pp. 49, 52-53, 55, 57, 61-62) report students’ accounts of sex discrimination they experienced and observed. Analysis of students’ responses revealed distinct differences in content between females’ and males’ descriptions. As a result, the data have been reported separately by gender to aid in the comparison between males’ and females’ reports.

Findings reveal that the most frequently reported types of sexually discriminative events students described experiencing and observing reflect many of the gender-related themes identified in the gender literature (e.g., females being treated as if they are unintelligent, males receiving lower grades than females). Females described instances in which they experienced and observed their teachers treating them as if

they are unintelligent. In a study by Belenky et al., females described the same types of experiences in school: "Most of the women reported that they had often been treated as if they were stupid" (p.194). Likewise, males' perceptions that females are generally receive better grades is supported by the literature. Sadker & Sadker (1994) claim that "from elementary school through high school, boys receive lower report card grades" (p.221).

Another finding of this study is that male and female students recognized and described the same types of sexually discriminative behaviors exhibited toward female students. For example, females identified (for themselves and other females) that they are often treated unfairly in P.E. class, as well as being treated as if they are unintelligent. Males, in their observations of sex discrimination exhibited toward female students, reported the exact same types of behaviors (refer to Figures 4.2, 4.4, & 4.7--pp.52, 55, 62).

The results of males' accounts of sex discrimination indicate that males' experienced and observed some similarity in behavior exhibited by teachers toward themselves and other male students (see Figures 4.3, and 4.5--pp.53, 57). For example, males' claimed they experienced and observed teachers "showing more attention to females" than to males. In addition, females identified that teachers' often "favored female students" (e.g., allowing them special treatment and opportunities). This study concludes that, overall, male and female students recognize and describe many similar types of sex discrimination exhibited by teachers toward males.

Themes in Students' Open-Ended Responses

Throughout the study various "themes" emerged, regardless of whether the respondent was male or female. Analysis of the open-ended response categories revealed ten general themes of sexual discrimination that students reported experiencing and/or observing exhibited by their high school teachers (5 female themes, and 5 male themes). When compared to the literature surveyed, the majority of respondents' themes paralleled the literature in a way that amazed this researcher.

Themes Relating to Females

Theme 1: Females Treated as if Unintelligent

Females reported being treated as if they were unintelligent in both their own experiences and observations of other females' experiences. (see Figures 4.2, and 4.4--pp.52, 55). Likewise, males also made this observation of females' sexually discriminative experiences (see Figure 4.7, p.62). This finding is similarly reflected in Sadker & Sadker's research:

Study after study has shown that adults, both teachers and parents, underestimate the intelligence of girls. Teachers' beliefs that boys are smarter in mathematics and science begin in the earliest school years . . . These perceptions persist throughout every level of education and are transmitted to the children. Girls, especially smart girls, learn to underestimate their ability" (Sadker & Sadker, 1994, p.95).

Belenky et al., (1986) further assert that these types of experiences cause females to underestimate their abilities.

Theme 2: Females Treated Unfairly in P.E. Classes

Similar to theme one, both males and females recognized that oftentimes “females are treated unfairly in P.E. classes” (Figures 4.2, 4.4, and 4.7 reflect these results--pp.52, 55, 62). This theme is supported by Sadker & Sadker (1994). For instance, one of the females in the Sadker’s study claimed:

I had a sexist gym teacher last year. He was constantly putting down the girls in my gym class. He would say things like, ‘You!’ pointing to a girl, ‘Get out of the way! Mark actually is trying to make a basket.’ He hardly ever called the girls by name, and no matter how hard we tried, he used to say we were lazy” (p.106, 1994).

This example closely resembles the descriptions that females in this study shared regarding the sex discrimination they experienced and observed exhibited by their teachers.

Theme 3: Females Received Higher Grades

Both males and females made reference to “females receiving higher grades” as a common type of sex discrimination exhibited by their teachers (refer to Figures 4.3, 4.5, 4.6, and 4.7--pp.53, 57, 61-62).

Amazingly enough, this trend is substantiated in the literature. For example, Richmond-Abbott (1983) claims:

The sex of the teacher giving the grades does not seem to be as important as whether the child receiving the grades is a boy or a girl” (p.134).

Bate (1988) also supports this finding, “girls perform better on the average in most school subjects” (p.144). However, Bate further states that “boys win more attention from teachers as well as from other boys and girls” (1988, p.144).

Theme 4: Negative Comments/Remarks Made Toward Females

Another theme that was identified was “negative comments/ remarks made toward females.” Results of the study show that females not only experienced this type of sexually discriminative behavior, but they observed other female students being treated this way by teachers. Males also described this as one of the ways in which they observed females being discriminated against. In their text, Failing at Fairness, Sadker & Sadker (1994) describe the experiences of one female that are very similar to the reports found in this study:

A lot of my female students complained about a science teacher who persisted in referring to them as ‘dizzy’ or ‘ditzzy’ or ‘airhead.’ He often told the class ‘You can’t expect these girls to know anything (p.95).

Theme 5: Inappropriate Sexual Behavior Toward Females

Results of this study reveal that male and female students both described instances of “inappropriate sexual behavior toward females” being exhibited by their high school teachers (refer to Figures 4.3, 4.4, and 4.7--pp.53, 55, 62). This theme supports previous findings in Sadker & Sadker’s (1994) research. In their experience, the Sadkers relate that “although sexually harassing remarks, stories, and jokes occur only occasionally in classrooms, female silence is the norm . . . girls grow quieter as they grow older” (1994, p.10). Many of the females in this study identified inappropriate sexual comments and advances exhibited by their teachers as being very damaging to them.

Themes Relating to Males

Theme 6: Males Called Upon More Often/Received More Attention From Teachers

An interesting theme found in this study is that females described teachers exhibiting sex discrimination by “calling on male students more often” and “giving males more attention.” However, males did not identify these behaviors as sexually discriminative experiences that they observed exhibited toward female students (see Figures 4.2, and 4.4--pp.52, 55). Literature surrounding gender-bias support the theme that males generally are called on more often and receive more attention from teachers. Bate (1988) simply states, “boys win more attention from teachers” (p.144). Yet, even more disturbing are Wood’s (1994) claims that these types of behaviors are common throughout all levels of education:

From preschool through graduate education, teachers pay more attention to male students (ex: individual instruction higher) (p.215).

Theme 7: Males Disciplined More Strictly

Both males and females in this investigation mentioned that “males are more strictly disciplined than females.” This theme was especially evident in males’ own experiences of sex discrimination, as well as in their observations of sex discrimination exhibited toward other males (refer to Figures 4.3, 4.5, 4.6, and 4.7--pp.53, 57, 61-62).

The theme of males being disciplined more strictly than females (for the same behaviors) is also a common one discussed among researchers (e.g., Brophy, 1985; Lips, 1991; Sadker & Sadker, 1994). Brophy (1985) recognized this theme in education:

It is true that teachers criticize and punish boys more often than girls for misbehavior, and that they initiate interactions with them more frequently in order to give them procedural instructions, to check their progress on assignments or in general to monitor and control their activities (p.120, cited in Wilkinson & Marrett, 1985).

Sadker & Sadker (1994) assert that teachers expect males to be “troublemakers,” and they treat them accordingly:

so pervasive is the concern over male misbehavior that even when a boy and a girl are involved in an identical infraction of the rules, the male is more likely to get the penalty (p.201).

Lips (1991) further relates that males do receive more criticism than females.

Theme 8: More Opportunities Given to Males

Both male and female students report that “males are given more opportunities” by teachers than females (see Figures 4.2, 4.3, and 4.7-- pp.52, 53, 62). This theme is acknowledged in the literature as a common experience in the educational sphere. For example, Lips (1991) states:

Teachers allow boys to talk and to interrupt more than they do girls, thus ensuring that more time will be spent on boys’ than on girls’ questions . . . Teachers interact more with boys” (p.79).

Sadker & Sadker (1994) echo this finding:

Over the course of years the uneven distribution of teacher time, energy, attention, and talent, with boys getting the lion’s share, takes its toll on girls (p.1).

Theme 9: Males Treated Unfairly in P.E. Classes

In this study, a theme emerged that was not supported by the literature. Males reported observing that other male students were

“treated unfairly in P.E. classes” (refer to Figure 4.5, p.57). The consensus of the males identifying this sexually discriminative behavior is that males are expected to work harder and perform better in P.E. classes than females. The only literature that discusses unfair treatment in P.E. classes concerned the experiences of female students. Thus, a question arises as to whether males’ experiences of sex discrimination in P.E. classes are common among male students in general, or whether this finding is unique to this investigation.

Theme 10: Males Given Higher Grades

Another interesting theme, in contrast to the literature, is “males are given higher grades than females.” Females surveyed in this study indicated that they experienced and observed males being treated more leniently with respect to grades (see Figures 4.2, and 4.4--pp.52, 55).

As previously mentioned, the literature supports the claim that females are generally given higher grades throughout their educational years; however, the literature does not endorse this theme that “males are given higher grades.” For example, Sadker & Sadker (1994) maintain that “from elementary school through high school, boys receive lower report card grades” (p.221). Therefore, the conclusion emerges that further research needs to be conducted in this area in order to investigate the generalizability of this theme.

Summary

The fact that males could recognize and describe sex discrimination exhibited toward females, and vice versa, seems to lead to an important conclusion. Students in this study were aware of sexually discriminative instances that occurred in their high school; they were

aware of not only their own experiences of sex discrimination, but they were cognizant of the sexually discriminative experiences that were exhibited toward other students of the same sex and of the opposite sex.

Overall, the content of females' reports of sex discrimination they experienced is different than what males reported. Females' responses were centered more around instances in which they were made to feel "unintelligent" or "incapable" (e.g., in P.E. classes). These types of experiences are closely related to issues of students' self-esteem and self-concept, thereby resulting in greater potential damage to females' overall self-concept and identity. As Lips (1991) states, "The socialization of females and males differs from childhood onward: Females, in contrast to males, are taught that their actions do not make a difference" (p.77). Unfortunately, females often report experiencing this type of treatment from their teachers in the school (as evidenced by the findings of this study). If females are being taught that their actions aren't valued, and perceive that teachers regard them as unintelligent, then the belief that females' self-esteem is in danger is confirmed.

Males, on the other hand, described experiencing and observing instances of sex discrimination that related more to unfair policies and rules. For example, males frequently identified being "disciplined more strictly than females." The literature reflects this finding. Males are generally subjected to more frequent and stricter discipline by their teachers; however, these types of experiences do not have the same devaluing effect on males' self-esteem that females' experiences of sex discrimination have.

When the results of the closed and open-ended survey questions are combined, an overall conclusion emerges. Albeit that male and

female students report experiencing and observing sex discrimination exhibited by their teachers with similar degrees of frequency, the content of the sexually discriminative messages they receive is often very different. Many researchers discuss the internal messages that males and females develop as a result of sexually discriminative teaching practices (e.g., Hall & Sandler, 1982; Safir et al., 1992; Wood, 1994). In a national survey conducted by the American Association of University Women, in 1990, findings indicated that there is a definite gap between males' and females' self-esteem:

As these boys and girls matured, the gap became a divide, a vast gulf that revealed troubling differences in how males and females feel about themselves" (Sadker & Sadker, 1994, p.78).

In addition, Sadker & Sadker (1994) relate that females' underestimate their potential and ability in school.

This study's results raise a concern regarding the potential for future damage to females' self-esteem. The types of sexually discriminative experiences that females report are alarming. For educators, there should exist a concern for the well-being and equality of education for all students. Nonetheless, this study indicates that females are indeed the group most at risk due to teachers' sexually discriminative behaviors.

Although this study discovered that males and females reported experiencing and observing low levels of sex discrimination exhibited by their high school teachers, the problem of gender bias in education remains. According to Ivy & Backlund (1994), the consensus among scholars is that the educational climate remains relatively unchanged; there have been only small increments of improvement over the past ten

years. The results of this investigation help narrow the gaps identified in the literature and support the call for further investigation of gender-bias in the high school. As long as students continue to experience and observe sex discrimination exhibited by their teachers, both male and female students will continue to be shortchanged in their educational careers.

Suggestions for Dealing With Gender-Bias

This study reveals that, overall, the majority of male and female students sampled experienced sex discrimination exhibited by their high school teachers with a similar degree of frequency. Consistent with previous gender research, this study provides evidence that schools, teachers, parents, and communities alike need to be concerned about the sexually discriminative behaviors that many students (both male and female) are being subjected to. For example, students in this study have reported that they not only experienced sex discrimination themselves, but they observed their teachers exhibiting sexually discriminative behaviors toward other students of the same sex, as well as toward students of the opposite sex. Since the majority of the sexually discriminative behaviors students identified in this investigation reflect themes presented in the literature, it seems that suggestions for dealing with gender-bias, offered by theorists recognized in the field of gender-research, would be appropriate.

Many researchers have offered “prescriptions” regarding how educators can battle gender-bias in the classroom (e.g., Carelli, 1988; Houston, 1985; Romatowski & Trepanier-Street, 1987; Stitt, 1988; Wood, 1994). Upon review of the literature, four themes emerged regarding ways in which educators may battle gender-bias: (1) teachers

need to be responsible for alerting their students to the existence of gender-bias; (2) teachers need to be aware of the vocabulary they use in the classroom (avoid using the generic “he” to refer to both males and females, etc.); (3) teachers need to present texts and curriculum materials that are inclusive of both males and females; and (4) teachers need to work toward creating a “gender-sensitive” environment, rather than a “gender-free” environment.

First, teachers need to help students become more aware of gender-bias, sex-role stereotyping, and the different forces that influence “attitudes, thinking and behavior” (Carelli, 1988, p.13). In addition, teachers can aid students in examining their own beliefs and attitudes regarding gender-related issues (Romatowski & Trepanier-Street, 1987). These types of teaching methods acknowledge the fact that children may bring gender-biased beliefs into the classroom with them; however, they recognize that teachers still have the ability to impact their students’ perceptions. According to Eccles & Blumenfeld (1985), children bring gender roles and stereotypes to school and maintain such beliefs until they are taught to examine them and “reconsider their validity . . . If teachers are guilty of sexism, it is their failure to get students to reconsider these beliefs that condemns them” (cited in Wilkinson & Marrett, 1985, p.87).

Second, teachers need to recognize the impact their language has on shaping their students’ perceptions, abilities, and self-concepts (Jett-Simpson & Maslund, 1993; Pottker & Fishel, 1977). Wood (1994) claims that the generic “he” (a representation of society’s male-dominated language) often creates the perception that females are regarded as separate or as exceptions to the norm. Research has indicated that the

use of gender-biased language by teachers may be reduced through “relatively simple attempts to increase their sensitivity to the problems of such language (Richmond & Dyba, 1982) and that students of teachers who consciously use a generic “she” will model that usage” (Richmond & Gorham, p.147).

Third, teachers need to present texts and curriculum materials that are inclusive of both males and females. Wood (1994) states that gender-biased curricular materials:

reflect and perpetuate the general social practice of making women invisible. When we do not learn of women’s contributions, the ways they shaped history, science, and literature, their activities, and the impact of events on women, then we misunderstand our collective life (p.214).

Changes in attitude and perception may occur in the classroom through the effective use of “nonsexist resources” (Romatowski & Trepanier-Street, 1987, p.18). Theorists claim that teachers who incorporate non-sexist teaching materials may make a significant contribution to the reduction or elimination of children’s sex-role stereotypes (Stitt, 1988).

Fourth, teachers need to create a “gender-sensitive” atmosphere, rather than a “gender-free” atmosphere. The term “gender-sensitive,” in regards to teaching, is defined as instruction that presents “balanced content that highlights the strengths of traditionally masculine and feminine supervisory inclinations” (Wood & Lenze, p.16). Houston (1985) recommends that teachers pay attention to gender when they can prevent traditional gender stereotypes or promote equality among the sexes. This type of teaching approach acknowledges that gender-biases do exist; however, the goal is to work toward valuing both male’s and female’s attitudes and perceptions. By contrast, the “gender-free” teaching approach encourages teachers to ignore gender altogether. In

such an atmosphere, educators are encouraged to “eliminate any gender differences in achievements (in the class-room) in the hopes of creating a kind of gender-blindness” (Houston, 1985, p.364). Houston (1985) further states that the “gender-free” style of teaching may have two serious effects: (1) it is likely to create a context which continues to favor the dominant group; and (2) it undermines certain efforts which may be needed to realize an “equalization of educational opportunities” (p.365). Therefore, gender-sensitive atmospheres are encouraged because they acknowledge the differences that exist between males and females while incorporating curriculum materials and examples that appeal to both genders.

Discussion of Limitations Concerning the Representativeness and Generalizability of This Study's Findings

Although the value of this study has been articulated in the introduction of this investigation, there are limitations of this research. To begin, the generalizability of this study's sample population may be difficult to assess. Due to time limitations (and limited finances), a genuinely random, stratified sample population was hard to obtain for this investigation. The sample gathered was random and stratified only to the extent that students had an equal chance of being selected (and of being of different backgrounds) in the initial data collection. However, due to the narrowing of the collected sample to 18, 19, and 20 year-olds, not all students truly had an equal probability of being included in the final sample used for this research analysis. Weisberg and Bowen (1977) would most likely classify this study's sampling procedure as nonprobability, haphazard sampling. Nonprobability, haphazard sampling makes use of the most available population (i.e., attitudes of a

class), but there are no guarantees that the population is representative of a wider group. The possibility exists that the sample may produce representative results. Still, it is difficult to generalize these findings (with any certainty) to a larger, more randomly stratified population.

A possible limitation of this study is that it does not sample today's high school students and their perceptions of sex discrimination they experienced or observed exhibited by their teachers. Due to the scope of this study (time limitations), it was not feasible to use current high school students as a sample population for this investigation. However, this study attempted to do the next best thing. The sample group collected for this research was limited to first and second-year college students between the ages of 18-20 years. The goal of the researcher was to obtain responses from students who had just recently graduated from high school. Therefore, the younger the age of the respondent, the greater probability that he/she will be able to recall instances of sex discrimination more easily (with greater accuracy and clarity).

The impact and significance of economic (class) differences between participants was not a factor in this investigation. As previously mentioned, it is difficult to study several interlocking variables at once (e.g., class, race, gender, age, sexuality, etc.). However, the literature indicates that economic differences between individuals may have a profound impact on the way they perceive and interact with their surroundings (also, one's class frequently limits one's "access" to opportunities and privileges that shape and foster our emotional and physical development) (Cyrus, 1993). Yet, economic differences are not

the only institutionalized differences that maintain a stronghold on our society and its individuals.

Race and ethnicity are other important areas of influence worthy of investigation. In this analysis, race and ethnicity were identified in the demographic data requested from participants (in order to determine whether those variables had an effect on the type or frequency of responses given). After analyzing the data, it appeared as though the significance of race and ethnicity regarding student responses in this study could not be generalized due to the limited number of respondents who indicated they were other than "Caucasian." For example, only 21 of the 149 subjects identified themselves as being "non-Caucasian" (5 females, 16 males). Of those 21, twelve separate ethnic "labels of preference" were identified. This sample is simply too small to function as a reliable predictor variable influencing the types of responses given.

Another concern is the education of the students sampled. It was difficult to determine what impact a student's level of education (in this case, undergraduate level) had on their range and types of response. Since the respondents in this investigation were all college-aged students from the same western university, there was a limitation concerning the generalizability of findings. The likelihood exists that not all individuals (from an age/experience-stratified sample) would respond in the same manner as an 18-20 year old college student from the west coast would.

There have also been some debates as to the validity and reliability of self-report findings. The self-report aspect of the methodology in this study was evident, due to the fact that the students were asked to fill out their own responses to the survey questionnaire. Since the questionnaires were filled out by "untrained respondents" who had never been

introduced to the survey questionnaire before, and probably would not see it again, some researchers may argue that the subjects were given no incentive to provide completely truthful or thoughtful answers. However, there was no indication that the respondents surveyed in this study had an incentive not to be truthful. Both validity and reliability may be questioned when self-report methods are used; however, this experiment did increase its data collection reliability to a degree. The primary researcher was present for all data collection times; this encouraged a high rate of return from respondents and provided reassurance and clarification of the instrument. Some theorists argue that the presence of the researcher may bias the subjects' responses. In this study, the researcher attempted to control for the highest possible accuracy of self-report responses: (1) by remaining present throughout all data collection times, and (2) by stressing the voluntary and anonymous nature of any participation solicited for this investigation.

Nevertheless, due to several limitations of this investigation, the generalizability of this study's findings may be called into question when projected onto wider, more stratified, populations. It is this researcher's belief that until similar research studies are conducted nationwide to produce a base for comparison of research findings, the generalizability of this study's results may be arguable when applied to populations outside this western university.

Suggestions for Future Research

A number of different replications of this study could be investigated in the future. More research could be conducted regarding the interaction between the sex of the teacher versus the sex of the student in relation to the amount of sexually discriminative behavior

that is exhibited. The current literature in this area does not agree. Several studies claim that the sex of the teacher has no bearing on the amount of sex discrimination that is exhibited toward male and female students (BenTsvi-Mayer et al., 1989; Brophy, 1985; Ivy & Backlund, 1994; Richmond-Abbott, 1983). However, the findings of this study support Wood's (1994) research--the sex of the teacher does appear to have an influence on the amount of sex discrimination that is exhibited toward male and female students. It would also be interesting to investigate the characteristics of the teachers that students identify as being sexually discriminative (e.g., age, race, ethnicity).

This study could be replicated using current high school students as subjects and compare those findings to the results gathered from this study.

Replication of this study could be conducted on students of all ages (elementary through graduate level), providing that slight adjustments of the instrument are made to cater to the level of students' understanding. It would be interesting to compare the responses gathered from students many ages to discern the age-range at which students begin to recognize and describe instances of sex discrimination that they experience and observe.

Future research could be conducted using a larger, more stratified sample group. The subjects used in this study were 18-20 yr. olds from the same western university. In order to create more generalizable results, similar studies could be conducted nationwide.

It would be beneficial to conduct a longitudinal study of students' perceptions and experiences of sex discrimination in their school. Researchers could explore the content, range, and intensity of students'

experiences of sex discrimination over the course of their educational career.

Future investigations could examine the relationships of race, ethnicity, and class on male and females' experiences of sex discrimination exhibited by their high school teachers. A version of this study could focus on the possible influences of race and class on students' perceptions of sex discrimination they experienced or observed exhibited by their high school teachers.

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(4)

APPENDICES

APPENDIX A
Survey Questionnaire

5) How sensitive was your school to situations of sexual discrimination like the ones you describe:

- Not at all sensitive
 Somewhat sensitive
 Very sensitive

Please elaborate on your response:

6) Please feel free to provide any additional comments:

7) Your age: _____

8) Ethnicity/Race: _____ Country of National Origin: _____

9) High School graduation date: _____ 19__

10) Approximate number of students in your graduating class: _____

11) High School: Public

Private

Other (Please specify): _____

A synopsis of this study will be available at Shepard Hall Rm.#104 after May 20, 1995.
Thank you for your participation.

5) How sensitive was your school to situations of sexual discrimination like the ones you describe:

- Not at all sensitive
 Somewhat sensitive
 Very sensitive

Please elaborate on your response:

6) Please feel free to provide any additional comments:

7) Your age: _____

8) Ethnicity/Race: _____ Country of National Origin: _____

9) High School graduation date: _____ 19__

10) Approximate number of students in your graduating class: _____

11) High School: Public

Private

Other (Please specify): _____

A synopsis of this study will be available at Shepard Hall Rm.#104 after May 20, 1995.
Thank you for your participation.

APPENDIX B
Human Subjects Approval Form

OFFICE OF DEAN OF RESEARCH



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November 29, 1994

Principal Investigator:

The following project has been approved for exemption under the guidelines of Oregon State University's Committee for the Protection of Human Subjects and the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services:

Principal Investigator: Joanne B. Engel

Student's Name (if any): Catherine L. Hostetler

Department: Education

Source of Funding: _____

Project Title: Students Perceptions of Equity in High School

Comments: Please add your name to the informed consent document (e.g., "Hello. I am Cathy Hostetler and I am conducting a research study regarding...")

A copy of this information will be provided to the Chair of the Committee for the Protection of Human Subjects. If questions arise, you may be contacted further.

Redacted for privacy

Mary E. Nunn
 Sponsored Programs Officer

cc: CPHS Chair

APPENDIX C
Informed Consent Document

Informed Consent Document

Hello. My name is Cathy Hostetler, and I am conducting a research study regarding males' and females' perceptions of equity in the high school classroom. I will be passing out a brief survey questionnaire. You will notice that I am handing out two colors of questionnaires--green and yellow. The green questionnaires are for the females, and the yellow questionnaires are for the males. These survey questionnaires are to be completed voluntarily and anonymously--I will not be using people's names in this study, so I do not want anyone to put his/her name on the colored questionnaires.

In addition to the questionnaires, I will be distributing a separate sheet of white paper called the "interview volunteer" sheet. If anyone would like to further participate in this study by volunteering to be considered for an random interview, please complete the information requested on the white sheet. Again, these white sheets of paper are to be filled out only by those students who would be willing to participate in a random interview process to be conducted at a later date.

There is a short list of instructions at the beginning of the survey questionnaire. If you have any questions, please let me know. When you have completed the questionnaire, please return it to the box marked "questionnaires" (this is true for both green and yellow questionnaires). Those students who wish to participate in the random interview process, please return the white sheet to the box marked "random interviews." Thank you for your participation in this study.

APPENDIX D

**Comprehensive List of Open-Ended
Response Categories**

Comprehensive List of Open-Ended Response Categories

Q#1: What sorts of actions, beliefs, and/or behaviors do you believe constitute sexual discrimination in the classroom?

Females

- Favoritism based on one's sex = (25)
- Putting down either sex verbally and/or physically --(e.g., making jokes, ridiculing behavior toward one sex, teachers speaking to females in a demeaning manner) = (19)
- Giving more attention and opportunities to one sex = (15)
- Inappropriate touching, flirting toward females = (10)
- Giving higher grades/points to one sex = (7)
- Leniency toward one ("better") sex = (6)
- One sex called upon more often = (5)
- Questions aimed toward males not females = (1)
- Always referring to "he" for dominant positions = (1)
- Expecting more from one sex = (1)
- More support given to males = (1)
- Regarding genders as having different capabilities = (1)
- Believing that males are dominant = (1)
- Treating students differently in P.E. class because of their sex = (1)

Males

- Favoritism based on ones' sex = (26)
- Putting down/demeaning someone because of his/her sex--(e.g., making rude comments, jokes, gestures, or actions toward a certain sex) = (24)
- Giving higher grades (more points) to one sex = (20)
- Giving more attention and opportunities to one sex = (16)
- Leniency toward one ("better") sex = (8)
- Inappropriate behavior, touching, flirting toward someone due to his/her sex = (7)
- Calling on one sex more often = (5)
- No response = (4)
- Stricter discipline toward one sex = (3)
- Ignoring a student because of his/her sex = (3)
- Lack of respect toward someone due to his/her sex = (1)

Q#2b: How often did you experience sexual discrimination exhibited by teachers during your last two years in high school?

Females

- Females treated unfairly in P.E. classes = (12)
- Talking down to females, treating them as if they = (9)
- More attention/opportunities given to males = (7)
- Inappropriate physical comments, jokes, gestures = (5)
- No response/can't recall = (27)
- Asking only males to do certain tasks/activities = (3)
- Leniency toward female students = (3)
- Lower grades given to females = (2)
- Assuming males have stronger physical ability = (1)
- Males given more scholarships = (1)
- Teachers finish females' projects/work for them = (1)
- Females treated badly/ignored in physics class = (1)
- Inappropriate touching by a male teacher = (1)

Males

- No response/can't recall = (41)
- Higher grades given to females = (11)
- More attention given to females = (11)
- Teachers (male) favor good-looking = (5)
- Stricter policies/rules for male students = (4)
- Leniency toward female students = (4)
- Teachers (female) flirting with male students = (2)
- More opportunities/higher grades given = (2)
- More sympathetic to females = (1)
- Math teacher didn't call on male students = (1)
- Teachers didn't trust males as much as females = (1)
- Female were allowed to choose topics first = (1)
- Nicer facilities (locker rooms/bathrooms) for females = (1)
- Teachers liked female students more = (1)

Q#3b: How often did you observe sexual discrimination exhibited by teachers toward other students of the same sex during your last two years in high school?

Females

- No response/can't recall = (26)
- Talking down to females, treating them as if they = (11)
- Females treated unfairly in P.E. classes = (7)
- Inappropriate comments/actions toward females = (5)
- More attention given to males = (5)
- Males' work graded easier than females = (4)
- Discipline more lenient toward females = (3)
- Activities/opportunities separated by gender = (3)
- Teachers gave more scholarships to males = (1)
- Teachers were harder on females = (1)
- More encouragement was given to males = (1)
- Teachers were more lenient with males = (1)

Males

- No response/can't recall = (44)
- Discipline more lenient toward females = (13)
- More attention given to females = (10)
- Favoring females' opinions/work = (7)
- Talking down to males, treating them with less = (5)
- Females given higher grades = (2)
- Males treated unfairly in P.E. classes = (2)
- Called on females more often than males = (1)
- Teachers picked on guys/singled them out - (1)
- Males' opinions were ignored = (1)
- More attention was given to male students = (1)
- Females were considered smarter = (1)

Q#4b: How often did you observe sexual discrimination exhibited by teachers toward students of the opposite sex during your last two years in high school?

Females

- No response/can't recall = (37)
- Teachers favoring female students = (7)
- Making degrading remarks/put downs = (7)
- Discipline more strict toward males = (3)
- Teachers favoring male students = (3)
- Teachers more lenient toward females = (2)
- Females given higher grades = (2)
- Teachers ignored males in class = (1)
- Girls were regarded as smarter than males = (1)
- More attention/opportunities were given to males = (1)
- Different behavior was expected for males than for females = (1)

Males

- No response/can't recall = (39)
- Teachers treating females as less intelligent = (18)
- Females treated unfairly in P.E. classes = (12)
- Inappropriate sexual comments/actions = (8)
- Favoring male students = (3)
- Teachers more lenient toward males = (3)
- More attention given to females = (3)
- Allowing different activities for males = (2)
- Females given higher grades = (2)
- More attention was shown to males = (1)
- Teachers were more lenient with females = (1)
- Inappropriate behavior (sexual) toward males = (1)