
Gender Equity in the New Zealand Curriculum: A change in focus

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Recent discussion about gender equity has been concerned with the needs of boys. This paper outlines the context for gendered education in New Zealand, which demonstrates that males have been privileged and have dominated. It discusses the hegemonic regime for girls and women in schools, arguing that girl's education is still subordinate to boys, and that women are far less likely to become principals. It discusses boy's domination of classroom time and talk, and debates the equity issue now that boys are not achieving as well as they previously were.

Clarifying Terms

Before beginning to examine these issues, it is necessary to clarify some of the key words used. Firstly, it is important to discuss the term 'gender'. Gender is a construction. The notion of gender encompasses the beliefs, values, roles, expectations and practices which are associated with being either male or female within a given cultural context. Pihama and Mara contend that gender should not be viewed separately from wider power relations, and that gender encompasses issues of ethnicity, class and sexuality (Pihama, & Mara, 1994). Our understanding of feminine and masculine behaviours and characteristics are learned. These are neither biologically determined nor fixed, but they develop, change, are challenged and resisted. Understandings about what it 'means' to be masculine or feminine are shaped and reshaped over time, in different contexts and through changing values and experiences (Allard et al, 1995):

Much of what we in Western society take for granted as 'natural' as regards sex and gender is not only socially constructed but is conceived in a way that is fundamentally androcentric, that is, seen from the point of view and prioritising the male gender (Paechter, 1998).

Secondly, it is essential to differentiate between equality of opportunity and equity. Equity is the achievement of fairness and justice. It is achieved for an individual or group, which is currently disadvantaged. The addressing of identified equity-needs

often requires unequal or different treatment in order to achieve equal or more appropriate outcomes.

Equity is not the same as equality, which presupposes sameness. The New Zealand Curriculum Framework (1993), implies treating boys and girls equally; equality, therefore is synonymous with sameness, whereas equality of opportunity presupposes a certain amount of difference. If there were no differences, or unequal rewards, there would be no need for equality of opportunity.

In order to provide equality of opportunity there must be differential rewards. It assumes not merely different conditions but unequal conditions (Coxon et al 1994:27).

The noun 'equity' surfaced in 1973 in Department of Education literature, but has appeared permanently in N Z Government documents since 1988. As the achievement of fairness and justice, it marries the notion of equal opportunity and equitable outcomes.

Thirdly, an appropriate definition of curriculum is from a feminist perspective:

Curriculum in its broadest sense may be defined as those activities and sets of meaning which are intentionally taught, or intended to be taught, and those activities and sets of meaning which, although not intentionally taught, are in effect learned (Middleton, 1980:25).

Gender Differences: The current scene

The June 1999 New Zealand Education Gazette's feature article is devoted to boys. The Education Review Office is about to release a report on boy's education, and the Ministry of Education is working on a literature review that will identify strategies used to address gender differences in learning and social outcomes:

Increasingly educators have decided they need to know more about why boys behave and learn as they do and may have adopted strategies to help boys get more out of the education system (Gerritsen, 1999).

Why is there this interest in boys' achievement when men can still earn a better living wage than women can? Men still own and operate most of what can be claimed and controlled. Men make up fewer than 50% of the world's population, yet they own

somewhere between 88% and 95% of the world's wealth. Angier (1999), contends that the playing field in gender relations remains about as level as the surface of Mars. In New Zealand, women comprise no more than 21% of MPs; 9% of High Court judges; 4% of surgeons (excluding paediatricians) and 11% of partners in large law firms (Rourou, 1999). It is true that young women are staying at secondary school longer, and as a result are leaving more qualified than young men. Ministry of Education data shows that in 1996, 83.4% of females left school with formal qualifications compared with 75.3% in 1996. The figure for men in 1996 was 78.4%. Women even outnumber men in tertiary education; 56.9% of all tertiary graduates in 1996 were women. However, men tend to graduate with higher qualifications; in 1996, 17.4% graduated with a post-graduate award compared with 12.6% of women. Women are paid less than men are but the gap is closing. Women in full-time work earn 80% of their male counterparts (Horwood, 1999).

Critical Theory

The education system serves the interests of the dominant class. While the various theorists mentioned in this section focus on different aspects of schooling, they share the same underlying view, that "students are shaped by the experiences in schools to internalise or accept a subjectivity and a class position that leads to the reproduction of existing power relations and social and economic structures" (Weiler, 1988:10). This position is explained by reproduction theory, and is concerned with the processes through which existing social structures maintain and reproduce themselves.

Prior to the 1970's, the curriculum was not questioned when students 'failed'. If students were not succeeding, it was because of their own action or inaction. In the 1970s, critical theorists began to publish work which intimated that there were other reasons for failure. Bowles and Gintis, neo Marxist theorists and theorists of social reproduction, argued that what is learned in schools corresponds to what is needed in the work place - education is therefore delivered according to one's place in society. Young (1973), theorised that those in positions of power attempted to define what should be taken as knowledge. He used Marx's claim that education in a capitalist society is a tool of the ruling class interests (i.e. men). Young argued that the competitive academic curriculum served the wealthy classes, and that most others

were likely to fail. Hughes and Lauder, in their longitudinal study of Canterbury secondary schools, demonstrated that the education system in New Zealand serves the interests of the dominant classes (ref?).

Pierre Bourdieu theorised that schools reproduce society, and that the major function of education is the reproduction of social inequalities (Harker, 1990). In his concept of cultural capital, Bourdieu argued that, “the knowledge that is valued in schools, is the cultural knowledge of the bourgeois class. Thus the children of the dominant classes appear to be successful in school because of their natural intelligence, whereas in reality they rise because they already know what is valued” (in Weiler, 1988:6).

Feminists have used the concept of cultural capital in their discussion of how gender is produced and reproduced in schools under a system of patriarchy. Alison Jones, in her book, “At School I’ve got a Chance,” (1992) used Bourdieu’s theory. In Western feminist literature, the dominant group has, on the whole, been described as the patriarchy, which is defined as encompassing male ideologies, beliefs, culture and practices (Pihama and Mara, 1994:217).

Power: The patriarchy and hegemony

The experience of males and females in the classroom is different. The gender regime currently encountered by girls in our schools (and wider western society) is hegemonic: “It is so deeply embedded in social and cultural forms that most of the time it feels natural and inevitable” (Paechter 1998).

Hegemony is a concept, originally used in the work of Gramsci, which describes how the dominated become accomplices in their own domination. Hegemony is:

designed to explain how a dominant class maintains control by projecting its own particular way of seeing social reality so successfully that its view is accepted as common sense and as part of the natural order by those who in fact are subordinated to it (in Paechter, 1998).

Hegemony, according to Giroux (in Paechter, 1998) operates on individuals and groups in such a way as to make them agents of their own oppression. As an example, we see girls acting as helpers or believing in their own inability in mathematics and science, and giving up on trying to succeed.

Gender is constructed in such a way that it is built upon unequal power relations, where it is mainly boys who have access to enact and embody power. Power is everywhere in our schools, their structures and our relationships. According to Foucault (in Paechter, 1998) power does not emanate from one source but it is inscribed in our social forms, in our ways of being and in the spaces we inhabit. Foucault sees power as beginning in small interactions, spreading to wider social arena. He lays stress on the mechanisms through which power is exercised:

The ways in which gender is constructed in society are linked to the power relations that exist in society (Coxon et al 1994).

In gender studies the term patriarchy is generally used to denote power relations of men over women. Witz (1992), defines patriarchy “as a societal wide system of gender relations of male dominance and female subordination and the ways in which male power is institutionalised.” MacDonald (1995), states that “(P)atriarchy runs through those elements of our primary socialisation...It is embodied in social institutions, in culture, in social relationships and in language”.

Throughout history, men have undertaken most of the large-scale economic activities outside the home, whereas women’s activities have been largely domestic. Feudal and capitalist societies submerged women, since men owned most of the land and capital, and made laws of property to ensure that they held on to it. Women still have both the biological and cultural burden of childbearing and the customary responsibility for child rearing and domestic work.

Women in New Zealand, have been part of the global wave of feminisation of the workforce since World War Two. Women’s involvement in the labour force soared 182.5% between 1961 and 1991. It has been projected that by 2011 this upward trend will stabilise at around 8 women for every 10 men in the labour force (in McGregor, 1994).

New Zealand women dominate certain occupation, being confined to six traditionally female groups: typists, book keepers/cashiers, clerical workers, medical workers, teachers and shop assistants (Statistics N.Z, 1993). Women are unfairly restricted in appointment and promotion prospects in a male dominated professional world (Perkin, 1996).

Power relations in schools, too, are generally gendered. Although women form the majority of the work force in education, they are under-represented in its management.

In 1979, women in primary schools made up 63% of the primary teaching force, but only 5% of principals, 46% of assistant and deputy principals and 78% of scale A teachers. In contrast, in 1994, women made up 78% of the teaching staff, held 28% of the principal's positions, 69% of deputy or assistant principal's positions and 88% of basic scale A teaching positions (in Williams, 1995).

Helen Slyfield (1993) noted that although the percentage of principal's positions held by women has increased, the proportion of women in the primary service who hold principal's positions has remained constant at 3% (1985-1992). Williams (1995), stated that women currently have a 1 in 33 chance of becoming a principal, in comparison with a 1 in 3 chance for men.

A recently released report from the Ministry of Education (in Cassie, 1999) states that while women made up two thirds of the teaching workforce, they accounted for only 53% of the number of teachers promoted to principal in 1997. In the primary sector, where women make up 77% of the teaching staff, only 58% of principal promotions went to women.

Gender and Equity: An historical perspective

Prior to 1900, girls' learning was restricted, so as not to give women 'dangerous power and disturb their delicacy' (Fry, 1985). The Education Act of 1877 provided equal access to primary schools for girls and boys alike. This did not necessarily mean access to the same curriculum. Girls did needlework, callisthenics and domestic economy. Boys did drill and agriculture and were given extra arithmetic (being seen to have an 'extra need' and a 'greater aptitude').

The Manual and Technical Training Act of 1900 prescribed that boys were to do woodwork and girls cooking (to help them fulfil their natural function as wives and mothers). Also around this time, Dr. Lindo Ferguson wrote his report linking physical and nervous strain and eyesight problems in girls with anaemia, and blamed: an overburdened syllabus, scholarship examinations and excessive homework. He recommended that the curriculum for girls be confined to English, sewing, cookery, dressmaking, knitting and 'other such feminine accomplishments as do not come into a university curriculum'. This was so as not to put undue stress on the mothers of the next generation, or to upset the nervous balance of their heirs (Fry, 1985).

A few years later, Dr. Truby King (leader in infant and maternal health and founder of Plunket) launched an attack on the education of girls. 'Cram' led to pulmonary consumption. Brainwork was harmful and sapped a girl's strength, which she should be storing for motherhood. He aligned himself with the views of leading American psychologist and pedagogue, G. Stanley Hall, who accepted the evidence that women were capable of competing with men but advocated 'that it was necessary for the health of humanity to retard the education of girls and to keep them in the adolescent state nature intended for them' (in Fry, 1985).

Girls were therefore receiving messages in keeping with the expectations of society. Boys were to have more adventurous lives, they were more likely to be leaders, and they were better at mathematics. Girls were destined for the domestic sphere. The brighter girls, however, could aspire to be teachers.

World War I enabled women to 'temporarily' take on men's jobs, but afterwards any semblance of equality was abandoned. The expansion of co-educational secondary schools, in 1938, gave the illusion of equal opportunity. In 1939, Peter Fraser promised that the government would provide suitable and free education to every citizen, rich and poor, in town or country. He said that people should be educated to their full extent (Coxon et al 1994).

The Thomas Report of 1944, laid down a continuing prescription for schools to keep facilitating the production of a gendered social order (O'Neill, 1992). Domestic activity - mothercraft, housewifery, house planning, dress design, pattern making, clothing, and laundry work, cookery and meal planning - was prescribed in the Thomas Report.

The Currie Report of 1962 expressed ambivalence towards the value of post-primary education for young women, and commented on the differences in the educational achievement of girls and boys, but did not translate this into action. By this stage it was still not customary to give public expression to the needs of girls. It was believed that more could be achieved by quiet acquiescence.

By the 1970s there was still a marked polarisation in subject choice at senior level. Girls took arts and boys focused on sciences. Then came the Feminist Movement and with it a series of legislative changes (1972 Equal Pay Act, 1976 Matrimonial Property Act). In 1977 the Johnson Report acknowledged that discrimination towards

women existed. Equality at this stage was seen as desirable, but this did not necessarily mean any change in gender interaction was intended.

By the beginning of the 1980s, boys were still studying a different curriculum in secondary schools (in Jones et al, 1990). The 1987 Curriculum Review recommended non-sexist curricula based on equality or equal treatment for boys and girls and the 1988 Picot Report saw the noun 'equity' replacing equal educational opportunity. Equity, however, was not defined. A number of researchers published their findings around this time, including Newton, (in Sturrock, 1993) whose New Zealand based research confirmed that girls were not getting a fair share of teachers' attention

In 1989, the School Charters defined equity as focusing on fairness and individual development. The charters advocated unequal treatment of girls for equitable outcomes. In 1989 the *Countering Sexism* document was an overt attempt by the Department of Education to help modify sexist practices in schools.

Equity became the buzzword of educational rhetoric (which David Lange said should go hand in hand with efficiency and standards.) The 1989 establishment of the Education Review Office provided some impetus to the new notion of equity. Schools were to be monitored and held accountable for providing equitable outcomes for students (Coxon et al, 1994).

Feminists were beginning to question whether the existing school structure could ever accommodate their claims for genuine sexual equality:

Equitable education does not arise from girls' access to, insertion into, existing (male) knowledge and educational practices. Rather, 'equity' as liberation for girls demands emancipatory education for girls/women-in education, which is critically shaped by women's words and experiences. It is liberating (anti-sexist) rather than 'fair' (non-sexist) which radical feminists seek (Jones et al, 1990).

In the early 1990's Lockwood Smith announced that Boards of Trustees were permitted to remove requirements to work towards gender equity. The equity clauses in charters became a focus of local and nationwide political struggle. In 1992, the Girls' and Women's Section of the Ministry of Education was disestablished. This was an indication of the Government's lack of commitment to eliminating educational disparities between men and women (O'Neill, 1992).

Equity, Equality and Equitable Outcomes in the NZ Curriculum Post-1990

The Bill of Rights Act (1990) and The Human Rights Act (1993) embody critical principles of human rights which include freedom from discrimination. These, together with the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (1993), set out the rights of students to equal educational opportunities. The following paragraphs summarise recent rhetoric regarding gender in New Zealand curriculum documents.

In 1992 the Mathematics Curriculum was published. It stated that mathematics was 'for all' regardless of gender. It acknowledged girls' past failure to reach their potential and to see the applicability of mathematics in their own lives. It suggested that teachers design learning experiences that use girls' interests and strengths, and ones that involve them and give them confidence. The term 'equity' (as the achievement of fairness and justice, marrying the notion of equal opportunity and equitable outcomes) was not stated, but it was implied.

In 1993 the National Curriculum Framework was launched. Programmes were to be non-sexist, non-racist and non-discriminatory. "The New Zealand Curriculum provides all students with equal educational opportunities. It will recognise, respect and respond to the educational needs, experiences, interests and values of all students, both female and male" (Ministry of Education, 1993). Also in 1993, Boards of Trustees were required, through the National Education Goals, to identify and remove barriers to students' learning and so provide equal educational opportunities. One of the goals schools were required to work towards was: 'Equality of educational opportunity for all New Zealanders, by identifying and removing barriers to achievement' (National Education Goal 2). National Administration Guideline 1 states that: "In order to provide a balanced curriculum, each Board, through the Principal and staff, will be required to: analyse barriers to learning and achievement; and develop and implement strategies which address identified learning needs in order to overcome barriers to students' learning."

The Science Curriculum, published in 1994, advocates equality for all. In this document the term 'gender inclusive' is used:

A curriculum which is gender-inclusive acknowledges and includes the educational needs and experiences of girls equally with those of boys,

both in its content, and in the language, methods, approaches, and practices of teaching.

The Science Curriculum specifically talks about girls and the need to provide opportunities for them to: “learn science that they value; use their language strengths and co-operative learning skills; express their experiences, concerns, interests and opinions.” Although the need to provide opportunities for girls is highlighted here, the curriculum document does not imply that these opportunities should not be offered to boys as well. Again, equity is not mentioned.

The English Curriculum, also published in 1994, implies equality, recognises the gender-inclusive curriculum and quotes the NZ Curriculum Framework saying that it ‘provides all students with equal educational opportunities.’ This document discusses equitable outcomes and the need for equitable access to resources:

Although girls are more successful than boys in English at school, their attainments in English are not always transferred into the full range of vocational training and employment options. Boys, on the other hand, may be restricted because of lack of achievement in English. A gender-inclusive curriculum has a critical role to play in producing and maintaining equitable outcomes for all students...The programme should provide a supportive learning environment, in which girls and boys receive equitable access to resources, including teachers’ time and attention, technology, learning assistance, and a range of roles in group activities (Ministry of Education, 1994:13).

The Technology Curriculum (1995), and the Social Studies Curriculum (1997), are similar to the English document, reinforcing equality and gender inclusiveness. However, Social Studies spells out the need to focus more on the experiences of girls than in the past, in order to be truly gender-inclusive:

Many social studies curriculum materials have traditionally focused on the experiences of boys and men. The experiences of girls and women have often not been visibly represented, and, where they have been visible, have often been stereotyped or trivialised (Ministry of Education, 1997:22).

The Health and Physical Education Curriculum (1999), prescribes programmes that are gender-inclusive. The document also discusses equitable outcomes, stating that this curriculum:

Provides many opportunities for teachers and schools to address issues that specifically affect the learning experiences of girls or boys and to select learning outcomes that are equitable, regardless of gender, across all essential learning areas...Ensures that boys and girls have equitable access to resources, including teacher time, learning assistance, and technologies, across all learning activities (Ministry of Education, 1999).

Boys' Domination of Classroom Space, Time and Talk

Notwithstanding the rhetoric outlined in the previous section, males are still able to take up more space and have greater control over the use of their own and other's classroom time (Paechter, 1998). This section outlines some recent research in this area.

Boys gain preferential access to school resources, taking charge of scarce items of equipment. (in Paechter, 1998). They occupy the 'action zone' around the teacher giving them more potential eye contact with the teacher, something that is important in gaining teacher attention and the opportunity to speak in class (in Paechter, 1998). Boys are seen as more disruptive than girls are. Disruptive behaviour from a few, allows boys in general to claim more classroom time and attention, and often means that lessons are geared more towards the interests of boys than of girls (in Paechter, 1998).

A significant piece of research done in New Zealand on teacher-student interactions, is that (previously noted) by Newton. In 1988, Newton undertook research into the way morning talks or sharing times are constructed in primary classes. Her findings revealed that on average, over two-thirds of teacher attention in this context was received by boys. Boys were found to be more successful in gaining teacher attention than girls, which Newton believed parallels ways men interrupt everyday conversations (in Coxon et al, 1994). Newton's research illustrates that boys receive more negative and positive attention than girls do and that they receive positive reinforcements and rewards for behaviour which is considered normal for girls.

Spender (in Coxon et al, 1994) reiterates this by arguing that in mixed classrooms women and girls are marginalised by their male counterparts and denied speaking time.

Luke (1994), noted that in classrooms, boys out-talk girls by a ratio of 3:1, and girls' contributions are praised less than those of boys. Swann and Graddol (1994), also found that boys talked more than girls, in terms of the number of words uttered, the number of speaking turns they took and the number of interchanges they had with the teacher. Paechter summarises it this way:

It would appear, then, that girls are marginalised in two forms of classroom talk that are important in learning contexts: learning through collaborative discussion in mixed groups and class discussion with the teacher. This not only denies them the opportunity to work through their ideas and have them acknowledged and valued, but also gives them comparatively little experience of success in the comparative talk that often characterises mixed adult discussion, particularly in public arenas (Paechter, 1998: 25).

I asked my own class of 33 Year 5 and 6 students which gender was the more disruptive. 27 out of 30 (90%) students said that the boys were more disruptive. When asked, 'who has the most to say?' 9 out of 10 (90%) named one particular boy. In 1998, of the 410 entries which record infringements to our school rules in our school-wide behaviour management system, 320 (78%) were boys. In my report to the BOT for the first half of this year, there were 8 entries where girls were required to 'do a detention' because of a more serious incident (usually fighting or physically hurting others), compared with 48 entries for boys. The data shows that boys are six times more likely to take up teacher time and energy, in lunch-time detentions, than girls are.

These findings are consistent with the prevalent pattern of male domination in classroom interaction identified above, and also in Kelly's international review of 81 studies (in Sturrock, 1993). These studies show that teachers consistently interact more with boys than with girls despite the frequent contention of teachers that they treat both sexes the same.

Boys Underachievement

The recently released report of the Literacy Taskforce (Ministry of Education, 1999), declared that 'there is... sufficient evidence to show that boys are not doing as well as girls in our school system.' Maureen Rutledge, who carried out a long-term investigation into gender differences in educational performance, stated:

At every level of New Zealand schooling, evidence showed boys to be providing the majority of educational and behavioural problems. Records showed, for example, that boys predominate in special education classes, present 75% of speech problems, represent the majority of early school failures, suspendees and truants, comprise two-thirds of the pupils in the Reading Recovery programmes, and up to 90% of pupils assisted by Resource Teachers of Reading (Rourou, 1999).

This problem is not confined to New Zealand. Boys' underachievement is a concern all over the western world. In Britain, prominent educationalist, Professor Ted Wragg argued that 'As we enter the new millennium, it is the underachievement of boys that has become one of the biggest challenges facing society and schools (Rourou, 1999).

New Zealand educational administration remains male-oriented in key aspects: Teachers continue to organise their lessons primarily around the dominant needs and interests of boys. There is a continued bias in favour of males in most textbooks, teaching materials and early readers. Men continue to hold the majority of positions of power and policy making in New Zealand education (in Rourou, 1999).

Now, despite the imbalance of power in men's favour, we are asked to bolster male achievement. I believe this is a ploy, even a conspiracy, which asks teachers to act in an inequitable manner. From the Ministry of Education's Data Management Analysis Section:

Boys tend to be the focus of attention and activity, receiving more remediation, criticism and praise. They are given more opportunity to display their knowledge and are given more help, thus gaining positive feedback and developing confidence. Teachers are more knowledgeable concerning their male students and are therefore more likely to plan around their needs and interests (Sturrock, 1993).

This is not a picture of equity. Boys quantitatively and qualitatively dominate classrooms by controlling the what, how, and when of verbal interactions with the likely result that male interests, concerns, experiences, beliefs are the ones being discussed and shared (in Sturrock, 1993).

And now boys are failing. In her paper on reading, *Are Boys failing the System or is the System Failing Boys?*, Maureen Rutledge argues that New Zealand primary school classes may have to be restructured so that boys find their initial educational contacts less stressful (Rourou, 1999). The Education Review Office is asking schools what data they are collecting about the achievement of boys. Why this focus on boys? I have no recollection of ever being asked about the data we were collecting on the achievement of girls.

Conclusion

There have certainly been different outcomes of schooling for girls as for boys, but now it is boys that are to be seen as the focus of attention. Has the payoff for girls really been turned around? Has all the highlighting of the plight of girls worked, so that now they are more successful than boys? I think not. Despite the rhetoric of the earlier policy development around girls, we should not ignore the historical perspective of education and the continuing, uneven power relations in society.

Boys will change when they are helped to understand themselves better, are affirmed and valued 'as they are' and are given the tools to feel safe and equal around girls (in Yates, 1997).

Boys and men, whose power has long been far greater than that of girls and women, are being threatened. The increasing success of girls in some areas is having implications for boys. As soon as girls start succeeding it is seen as detrimental to boys, and moves are made to amend the situation. Will the small gains that girls have made, in comparison to boys, be lost? Will the term 'gender equity' with its thrust towards the achievement of fairness and justice be directed towards boys? Will there now be a need for the unequal or different treatment of boys (because they are seen as the group, which is currently disadvantaged) in order to achieve equal or more appropriate outcomes? It seems so. After all, hegemony works to perpetuate the status

quo and that status quo, as has been presented, is male dominance. Even the concept of gender has been conceived of from the male view point - prioritising men.

The dominant group, which the education system has always served in this country - and continues to serve - is Pakeha, middle-class men. This dominant group, (the patriarchy), still holds the power to instill their values, beliefs and ideas on the rest (among them, women, who remain subordinate, economically and socially). The education system is reproducing the power relations and social structures that have always existed.

Particularly since 1990, the curriculum in New Zealand has journeyed towards gender equity for girls. The Social Studies Curriculum (1997), for example, recognises that girls' and women's experiences have not been represented or have been trivialised. We have been directed to ensure that girls have equitable access of teacher time and attention, but we are fighting against a tide of history and a hegemonic regime that makes it very difficult.

Even as a feminist teacher, (who is hopefully aware,) I know it will take time and a deconstruction of the deeply held values and assumptions of society and of the hegemonic forces which preserve the status quo, before there are truly equal outcomes for both genders, in our society and in our schools.

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