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Mexican-American Concepts On Gender And Identity: A Teacher's Perspective In A Fifth Grade Classroom

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MEXICAN-AMERICAN CONCEPTS ON GENDER
AND IDENTITY: A TEACHER'S PERSPECTIVE IN
A FIFTH GRADE CLASSROOM

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Dedication

For my mother and father, Raquel and Roberto Soto, my brother Robert, my sister Klaudia, and my fiancée Richard, without their patience, love and support I would have not been able to complete this work.

For my teachers and professors who have given me the confidence to pursue my dreams and the courage to believe anything is possible.

Finally, for my students the greatest inspiration in my life, thank you.

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AND IDENTITY: A TEACHER'S PERSPECTIVE IN
A FIFTH GRADE CLASSROOM

by

CYNTHIA SOTO, B.A.

THESIS

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Abstract

This study primarily focuses on fifth-grade Mexican-American students and the factors that influence their views on gender and identity. Gender perspectives in the classroom have the potential to improve instruction and can positively affect students' motivations to learn.

Literature can also influence students' gender perceptions and also contribute to gender bias in the classroom. This study works toward creating a non-biased learning environment.

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Chapter I-Introduction

As a fifth- grade bilingual teacher, I have been given the opportunity to view a range of diverse student values and interests. Through teaching, I have been fortunate to have had an opportunity to develop and evolve within a valuable relationship with my students. I aspire to deepen and share my understanding about my experiences in the classroom as a way to strengthen my own and other educators' teaching practice. The primary purpose of this research is to deepen an understanding of Mexican-American student's gender perceptions in a fifth-grade classroom.

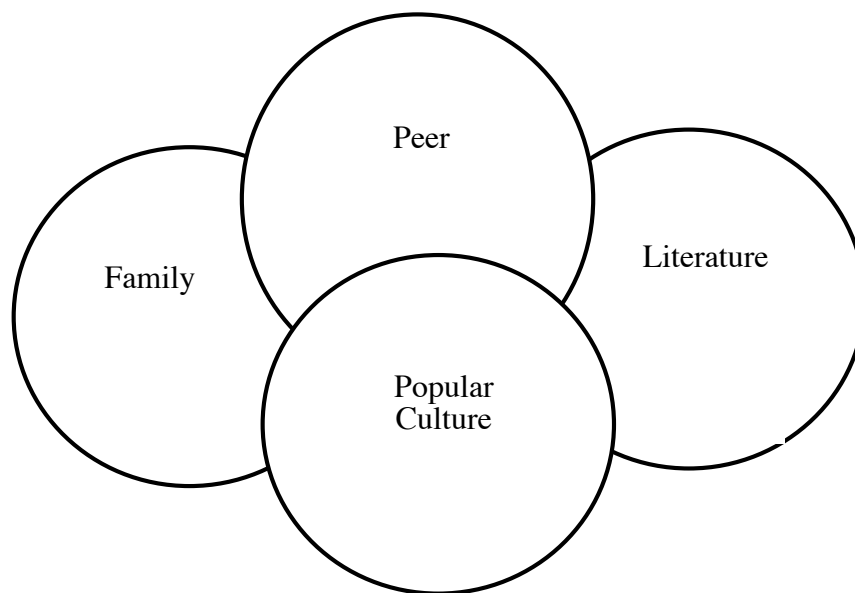
As I observed my students throughout the school year, it became evident that the students carried particular concepts of gender and identity. There were noticeable differences between the students' actions inside and outside the classroom. Observing my students engaging in hands-on activities, I found most of the girls would sweep and pick up the classroom when it was time for the activity to conclude, while the boys stayed off to the side watching. An outsider observing the students would assume that the process was a routine established by the teacher. In reality, the students themselves had formulated the cleaning process; however, the boys would participate in the science lab and the girls were just an audience. This situation, created by the students, did not offer equal opportunities to the students. I reflected upon these experiences as the basis for my study.

Students are influenced by multiple factors that define their gender roles. Some students carried conceptions that only applied to certain contexts. For example, one male student wondered whether buying a male friend a "holiday gram" could be misinterpreted by the other students as *gay*. The word *gay* in this study is a derogatory term used by fifth-grade students to identify someone as having too much affection for a person of the same sex. When a student is

referred to as gay, the derogatory nature of the term has the potential for impacting a fifth-grade student in some negative ways, such as through their self-esteem. The student hesitated to engage in kindness because he was concerned about what the outcome might have been. In another context, the students were not worried about the other students' interpretations. In this case, some male students who could be classified as skaters and Emo also choose to wear girls' jeans to represent their unique styles. Emo in this study refers to a style identified as "emotional hardcore" a style that describes the relationship between punk rock bands and fans. In this context students did not question or categorize a student as being gay. In one context, the student questioned an act of kindness and was concerned how other students would perceive him. In another situation, the students did not even consider questioning why a boy would wear girl jeans because it was considered a stylish trend. These examples of student observation in social and academic settings suggest that student gender biases exist. Finding the specific factors that influence student gender perspectives is critical for creating student-centered lessons. Students became influenced by their peers, and it is important to understand the differences between the diverse factors that contribute to students' biases.

Society contributes to the aforementioned biases of gender and identity that were evident through student observation. Peer influence was evident in students' actions, such as how peer influence motivated and influenced students' in their choices for dress and attire. Students' concepts of gender and identity reflect social and cultural factors that contribute to these biases. Students have identified certain gender roles that are influenced through a variety of factors including society, culture, family, and popular culture.

Gender Identity and Influence



There were a variety of interests among students. Fifth-graders at this campus are very interested in skating, which is not unusual considering the close location of a skate park a few minutes from the school. Their interests reflect the way they dress. Kids dress according to their personal interests. *Emo* style is presented by many celebrities in magazines, movies, and popular television shows and is represented by many fifth-graders.

Some students who wear skinny- fit jeans are identified by their peers as *Emo*, a style characterized by punk rock bands such as *Jimmy Eat World*, *Dashboard Confessional*, *My Chemical Romance*. *Emo* dressing style represents wearing *skinny* jeans that are low- rise fit and tight at the ankle. In some cases it is considered normal for a boy to wear girl jeans.

Students spend an abundance of time in school, and their interaction with other students reflects upon their individual personalities, characteristics, and motivations. Students begin to develop gender concepts through a process of self- discovery. Students may become less

interested in academics and become more interested in being accepted within their social groups. For this reason, keeping fifth-grade students engaged in a lesson is very challenging. Usually student motivation reflects their interest level in the topic being taught. It is not what is being taught, but the approach or how it is being taught that can determine a successful lesson. Student interest can vary between gender. When students were given the allocated time for reading, the girls were interested in the new Stephanie Meyers (2005) *Twilight* Saga. *Twilight* is a romantic novel of forbidden love that was preferred by girls. When it was time for *Drop Everything And Read (D.E.A.R.)*, the boys found interest in the *I Spy* books by Walter Wick and Jean Marzollo (1995,1997). *I Spy* books are riddle books that illustrate many objects condensed onto one page, a student who is the “spy” gets to say “ I spy...” which ever item they choose, while the other students guess where it is found on the page. It became a daily routine during D.E.A.R. time. The boys would go off to the reading carpet to read Wick and Marzollo’s *I Spy*. The girls stayed at their desk more interested in the romantic novel, *Twilight*, by Stephanie Meyers. The boys and girls had their own conceptions, reflecting their interest in what they chose to read.

Another foundation of students’ gender factors is their cultural. It was very interesting to consider the factors necessary to understand my student’s concepts of identity to effectively teach and meet their needs. It is critical that educators become familiarized with the students’ traditions to understand their concepts on gender and identity. Being of Mexican decent myself and teaching students who are predominantly Mexican -American, I understand how cultural values and traditions reflect student gender concepts on identity.

Students gain knowledge from their families and cultural backgrounds otherwise known as *Funds of Knowledge*. González, Moll, and Amanti, (2005) describe it as “the historically accumulated and culturally developed bodies of knowledge essential for individual functioning

and well being” (p.133). Building on students’ prior knowledge and utilizing their experiences as resources for instruction develops endless opportunities for successful teaching. Teaching in a predominantly Mexican-American community for the past two years has provided me the opportunity to observe the diverse traditions that students who are from Mexican-American descent bring in to the classroom. *Tradition* can be defined as students’ beliefs and cultural practices that are perpetuated through subsequent generations of family members. One of the most obvious gender-related identities that students bring to the classroom relates to traditional beliefs about gender. Boys grow up with certain roles and expectations as do girls. Children are often at risk of believing that one gender is better than the other (Powlishta, 2004). Due to the existence of gender biases in the classroom, teachers must provide instruction that allows children to value both genders. Patchen (2006) concurs, describing classroom practices proposed to diminish the disparities among boys and girls in the classroom that will increase academic performance for both sexes.

Classroom instruction may inadvertently show particular preferences for one gender over the other. Teachers praise young girls for their cooperation and obedience while boys are praised for their achievement (Evans, 1998). Often teachers expect good behavior from girls but consider obedience from boys an accomplishment. The lack of praise for girls can affect their self-esteem, while praising boys helps them build individual qualities. The praise for boys helps them develop higher self-esteem and confidence (Evans, 1998). Girls on the other hand are being praised for keeping up with what is expected of them. “Teachers are often unaware of the gender inequity existing in their classrooms; thus, they are unable to correct behavior” (Lowery, 2002, p. 26). Educators can positively affect students’ biases by becoming aware that such biases exist and by creating a non-biased learning environment.

Motivation: A Key Component to Successful Teaching

Students continue to grow physically, academically, and mentally. One individual who witnesses students' growth besides parents is the teacher. Student motivation to learn is effected by the connections to their personal interests. As students are growing, their interests are changing. Evans (1998) said incorporating a curriculum that reflects the diversity of students' cultures is a critical component in creating a non -biased classroom. The creation of a non-biased classroom is critical for boys and girls to feel valued and respected. Lowery (2007) writes that the continuation of boys' and girls' working together "increases the need for teachers to provide children an equal learning opportunity regardless of their gender" (p.25).

When I discussed effective teaching strategies with teachers who have taught for more than ten years, they all expressed that many students seem to be losing their interest in learning and therefore the teaching strategies varied. I have two years teaching experience, and I am considered a new teacher. As a new teacher, my colleagues' comments were very frightening. How can I keep students interested in learning when lack of motivation for learning is evident? Relevant to gender misconceptions, motivation and the lack thereof can be driven by a teaching approach that refrains from valuing one gender more, or providing instruction that is more interesting to one gender. I reflect and realize that the most effective teachers were those who utilized an interesting approach offering comfort and confidence to me as a female student. It is rational to think that any student who is not valued will lose the motivation to learn. I support designing instruction that is not aimed to fit school culture to students' culture but using student culture to drive instruction that will help students understand themselves and others, and conceptualize knowledge as described by Ladson-Billings (2001). I feel that creating genuine authentic instruction will increase student motivation to learn.

As a fifth-grade teacher, I have learned to utilize my students' *Funds of Knowledge*. Considering that culture and society are not the only factors contributing to children's gender identity, I was curious about what other factors influence children's gender roles. I wanted to find the connection between the social, cultural, the media and psychological, factors that influence children's gender identity.

Children assume that peers who are of the same sex will have the same interests as their own. Powlishta (2004) illustrates how boys and girls emphasize the differences between males and females as well as their roles. The boys' interests were Tech Decks or finger-boards, which they use to model skateboarding tricks, but the girls' interests include Littlest Pet Shop toys. I found the girls would model nurturing to take care of their pet. Girls' interest in Littlest Pet Shops could suggest the social reinforcement of gender biases. One girl in the classroom who owned a Tech Deck was identified as a *tom boy*, a girl who enjoys rough activities traditionally associated with boys. When I identified Aarti as a "tom boy" the rest of the class gave a negative response as if I was putting her down. I had to explain that it was not a put down and apologize to the students and explained that it was not my intention to hurt her feelings.

It was evident that many students act upon their gender concepts, and they refrain from participating in activities that they did not consider appropriate for their gender. Having been raised with Mexican traditions, I realized that many of my students were instilled with similar beliefs. I also discovered the range of beliefs even within my own culture and that my experiences as a Mexican-American were different from others. I have been raised with the traditional Mexican belief that men are a leading authority at home and that they harbor certain expectations that can be thought to subordinate women. My *funds of knowledge* represented these traditions and beliefs. These expectations do not include washing dishes, cleaning the

house, or cooking. However, men are also expected to take care of household logistics, such as cleaning the yard and providing for their family economically.

An understanding of fifth-grade Mexican-American students' funds of knowledge will help teachers build on students' experiences to provide authentic instruction. Many Mexican-American students are presented with misunderstanding and humiliation when arriving in school (Godina, 1996). Avoiding the creation of this harmful atmosphere requires the teacher's recognition of students' interests, and concepts of gender identity. This is critical to increase a student's motivation and to make learning effective.

Research Questions

1. What is needed for understanding Mexican-American fifth-grade students gender perspectives in the public school classrooms? How can teachers better instruction by understanding students' funds of knowledge?
2. How do the implementations of funds of knowledge affect student motivation? What factors contribute to students' perceptions on gender and identity?
3. How does children's literature influence the perceptions and biases related to gender?

Through this study we can further understand the practical implications of understanding students' gender perspectives in the public school classroom. Teachers' comprehension and discovery of gender perspectives and identity will positively affect teaching practices ultimately leading students to succeed.

Coming to Terms

Chismosa- Spanish term that refers to a gossiping girl

Culture- traditions and customs followed by a particular ethnic group

Emo- a style characterized by “emotional hardcore” or EMO style. A style described as the relationship between punk rock bands and fans. It describes fashion, culture, and behavior.

Funds of Knowledge- the knowledge students gain from their family and cultural backgrounds to make their classrooms more inclusive.

Gay- A derogatory term used by fifth- grade students to identify another student who shows too much affection for a person of the same sex.

Gender roles- Gender role attitudes refer to beliefs concerning behaviors, responsibilities, and activities appropriate for women and men (Corrigan & Konrad, 2007).

Tech-Decks- finger –boards.

Tom boy- a girl who enjoys rough activities, traditionally associated with boys.

Littlest Pet Shops- small toys that resemble these found in real pet shops.

Chapter II-Literature Review

There are many factors that influence gender assumptions, expectations, and biases in children. Due to the growing diversity in today's schools, many students arrive with diverse values and beliefs. Children are influenced in the social context because they want to meet social standards. Often teachers are unaware of the implementation of bias through literature instruction. It is critical that teachers meet the academic needs of students and explore all avenues to make student learning efficient. Differentiating instruction to meet the students' needs is a unique challenge presented to today's educators. Understanding students' traditions creates a student-valued environment. Many scholars have contributed to gender research in education.

The *Funds of Knowledge* approach values students' backgrounds and experiences (Moll, 1992). Focusing on students' Funds of Knowledge offers endless opportunities for both teachers and students. Students learn a variety of cultural practices and traditions from their home environment. Students' Funds of Knowledge illustrate their learned beliefs, customs, and the traditions that they bring into the classroom. Gonzalez, Moll, Amanti (2005) describe the importance of teachers becoming familiarized with the students' Funds of Knowledge in creating student -centered instruction that is beneficial for all students.

Sadker devoted an extensive amount of time to researching gender roles in the classroom. Sadker (1999) provides valuable information and resources for creating non-biased instruction. Sadker (1999) describes the gender inequities present in today's classrooms. Often teachers are unaware that such biases exist (Sadker, 1999) .

Delgado-Gaitan (1993) describes the *Ethnography of Empowerment* based on the nature of learning. The theory *Ethnography of Empowerment* is based on two principles; first, learning

among humans occurs across cultures; primarily, in the home or in socio-cultural units in which individuals are socialized; second, learning is purposive and should be directed to the enhancement of cultural values (p. 3). Teacher research provides powerful insight on what constitutes best practices for instruction. Teacher-student interactions can be a source of important contributions for understanding how to best shape instruction. “Teachers gain new ways of seeing children and develop deeper understandings of children’s feelings and growth” (Henderson, Meier, & Perry, 2007). Teachers and students develop a relationship of trust and become familiar with each other. The credibility of the teacher’s perspective in the study is extremely valuable. The time teachers spend with their students provides the opportunity to witness their growth, needs, and strengths from which teachers can create instruction that focuses on students. The collaboration between students and teachers allows an ongoing opportunity for professional growth and teaching practice. The implementation of this theory allows for endless opportunities for successful instruction.

Working in the field of education can be very challenging. It is imperative that educators be socially and culturally aware of diverse student values. There are implications that are vital to understanding gender perceptions in public school classrooms. As student demographics grow, students’ funds of knowledge are more evident in the classroom. Students’ values and customs are identified through their cultural beliefs that often times reflect their gender concepts and identity. Within the sense that males and females are different each having certain responsibilities lies the risk of assuming that one sex is better than the other (Powlishta, 2004). Students’ gender concepts may lead to stereotypes. Therefore, instructors must take initiative to clear all assumptions and conceptions of gender stereotypes that derive negative outcomes. Both

male and female students need to be exposed to a variety of instructional practices that fosters the opportunity for students to value both genders.

Influential Factors

Masculine and feminine stereotypes have been historical issues in the United States. Studies made in the 1990's provide evidence that gender biases are continuous through time. Sadker's (1999) article, *Gender Equity: Still Knocking at the Classroom Door*, eloquently illustrates that gender biases still exist in today's classrooms. "Gender Equity? Oh, yes, that was big a few years ago. Today, girls' home ec and boys' shops are gone" (Sadker, 1999, p. 5). Students' perceptions are not only influenced by their cultural beliefs, but also considering the amount of time spent in the classroom, it is evident that teachers are significantly influencing gender stereotypes. All too often, teachers are unaware that such biases are being implemented in the classroom (Sadker, 1999). Sadker (1999) describes this phenomenon as *gender blindness*. He demonstrates this concept in the classroom when he asked teachers to evaluate a tape, which contained subtle gender biases. In this study, most teachers missed the bias, but soon after the teachers reviewed their classroom interaction on tape, the gender biases became evident (Sadker, 1999). When teachers discover the existence of gender biases, it can become a critical component in understanding students' gender biases.

Durkin (2005) illustrates how western families perceive their infants differently reflecting their gender. They dress them, engage them in different activities, and provide them with play materials according to their gender. For example, male children are given blocks, play hammers, play tools, and guns, toys that are associated with modeling strength. On the other hand, girls are given dolls and cuddly animals, modeling nurturing. Durkin (2005) indicates that parents provide positive feedback to their children when the male toddlers choose to play with blocks and

females play with dolls. The truth of the matter is students come to our schools already influenced by their culture. Understanding students' gender perceptions is imperative in offering students valuable instruction.

Children begin to develop their attitudes and perceptions towards gender in their early years (Trepanier-Street and Romatowski, 1999). They begin to develop the appropriateness of toys, activities, attitudes, and roles. Male and female psychological growth differs in many ways. Children must first be able to distinguish themselves into male and female groups. Formal research studies indicate that infants are treated differently beginning in the first year, as described by Bennett and Sanni (2004). Soon after children begin to distinguish the differences between genders, they actively begin to divide groups into males and females (Powlishta, 2004). Children begin to develop gender identity explicitly as toddlers with the ability to sort photographs by gender. When children were asked to categorize people in a study described in Powlishta (2004), the process of social information during mid and late childhood resulted in gender categorization. It is apparent that children develop gender identity at an early age. Trepanier-Street and Romatowski (1999) concur stating, "Gender schema theory and social cognitive theory would suggest that children during the early childhood years are developing their thinking and attitudes about the differences between males and females (p.155)".

Developmental differences between boys and girls are factors that contribute to the development of gender roles. According to social identity theory, some individuals seek to differentiate their own groups in positive ways enhancing their self- esteem (Powlishta, 2004). In addition to connecting the characteristics of gender categories, students carry expansive knowledge of traditional roles of males and females that can also be seen as early as toddler years (Powlishta, 2004). Students' cognitive development evidently contributes to students'

gender identity. Other social forces such as culture, school environment, and literature, are potent influences on gender roles.

Gender and Careers

When students are asked to identify whether certain toys, activities, or occupations correspond to a particular gender, they do associate particular skills and activities as corresponding to a particular gender. A longitudinal study conducted by Corrigan and Konrad (2007) provides evidence that children's early perceptions of gender roles influence their future identity. Children develop an understanding of what is expected of them based on their surrounding concepts of gender. Some students are raised to believe particular norms and values associated with gender. It is evident that children relate professions to a particular gender. Why do children view doctors, scientist, engineers, and athletes to be male professions? On the other hand, why do children perceive professions such as teachers, nurses, dancers, and writers to be occupied by women? Croxford, Ducklin, Frame, and Tinklin (2005) examined the roles and expectations of women in a British society. The political, medical, science, business, and higher education, were considered male realms (Croxford, Ducklin, Frame, & Tinklin, 2005).

Students' masculine and feminine perspectives and stereotypes applied to them are not only reflected through their cultural beliefs or social influences. Marshall (2004) explains studies in the representation of gender through children's literature. Children can incorporate a great range of conceptions through their observations of society and educational environment. The educational environment significantly contributes to the biases that students develop correlated to gender.

Masculine and Feminine Representations Through Literature: Past and Present

Becoming knowledgeable of existing gender identity concepts enhances an educator's opportunity to provide student-centered instruction. Students' gender perspectives have the potential of making a positive contribution to classroom practice. Children's literature affects students' concepts of gender and identity as well. When teachers expose students to a variety of literary resources, students can create a non-biased classroom.

Both masculine and feminine roles are defined through children's literature. Intentional literary work for children first appeared in the 1740's (Marshall, 2004). Influenced by this development, books intended for boys and domestic stories for girls soon followed. The girls' stories characterized domestic roles that girls were expected to carry in society. Marshall (2004) states, "Children's text no longer contained messages for the child per se, instead, a child's sex became synonymous with a gender that required specific behaviors" (Marshall, 2004, p. 261). No longer were these children's books intended to teach character based on gender, they became distinctive books intended specifically for males or females. Evans (1998) concurs describing, "research has noted the prevalence of gender inequity in children's literature" (p.83).

Children's books, such as fairy tales, portray women as weak, submissive, dependent, while men are portrayed as strong, powerful, active, and dominant (Parsons, 2004). Often times, books convey distinctive images that highly influence and contribute to students' already present perceptions on gender. The major contribution to feminism through children's books is beauty. Beauty determines women's values. Disney's classic *Cinderella*, illustrates that she was only worthy of marrying the prince after she was glamorous and beautified by her fairy godmother. Cinderella's character was associated with weakness, submission and suffering. Cinderella played the housekeeper and had to remain submissive to the strong and powerful mother. Only

then did she become worthy of being rewarded with the prince. Parsons states, “As this message is repeated story after story, we come to accept as natural notion that passive, beautiful, females are rewarded” (Parsons, 2004, p. 145). Desires to live happily ever after only through suffering encourage young readers to accept these embedded messages. Parsons (2004) describes how women who are powerful are often illustrated as ugly or evil. Girls’ views can be affected by these stories.

While the representation of women’s roles is characterized by submissiveness and weakness (Parsons, 2004), masculine characters are described to have courage, strength, and knowledge (Parsons, 2004). Non-traditional gender roles have long been portrayed since the early publication of books, with the belief that they would expand children’s definitions of masculinity and femininity (Rice, 2002). Lowery (2002) further illustrates that boys are trained to be assertive, strong, and adventurous. Rice (2002) describes the reaction of a third grade student when he was asked to respond to a children’s book, *Oliver Button is a Sissy* (dePoala, 1979). This book is based on a boy who does not play sports well, so he relies on learning how to tap dance instead. The third grader’s response to the book was that he did not feel right because tap dancing “is a girl thing not a boy thing” (Rice, 2002 p. 33).

Oliver Button is a Sissy by Tomie dePoala (1979) is a children’s book that tells a story about a boy who gets bullied but refuses to fight. Oliver Button is the main character in the story and does not like to play sports like all the other boys. Oliver finds interest in art, reading, singing, and dancing. Oliver is ridiculed by the other boys because he simply does not enjoy the things that other boys do. Oliver’s father even calls him a sissy and tells him to play sports. Oliver tells his parents he likes to dance, and they enroll him in a tap dancing school. Oliver finds great interest in dancing but gets sad when the other boys criticize him for dancing. Oliver

is faced with many challenges because his interest differs from other boys his age. He is nicknamed “sissy” because of his interest, but he continues his dancing. *Oliver Button is a Sissy* (dePoala, 1979), describes the challenges children are faced with when personal interests differ from what is considered the norm. Trepanier-Street and Romatowski (1999) concur explaining, “gender stereotypical thinking may limit children’s choices, interests, and abilities” (p. 155). Children are presented with boundaries that formulate limitations on their interests or what they should be.

What is to blame for these beliefs imbedded in students’ minds? Female characters are often underrepresented and males are illustrated with strong identities. Traditional tales portray the male hero as a position of power to dominate and rule others (Parsons, 2004). In feminist fairy tales, the heroine assumes the power and raises moral questions. These descriptions define the roles of males and females and influence students to carry biased roles in school. For example, a dance team of mainly females with a male performer will raise questions for students. Aforementioned, students are already attending school with specific roles in mind; such events will lead to awkward student discussions. The implementation of redefining gender perceptions is challenging but can be obtained. The contributions that students bring to the classroom are equally as important as the knowledge teachers can enrich students with.

Chapter III-Method

Participants

I conducted the research within my own fifth-grade bilingual classroom. Because students spend six hours daily in my classroom, I was provided significant opportunities for conducting research. Six fifth-grade Mexican-American students were asked to participate in the study. The subjects consist of three boys and three girls between the ages of 10 and 12. The participants' real names have been changed to protect their identity: Richard, Roberto, and Jonathan are the boys, and Amanda, Nathalie, and Aarti are the girls who participated in the study. According to the campus profile (YISD, 2007) the ethnic composition of the school is 99% Hispanic, less than 1% Anglo, and less than 1% African American. The subjects were drawn as a sample of the general fifth-grade population. The subjects were randomly selected out of fifty-five fifth grade students at this campus. All students are of Mexican- American decent and attend fifth-grade at a public school.

Table 1. Ethnicity of Students Participants

<i>Student</i>	<i>Gender</i>	<i>Ethnicity</i>
Robert	Male	Mexican-American
Jonathan	Male	Mexican-American
Richard	Male	Mexican-America
Amanda	Female	Mexican-American
Aarti	Female	Mexican-American
Nathalie	Female	Mexican-American

Ethics

The six students were asked to participate on a voluntary basis. Research protocol approval has been obtained through the Ysleta Independent School District (YISD), refer to appendix A, Institutional Review Board (IRB) and the University of Texas at El Paso Institutional Review Board for subject data collection, refer to appendix B. The research gave the participants the freedom to withdraw at any time. The subjects were given a consent form (Appendix C) in both English and Spanish. The students' parents were given a consent form in English and Spanish providing detailed information about the study. The data collected will be destroyed six months after the data was collected. Some parents were concerned about signing the consent form. Parents were encouraged to attend a conference discussing details of the study where they were presented with the opportunity to ask any questions relevant to the study at any time. Students and parents were also given my contact information, my supervising professor's information, and the UTEP and IRB information for any questions and concerns. I personally explained the purpose of the study to all parents and children. A relationship of trust was established between the subjects, their parents, and me ensuring their trust in the value placed on any concerns.

Setting

The research study was conducted in my Fifth-Grade Bilingual classroom. The campus is located in the Lower Valley, a part of town considered low-income. The academic observation took place during student reading and science instruction. The subjects received reading instruction an hour and a half daily. Students were observed during their D.E.A.R. time and their engagement in a literature activity. Another teacher in a science laboratory, in which the

participants were observed while they participated in three science labs, gives the science instruction.

Design and Procedure

The data collection for this research consists of qualitative data that is student centered. Quantitative data has provided evidence that gender biases exist; therefore, I decided to conduct the study through the collection of qualitative data to find the specific factors that influence students' gender bias. More importantly, I sought to determine what was necessary in understanding student's concepts on gender and identity. Spending six hours a day with my students, observing them, and witnessing their growth, are key components validating the data for my research. The students were observed for ten days in both instructional and academic contexts offering both negative and positive contributions to the study. The benefits of establishing a relationship between the teacher and the students give students the confidence to act natural. On the other hand, one can argue that the relationship between the teacher and the student can evoke a students' response to please the teacher. The qualitative research approach provided me with concise evidence of the factors that motivate students' gender concepts on identity. The role of a teacher is to provide every student with an opportunity to succeed. Collecting adequate data to understand fifth-grader's concepts about gender and identity should be vital for providing instruction that has the potential to lead to student classroom success.

Instrumentation

The data collection was conducted utilizing observations, a survey, questionnaire, and interviews. The participants were observed daily in class instructional setting during classroom activities. The subjects were also observed in social settings during lunch and recess. Observations were ongoing throughout the school year. Specific observations for the study were

conducted during class, instructional setting, and outside of class, social setting. The academic observations were conducted during reading to find how literature affects students' concepts on gender and identity. Observation during students' D.E.A.R. time connects to the literature portion of the study. When the subjects were given the allocated reading time, a journal was kept for recording activities during the observation.

The survey (see Appendix D) lists various professions, with specific directions that ask the participants to circle which gender they feel is appropriate for the profession, or both. The survey is relevant to student's gender expectations and what profession they specifically identify for each gender. The participants were also asked to draw a picture of various characters depicting their profession. For example, one student drew a nurse and a firefighter another student chose to draw a teacher and a doctor. The word firefighter was emphasized to avoid researcher bias, as asking the students to illustrate a picture of a fireman will lead the students to automatically illustrate a male firefighter. The participants were asked to complete the survey within the second week of the study.

The questionnaire consists of seven gender biased statements examining the subjects' attitudes toward them. The questionnaire directed the subjects to indicate their feelings about the gender-biased statements through four degrees of affirmations or negation.

The responses are:

Disagree a lot

Disagree a little

Don't Care

Agree a little

Agree a lot

The third response is not quantitatively measured because it does not offer a degree of affirmation or negation. Please refer to Appendix E for the complete questionnaire.

Unfortunately, there were two boys who did not complete the questionnaire due to their school suspension during the distribution of the questionnaire. Significant information was provided from the other four students.

In addition to the questionnaire, students were asked to draw two professions of their choice. The illustrations reveal students' perceptions and how they identify specific profession with a particular gender. The final data collection consisted of individual, informal interviews with the subjects utilizing sample questions (see Appendix E). The questions vary from certain roles students take in the classroom and at home, to gender expectations and identity. Please refer to Appendix E for the complete sample questions.

Chapter IV-Results

Gender Profession Survey Results

Student responses to the survey varied between the boys and the girls. The survey directed the students to indicate whether a specific profession belonged to a male, female or both. There were interesting differences between boys' and girls' indications of what professions are suitable for both genders due to the wide range of results. Please refer to the survey below.

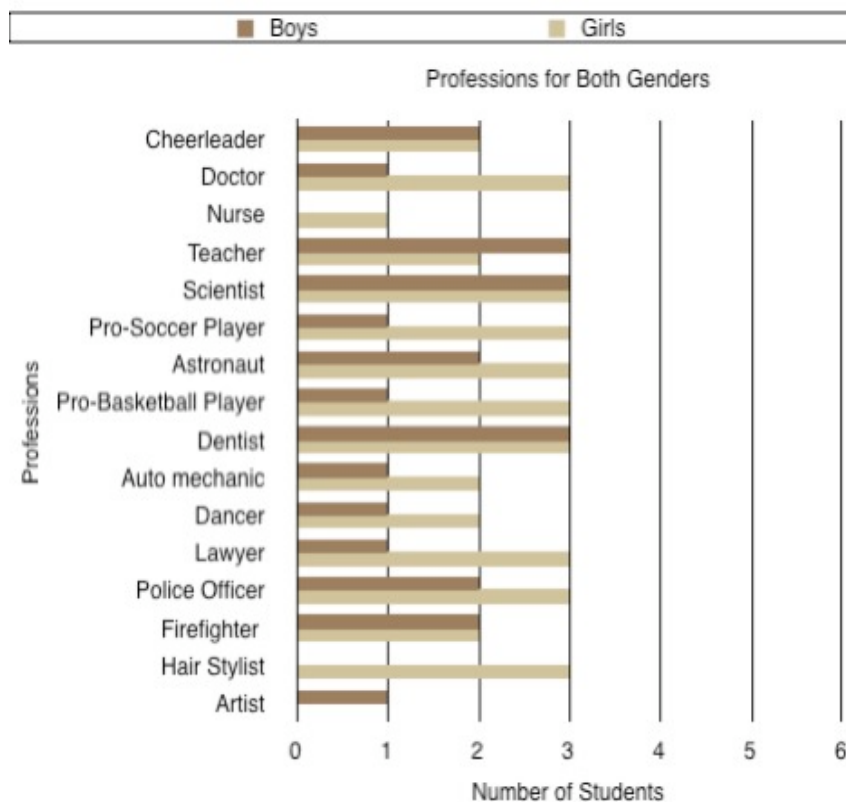


Figure 1.1

The data plotted in Figure 1.1 indicates the number of students who felt both genders were suitable for the profession. Only one boy felt that becoming a doctor was for both genders. On the other hand, all three girls indicated that both genders could become doctors. Two boys and girls felt that both males and females could be auto-mechanics. My personal views influenced my initial reaction to this conclusion. I was surprised to find the balanced student responses for auto-mechanic. Two of the boys indicated that police officer was a profession for both male and female. All the girls agreed that police officer can be a position obtained by both genders. Refraining from displaying a specific profession as a firemen or policeman did not limit their responses and association with a man or male. Participants were allowed to associate a fire-fighter and police officer to their individual connotation of male or female. The boys in this survey affirm that the male fifth-grade subjects limit their gender perspectives relevant to certain professions. Two of three participants indicated that a professional soccer player, basketball player, police officer, and fire fighter, were all the male dominant careers.

Boys Gender Perceptions on Gender

The boys' responses revealed a variety of conclusions. The males indicated that the professions of nurse, dancer, and hair-stylist suited females. Two boys revealed that auto-mechanic and artist belonged to either male or female. The following figure illustrates the boys' responses.

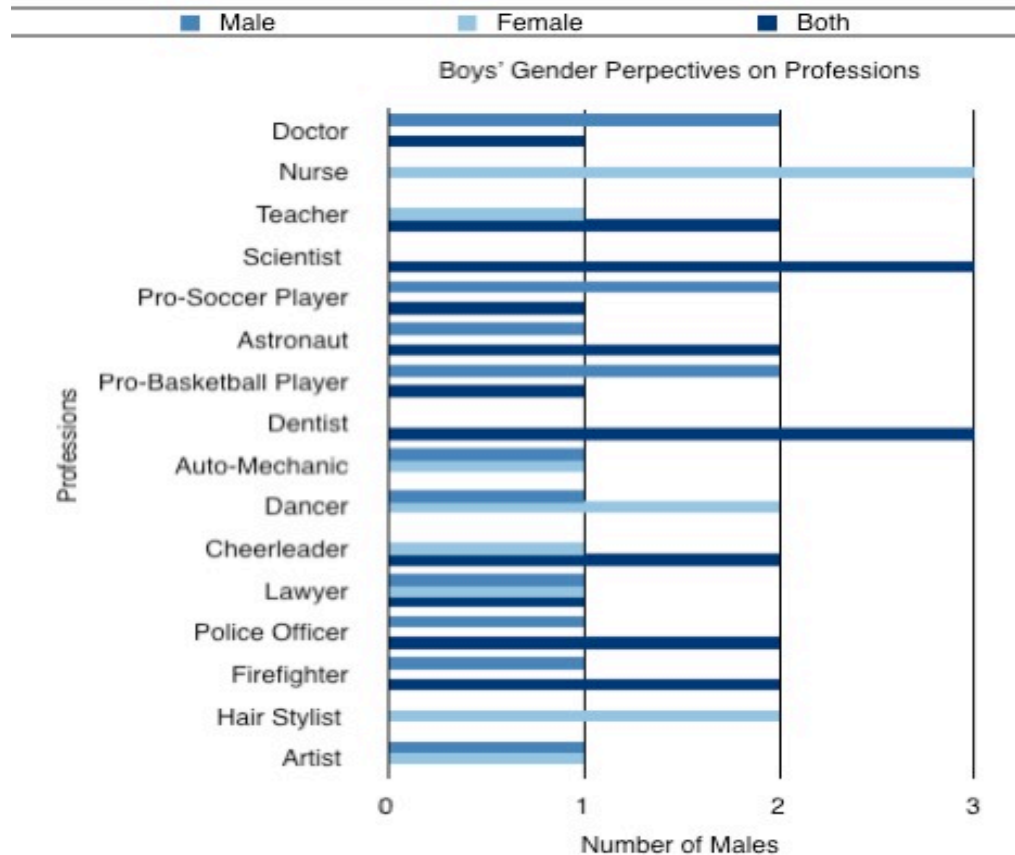


Figure 1.2

Girls Gender Perceptions on Professions

The girls' responses were relatively interesting (refer to figure). The female description of the listed professions indicated that the professions were either suitable for a female or both genders. The female participants' correlations to professions were not bound to one gender or the other. With the exception of a firefighter, professional soccer player, and nurse, the female participants' responses indicated that most of the professions could be occupied by both genders.

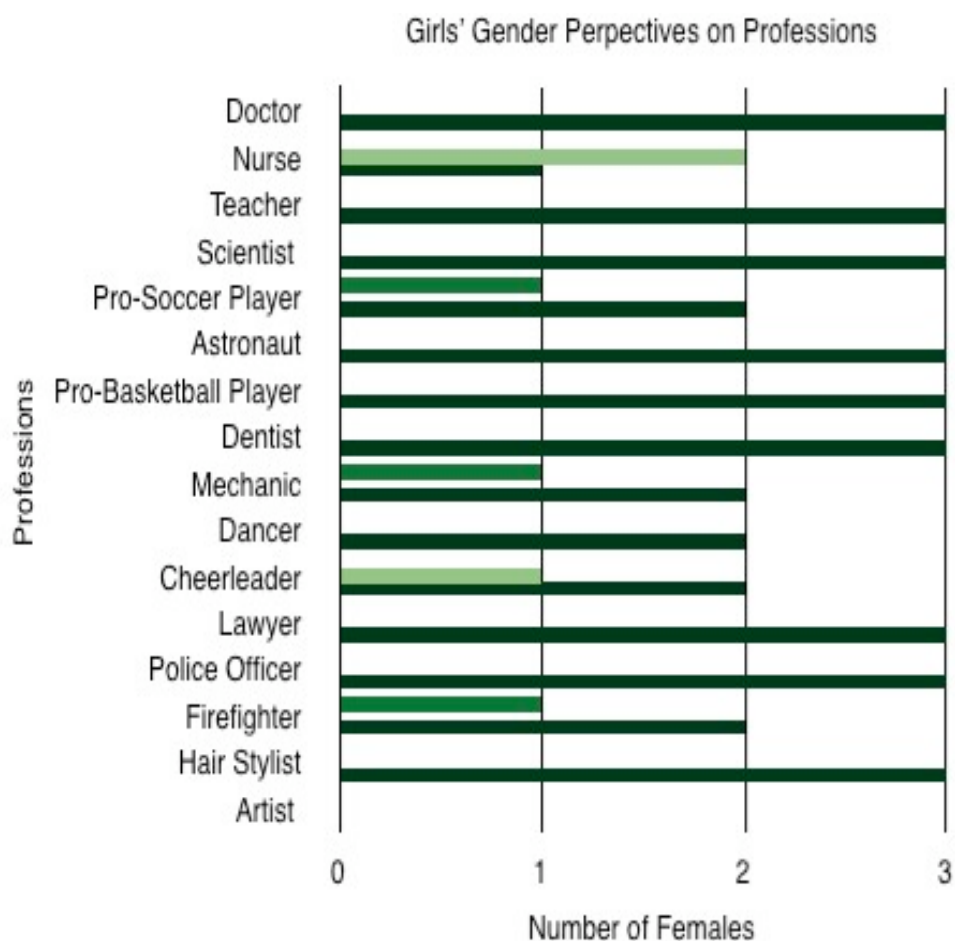


Figure 1.3

The variations for both male and female participants evidently prove that in this sample, the males bind certain professions to either belong specifically to one gender or the other. Although some male subjects did respond that a certain profession belonged to both genders, the female participants showed more flexibility towards the professions listed in the survey could be occupied by both genders. As I observed Richard and Amanda complete the survey, I witnessed a discussion between them in reference to one of the professions. Richard was indicating that a firefighter and police officer were jobs that could only be occupied by males. Amanda was adamantly opposed to him, responding, “even girls can be cops and firemen too. Richard mocked, “oh ya, I’m so sure, I have never seen a girl in a fire truck before.” I intervened and

explained to the students that there was not a right or wrong answer, and their personal opinions are greatly valued.

Illustrations

Amanda illustrated a doctor and a teacher. Her drawing portrayed the teacher's hair and dressed the teacher with a skirt and pink blouse. The illustration of the teacher was evidently a female. The doctor had shorter hair, and I assumed it was a male, so I asked Amanda to specify the gender, and she confirmed it was a female. Please refer to illustration 1.1.



Amanda's Illustration

The second female participant selected a firefighter and a nurse. The students' firefighter description was obviously a male. The description of the nurse was a female. The student illustrated the nurse with feminine characteristics i.e. long hair. Please refer to the illustrations below.



Nathalie's Illustration

The third female participant, Aarti, drew her illustration based on her personal views and therefore made this illustration different from the rest (refer to illustration). Aarti's interests are very similar to the boys'. She decided to illustrate a soccer player and a skater. Both of these illustrations are females. The student herself skates and plays soccer with the boys. This particular student's illustrations reflect her hobbies of interest.



Aarti's Illustration

I specifically had the girls make the illustrations because of the survey results. I wanted their insights. The survey concluded that most of the male students were more particular about professions that belonged specifically to one gender or the other indicated by the survey results. The boys did not participate in making the illustrations. The girls were most flexible to consider both genders for the professions listed concluded by the survey results and illustrations.

Social Expectations based on the Questionnaire

The levels of affirmation were not clearly understood by the students. Some of students chose not to answer some of the questions while two girls had the exact answers. The

questionnaire might have lead the students to some confusion in which I had to provide a more detailed explanation of how to complete the questionnaire. After the students completed the questionnaires, again, the results were very insightful. Aarti disagreed with boys being stronger than girls, while Nathalie and Amanda only disagreed a little with this statement. The girls showed that they did not care for boys wearing pink, or boys being cheerleaders. An insightful result, provided by the girls' responses to the questionnaire, was that they all agreed a lot that cleaning was only for girls. This would explain their roles in the science lab. Aforementioned the girls would clean up after the science lab, while the boys would just sit back and relax. The boys' results were varied. Richard and Jonathan did not care about boys wearing pink, while Roberto was opposed to boys wearing pink. All the boys agreed that football is just for boys, and cleaning was only for girls. Roberto also felt that cooking was just for girls, while Richard and Jonathan disagreed a little.

Student Observations

Gender Roles in a Science Classroom

Fifth-grade students receive science instruction from a designated science teacher. The boys and girls participation varied significantly during science labs. Most of the boys were always involved in science activities and dominant in classroom participation. The science teacher and the other fifth grade teachers came to a consensus that it would benefit the students if the girls received science instruction separately from the boys. Opposed to this decision at first, I decided to wait for the results. Having had the opportunity to observe the students' participation as a heterogeneous group made me value the decision of separating the students. Amanda, Nathalie, and Aarti reacted with more confidence when they were among other girls. They began answering questions and participating more in science experiments and labs. The science teacher felt adamant about the decision of separating the boys and girls. She described the effectiveness

of the decision stating, “it is awesome, I have noticed the difference the past three years. Usually the girls sat while the boys were engaged hands-on, at the end the boys just chill out, while the girls picked up.” After observing the students’ participation when they were separated, I fully supported the decision. I could not believe the girl’s motivation in participating more changed from end of the spectrum to the other.

Reading Observations

The classroom observations were conducted during D.E.A.R. time. Since the study was done in my classroom, I wanted to encourage the students to choose their reading selections to ensure ownership and comfort in reading. The boys would anxiously wait for reading time to engage in the *I Spy* books. The *I Spy* books require detective skills to find an object. I modified my instruction for the students, increasing their reading time. All of the boys had either checked out an *I Spy* book, or they owned one. The bilingual students, Richard and Robert, had even checked out the *I Spy* in Spanish, translated to *Veo* by Jean Marzollo (see appendix). Aarti was the one girl in my class who found interest in the book. Amanda and Nathalie on the other hand became focused on the Stephanie Meyer books. One book in particular was *Twilight*. This romantic novel interested most of the girls.

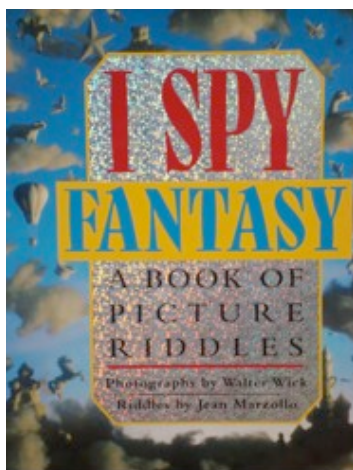


Figure 1.4

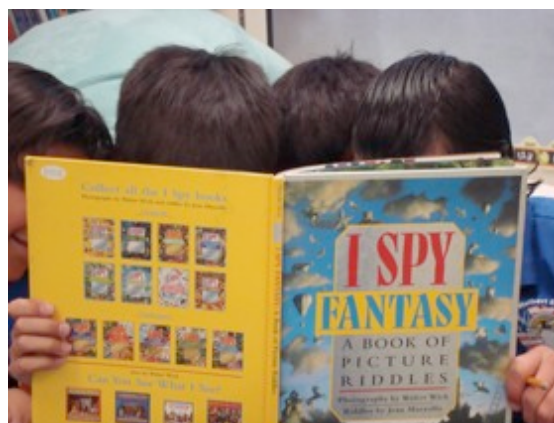


Figure 1.5

Social Observations

When I observed the students during lunch- time, the students participated in various activities. The boys and girls had separate interests. Amanda and Nathalie's interests were Littlest Pet Shops and Aarti, Roberto, Richard, and Jonathan's interests were Tech-Decks. Students would utilize most of their lunch -time playing with their toys. The tech-decks became a popular item among the fifth-grade boys. The Tech-Decks and Littlest Pet Shops are shown below.

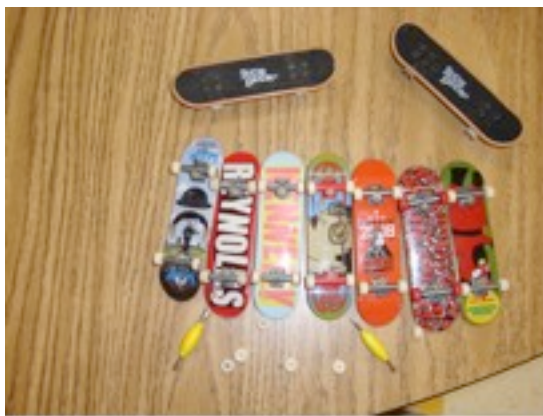


Figure 1.6



Figure 1.7

Peer Observations

When the girls socialized with their girlfriends, they would gossip about boys and other issues involving other students. I noticed that Amanda and Nathalie were a lot more interested in social conversation relevant to boys. Aarti would engage in playing with the other fifth-grade boys. She would play soccer and football with them.

As I continued observing the girls, I recalled a very interesting statement made by a fifth-grade girl. The kindergarten students were on their way to physical education while I was engaged in a conversation with another teacher and this student. As the kindergarten students passed us, she acknowledged that her “babies were coming.” The teacher and I looked around for

a parent with a baby; we assumed it was her little brother or sister, but she explained that she was referring to the kinder students.

The boys would usually spend their lunch -time playing soccer if not playing with the Tech-Decks. When the boys played a game, they became very competitive. Their main purpose was beating the other team rather than enjoying a game of soccer. As a result of rough play, two boys took it to the extreme and fought physically. The boys had to be separated by two monitors and taken to the office for further disciplinary actions.

One student approached me with a concern about whether buying a holiday gram for one of his buddies would be “gay.” I took this opportunity to explain to the student that it was not a gay gesture, and there is no reason why anyone should assume a friendly gesture to be such. The student hesitated to act on something friendly because of the way other students would perceive of him.

Student Interviews

When the interviews were given to the students, I expected more detailed descriptions from the boys and the girls. This was not the case. The students responded vaguely which limited the conversation to just question and answer. I expected an in-depth conversation with the students, but unfortunately this was not the case. The students had been preparing for a high stakes test, and I feel that the students were just too overwhelmed to answer questions. They wanted to enjoy their free time and just get the interview over with. However, the survey, questionnaire, and observations results provide powerful insights on the students’ concepts of gender and their identities. The observations allowed me to understand why students have particular concepts and refrain from participating in certain activities assuming they are inappropriate.

Chapter V-Discussion

1. What is needed for understanding Mexican-American fifth-grade students gender perspectives in the public school classrooms? How can teachers better instruction by understanding students' funds of knowledge?
2. How do the implementations of funds of knowledge affect student motivation? What factors contribute to students' perceptions on gender and identity?
3. How does children's literature influence the perceptions and biases related to gender?

The understanding of fifth-grade students' gender perspectives consists of validating students' responses and their beliefs to implement successful instruction. The educator must become open-minded to discovering students' interest and build on these findings. In valuing students' beliefs, traditions, and interest students become more engaged in lessons.

Validating Students' Responses

Students' gender perceptions can be influenced both by their experiences and lack thereof. The diverse population constitutes diverse student experiences; some students are exposed to a variety of activities while others are not. This is also reflected by the student funds of knowledge. These experiences can significantly influence students' perceptions on gender. Data collections make significant contributions to the understanding of the factors that influence students' perceptions on gender and identity. Through the understanding of concepts on gender, the educator can expose their students to lesson that meet their needs.

When I witnessed the students' discussion relevant to the survey, I reflected and came to the conclusion that many students had limited experiences and exposure to individuals with different professions and therefore limited responses. For example, at the campus where the study was conducted, there are only two male teachers. The fact that teaching is a female-dominated profession explains why so many students consider most teachers to be female. This is one example of how students' exposure to individuals of different professions can influence

their views. My curiosity on the influence of students' experiences and lack thereof, encouraged me to have students draw an illustration of two professions of their choice. Three females contributed to the illustrations. The illustrations described students' views on identifying the role of males and females for certain professions.

Evaluating the Girls Concepts on Identity

The girls' nature of being affectionate and loving justifies their interest in Littlest Pet Shops and explains their compassion for other students. Girls in the study exhibit nurturing characteristics. One student acknowledged another student with affection and even carried the kinder student for the other teacher and myself, to see who her "baby" was. She referred to the younger student as her baby. I had never noticed how caring and affectionate girls were with younger students. When the girls played with the Littlest Pet Shops they practiced caring, compassion, and affection in taking care of their pets. There was not one boy who owned or found interest in the pet shop.

There was a distinct connecting between the girls' interest in literature and their actions. As a teacher, I was excited about the girls' enthusiasm in reading the romantic novel. When D.E.A.R. time came around the girls were glued to the book. Connecting the book to the girls actions reflect their fascination on romance. Consequently the girls became more and more interested in boys. The girls' interest in boys was relatively the same as their interest in the novel. It does not necessary indicate that the novel influenced the girls interest in boys, but it was definitely a factor contributing to their concepts of identity.

Evaluating the boys concepts on gender and identity

The boy's overall concepts on gender and identity became obvious. Their interest in literature revolved around the participation in *I Spy*. The boys practiced discovering new objects and investigating. This type of literature became very interesting to the students. The fact that one girl was interested in this type of book suggests that literature inspires student identity. One student had taken the initiative to oppose the norm and follow her interests, while the other girls refrained from participating with the boys due to their personal interests. When the boys

participated in sport activities they became very competitive. The boys' interactions was strictly physical, they all pushed and shoved each other.

The responses to the data collections are valuable insights to understanding students. The data suggests by making connections to all students' interest and perceptions, teachers can construct lessons that do not specifically cater to one gender or the other.

Limitations

As the teacher and researcher, the relationship between my students and myself created both positive and negative contributions to this research. The negative aspect was the limitations of student responses based on my expectations. The student response may be limited to please the teachers' views and therefore place a limitation on students' genuine response. On the other hand, because of the student-teacher relationship, students' trust that their views are greatly valued therefore are more confident to respond with honesty.

Teacher Contribution to Students Perceptions

The survey indicated that the girls are more open-minded and do not necessarily distinguish professions to be obtained by one gender or the other. I feel that as a teacher I influence these conceptions. I am very adamant about teaching my students to pursue any career of their interests. I explained to the students that I personally have one friend who is a lawyer and another friend who is a doctor, and they are both females, explaining that gender does not limit their choices in a profession. There have been several situations where I provide personal insights to explain a lesson. For example, I discussed to the students that I would not engage in picking up after them because I was not their mother. I neglected to mention that I was not their parent to refrain from assuming that their mother is the only one who picks up after them. In another occasion, I heard one of the boys gossiping about another girl, I immediately stopped him and acknowledged that gossiping is for girls and to stop being a *chismosa* the Spanish term used for a gossiping girl, neglecting to realize that my comment could reinforce my students' stereotypes. When it is time for students to line up, I always have the girl's line up first. In

addition, prior to the school bell, I would give the students an opportunity to play with their tech-decks. As soon as the tardy bell rang, the boys would store their tech-decks in my desk. I decided to allow the students time to play with their toys because they would disrupt the class during instructions modeling tricks with them. I failed to give the same freedom to the girls because issues were never presented with them playing with their pet shops during instructional time. I could have taken the time to grant all the students that time but I never did. Because of the girls' good behavior, they should have been granted free time as a reward. Through the implementation of this study I discovered the personal contributions that I have made in influencing students perceptions on gender and identity. The realization that I have become a factor contributing to students' gender concepts on gender and identity affected my instruction.

Students Influencing Teachers

Becoming more knowledgeable about my students interests helped my teaching practice. I was greatly influenced by the student's enthusiasm, and I prepared a lesson in which students engaged teachers as well. The students were eager to find out how many teachers including the administrators in the school, knew about Tech-decks and Littlest Pet Shops versus how many fifth-grade students knew about the Civil War. The students became very interested in the lesson and even created a graph showing how many teachers knew about the fifth-graders interests. The results showed that four out of twenty-four teachers knew about fifth-graders interests in toys. In addition to the information the students found that only five students knew about the Civil War. Going further with this lesson, I integrated the lesson into a math lesson. I had the students create a math problem in which certain groups would have to model the problem solving strategies. I clearly elaborated to the students that they needed to use their personal interest in creating a fifth-grade math problem shown below.

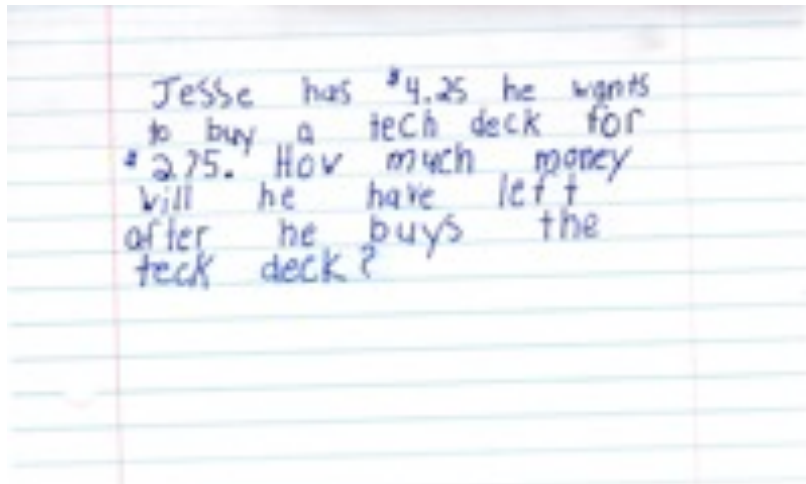


Figure 1.8

The students became interested in modeling problem solving connected to their interest. I have considered a new teaching approach, gaining powerful information from my students to better my instruction. The purpose of this research was to understand the practical implications there was to understanding students concepts on gender and identity. It is evident that gender concepts exist in the classroom; it is the teachers' choice to understand students' concepts and value what they bring to the classroom.

This research gave me the opportunity to know my students more and reflect on my instructional practices. Taking from everyday routines and taking the time to evaluate them made significant contributions in my teaching. The science interventions proved to be successful because of the increase in the girls' participation. Encouraging the students to choose their literature increased their enthusiasm in reading, so I increased the reading time. Teaching a concept in math relevant to students' interest encouraged students' participation in a math lesson. The indicated modifications bettered students' instruction because I took the time to understand my students' perceptions and value their interest. Connecting students' interest to the instruction made a significant difference in their motivation. There is a certainty that the most valuable resource a teacher can utilize to better instruction is by understanding the student.

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Appendices

Appendix A

Ysleta Independent School District

Office of Assessment, Research, Evaluation and Accountability
Division of Academics
9600 Sims Drive
El Paso, TX 79925-7225
Office: (915) 434-0710
FAX: (915) 435-9562

March 25, 2009

Cynthia Soto
143 Teakwood Rd
El Paso, TX 79915

Dear Ms. Soto:

This is to inform you that the Office of Assessment, Research, Evaluation and Accountability at the Ysleta Independent School District has approved your project titled **Mexican American Concepts on Gender and Identity: A teacher's perspective in a 5th Grade classroom**. We have determined that this project conforms to the district's standards regarding informed consent and FERPA regulations.

Your IRB number for 2008-2009 is **#493**.

Please inform school administrators about this letter upon your first communication with them as it provides them assurance that the study meets the district's research policy. District approval does not ensure research participation from the staff, given that research subjects have the right not to participate and withdraw from the research study at any point.

Also, please keep the office apprised of your progress and when the project is complete provide our office with a copy of your final report.

If you require additional assistance, you may contact me at (915) 434-0718 or email me at cherrera14@yisd.net.

Best regards,

Elea U. Herrera
YISD Program Evaluator

VISION STATEMENT

All students who enroll in our schools will graduate from high school, fluent in two or more languages, prepared and inspired to continue their education in a four year college, university or institution of higher education so that they become successful citizens in their community.

Appendix

B

THE UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS AT EL PASO
Office of the Vice President for Research and Sponsored Projects
Institutional Review Board
El Paso, Texas 79968-0587
phone: 915 747-8841 fax: 915 747-5931

DATE: March 25, 2009

TO: Cynthia Soto

FROM: University of Texas at El Paso IRB

STUDY TITLE: [107987-1] - Mexican American Concepts On Gender and Identity: A teachers perspective in a 5th grade classroom

IRB REFERENCE #:

SUBMISSION TYPE: New Project

ACTION: APPROVED

APPROVAL DATE: March 25, 2009

EXPIRATION DATE: March 24, 2010

REVIEW TYPE: Expedited Review

Thank you for your submission of New Project materials for this research study. University of Texas at El Paso IRB has APPROVED your submission. This approval is based on an appropriate risk/benefit ratio and a study design wherein the risks have been minimized. All research must be conducted in accordance with this approved submission.

This study has received Expedited Review based on the applicable federal regulation.

Please remember that informed consent is a process beginning with a description of the study and insurance of participant understanding followed by a signed consent form. Informed consent must continue throughout the study via a dialogue between the researcher and research participant. Federal regulations require each participant receive a copy of the signed consent document.

Please note that any revision to previously approved materials must be approved by this office prior to initiation. Please use the appropriate revision forms for this procedure.

All SERIOUS and UNEXPECTED adverse events must be reported to this office. Please use the appropriate adverse event forms for this procedure. All FDA and sponsor reporting requirements should also be followed.

Please report all NON-COMPLIANCE issues or COMPLAINTS regarding this study to this office.

Please note that all research records must be retained for a minimum of three years after termination of the project.

Based on the risks, this project requires Continuing Review by this office on an annual basis. Please use the appropriate renewal forms for this procedure.

Voluntary Consent and Permission Form

I _____, give my child permission to participate in a research study conducted for educational purposes only. I grant Cynthia Soto, to utilize excerpts from interviews, observations, and survey in which my child is represented. I understand that the use of excerpts from my child's words and insights may be used in, but not limited to publications, scholarly articles, and other educational products available to the public.

I understand that I will be invited to read the notes, interviews, and surveys of my child at any time in the duration of the research project. I understand that I can withdraw my child and withhold any information that my child has contributed to the study at any time. I understand that my child's name will not appear in print without my explicit permission, will be used in reference to my child's voice, ideas, and/or writings.

The decision for my child to participate in the research is voluntary and will not affect my child's status as a student at Constance Hulbert Elementary.

My signature acknowledges that I have read the above statements and I fully understand these statements.

I understand that the interviews may be published

I hereby give do NOT give permission for my child:

_____	_____	_____
Name	Signature (parent or guardian)	Date

_____	_____	_____
Name	Signature (Child)	Date

CONSENTIMIENTO VOLUNTARIO DE OTORGACION

DE DERECHOS

Yo _____, como participante en la investigacion, doy mi permiso al Distrito Escolar Independiente de Ysleta (YISD), la Universidad de Texas/El Paso (UTEP), y miembro docente, Cynthia Soto, para usar selecciones de mis palabras en entrevistas, escritos, y encuestas en cuales yo estoy representando. Yo comprendo que lo anterior pueden ser usado, sin limitaciones, en publicaciones, articulos academicos, y otras materiales disponibles al publico en general.

Comprendo que durante el proyecto de investigacion, sere invitado a leer y revisar notas, que puedan ser utilizados en documento(s) finales, y tender la facultad de retirar mi informacion del proyecto. Aun mas, yo entiendo que mi nombre no aparecera en forma escrita sin mi explicito consentimiento, seudonimos (nombres invitados) seran utilizados en referencia a mi voz, ideas, y escritos.

Yo entiendo que hay limite de seis meses se le daria a Cynthia Soto en el uso de los datos recopilados que le otorgo a ella.

Mi decision de participar es voluntaria y no afectara mi estatus de participante en la investigacion, Constance Hulbert Elementary, YISD, o el programa de estudios de UTEP.

Mi firma reconoce que yo he lei y comprendido las declaraciones escritas arriba.

Por el presente yo doy NO doy permiso a mi hijo(a)

_____ Name	_____ Firma (padre or guardian)	_____ Date
_____ Name	_____ firma (estudiante)	_____ Date

Dirija cualquier pregunta a:
Cynthia Soto O Dr.Heriberto Godina Ph. (915)433-0494 (915)747-5787

Appendix D

Career Survey

Please indicate by circling whether the following professions belong to a male, female, or both.

Doctor	male	female	both
Nurse	male	female	both
Teacher	male	female	both
Scientist	male	female	both
Professional soccer player	male	female	both
Astronaut	male	female	both
Professional Basketball player	male	female	both
Dentist	male	female	both
Mechanic	male	female	both
Dancer	male	female	both
Cheerleader	male	female	both
Lawyer	male	female	both
Police Officer	male	female	both
Firefighter	male	female	both
Hair Stylist	male	female	both
Artist	male	female	both

Appendix E

Directions: Please indicate how you feel about the sentences below by using the numbers 1 – 5. 1 meaning you disagree a lot and 5 meaning you agree a lot with the sentence, or 3 you don't care. Please use the table below to help you describe how you feel.

For example: __2__ Only girls can be Nurses. I put the number 2 because I disagree a little.

Students Social Gender Expectations|

Gender Roles Questionnaire

1 ____ Disagree a lot

2 ____ Disagree a little

3 ____ Don't Care

4 ____ Agree a little

5 ____ Agree a lot

____ Boys are stronger than girls.

____ Only girls can wear pink.

____ Boys can't be cheerleaders.

____ Girls can be doctors.

____ Football is for boys.

____ Cleaning is just for girls.

____ Cooking is just for girls.



Vitae

Cynthia Soto was born in El Paso, Texas in 1985. She attended the Socratic Magnet School for Future Teachers and Coaches at Riverside High School. She graduated from Riverside High School in the spring of 2003 and entered the University of Texas at El Paso with the Teachers in Training Scholarship. She received her Bachelor of Arts in Interdisciplinary Studies with a minor in Elementary Education. She was hired as a fifth-grade bilingual teacher in Fall of 2007 by the Ysleta Independent School District. She feels passionate about her profession. After teaching fifth-grade for one year, she decided to pursue a Masters degree in reading from the University of Texas at El Paso.

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