UNIT 4 Teaching and learning

This unit focuses on individual teachers and their students. What goes on in a classroom links both to a whole school approach and the wider context. There is always an interplay between them – changes in one area influence and are influenced by changes in another.

- The unit looks at ways of becoming more gender-responsive through approaches to teaching and learning that can lead to changes in ideas, attitudes and gender identities
- It provides practical ideas about how to 'do things differently' drawn from the experiences of other teachers
- It leads up to an action plan to follow up your learning in this unit

You can work through this unit in a variety of ways. Teachers may want to work through it on their own or collaboratively. The unit can provide an outline for a training programme. A headteacher or senior manager can use the topics to think about teaching and learning as part of a whole school approach.

Topic 4.1 Entry points
What are the issues in your classroom and your work as a teacher?
This topic will help you:
- Describe and analyse gender issues in your classroom
- Identify key themes in accounts of teachers' situations

Topic 4.2 Curriculum
We have noted the importance of the curriculum. What does this mean in the classroom? This topic will help you to:
- Explain how curriculum can affect gender equality in the classroom
- Identify actions you could take in your own classroom and changes calling for a whole school approach.

Topic 4.3 Classroom dynamics
By dynamics we mean the relationships between children and teachers and also practical Tand physical arrangements. This topic will help you to:
- Explain how classroom dynamics can affect gender equality
- Identify actions to take in your own classroom and changes calling for a whole school approach.

Topic 4.4 Underachievement

In this topic we explore further the whole question of underachievement, of both boys and girls. This topic will help you to:

- Explain what you understand by underachievement
- Analyse examples of underachievement in your context
- Plan ways of tackling underachievement

Topic 4.5 Teaching and learning for change

Becoming more gender-responsive, calls not only for technical and practical changes, but also for a different approach to teaching and learning. This topic will help you to:
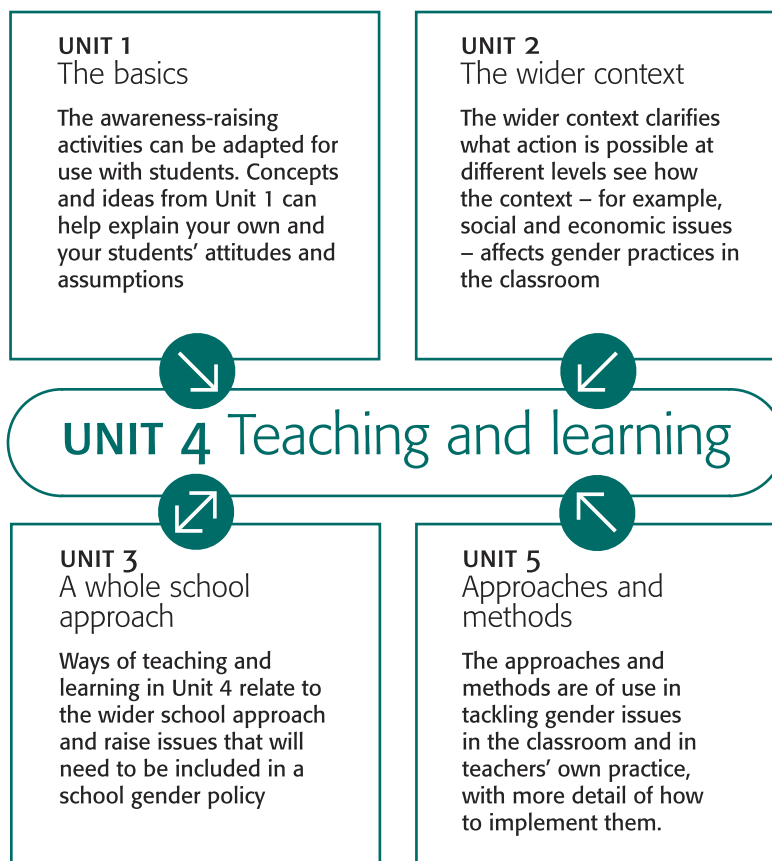
- Identify ways of teaching and learning to enable changes in ideas, attitudes and identities
- Plan different approaches to teaching and learning

Topic 4.6 Making changes last

After working through this unit you may be inspired with ideas about how you might do things differently. But how can you make these changes, and how can you make them stick? This topic will help you to:

- Identify your challenges and opportunities for making changes
- Devise ways of making them part of a whole school approach
- See how the action research approach can empower you
- Draw up a personal action plan

Links

UNIT 1
The basics

The awareness-raising activities can be adapted for use with students. Concepts and ideas from Unit 1 can help explain your own and your students' attitudes and assumptions

UNIT 2
The wider context

The wider context clarifies what action is possible at different levels see how the context – for example, social and economic issues – affects gender practices in the classroom

UNIT 4 Teaching and learning

UNIT 3
A whole school approach

Ways of teaching and learning in Unit 4 relate to the wider school approach and raise issues that will need to be included in a school gender policy

UNIT 5
Approaches and methods

The approaches and methods are of use in tackling gender issues in the classroom and in teachers' own practice, with more detail of how to implement them.

Topic 4.1 Entry points

We start by asking you to build up a picture of what is actually going on. What are the issues in your classroom and your work as a teacher?

This topic will help you to:
*   Describe and analyse gender issues in your classroom
*   Identify key themes in accounts of teachers' situations

To start with, here's an activity to reflect on your experiences as a teacher.

Describe your own classroom or a day in your life as a teacher. Try to build up a full and rich picture of what it's like. If you work with several classes or groups, choose the one that seems to you most typical.

For this activity you don't have to do a formal written account. You could draw picture or a diagram showing what goes on. You could do a mind map or spidergram. Write if you want to. Whatever format you choose, describe the class – what it's like, practical arrangements and physical environment; the pupils – how many boys and girls, how they behave, the relationships and dynamics; and your place in the classroom – for example, your physical position and your relationship to the pupils, your role, style and behaviour.

For example, what do you see each morning? Try to be specific and personal rather than making generalisations.

ACTIVITY **Teacher's reflection**

If you need to, take a separate sheet of paper for your description or picture. If you are writing the description, aim to write 250-300 words. If drawing or doing a diagram, keep it to one page.

Do your description quickly, without analysing too much.

ACTIVITY 4.1.1

We hope you enjoyed that exercise. It can be a good way of bringing to light things you may take for granted.

Now read these accounts of other teachers' experiences and classroom situations. As you read, make notes or underline key themes. Compare the accounts with your own experiences.

The first examples describe classroom conditions and how teachers respond in three Mozambique secondary schools.

Teachers' reflections from Mozambique

Teacher 1

In the classroom I chose for the classroom description there are no rigid criteria (defined by the school headteacher) to establish the way students sit. In these cases students sit based on friendship relations, interests, affinity. Occasionally I reorder students according to their affinities and behaviour. Students' desks are organised in lines and they sit in pairs.

On those days when the students do group activities, desks are organised according to the number composing each group (which varies from 6 to 8). Group formation does not obey a specific rule or rules either. I give the student the opportunity to choose her/his own group, but sometimes I interfere in order to establish gender balance.

In circumstances where I have given homework previously, classes begin with homework correction. I select students to go to the blackboard insisting on both girls and boys and not just those students who show interest in collaborating spontaneously.

Teacher 2

On my first working day as a teacher I was given a 6th grade class. It was a co-educational school.

Once my activity was supposed to happen outside the classroom. I noticed while it was taking place that when students organised themselves in groups, boys placed themselves at the front, while girls formed their own group. I could easily see that boys demonstrated self-confidence while girls were, apparently, showing despair during the activities. I felt I needed to encourage girls when they showed concern because they did not seem to be used to that type of activity.

In my view girls need more attention than boys when confronted with a new situation that exposes them to others.

In an activity based on trial and error, I notice that usually girls get confused and adopt a defensive attitude. I can also observe that despite the fact that there are more girls than boys, they let themselves be guided by boys.

Teacher 3

I begin the class with a general welcome, followed by revision of the contents of the previous class and homework correction. After this I start to explain new content, creating an environment of interaction with the students. I finish the class with a short evaluation.

Boys usually don't volunteer to do homework correction or to go to the blackboard to do exercises. I try to create the necessary conditions in order to make girls participate.

Classroom dynamics depend on the classroom organisation. The classrooms I work in have desks meant for 50 to 60 students but now accommodate 125, many of them sitting on the floor. This necessarily affects some aspects in classroom dynamics, such as my control of the students. This is limited due to the lack of space inside the classroom for me to move around and compromises the process of teaching and learning.

As a teacher I notice that girls' participation is still weak. It is my task to develop the necessary mechanisms to improve girl's participation.

[Southern Africa trialling workshop]

The second example is a step-by-step account of classroom practice. It does not specifically address gender issues, but it suggests that a detailed observation of what actually happens in a classroom could be used as a starting point to analyse such things as dynamics, relationships, and teaching and learning styles.

Teachers' behaviour

English

1 The teacher routinely articulates some housekeeping information in relation to students' work for internal assessment, homework and prescribed readers. Teacher routinely parades around face-to-face with students marking their homework.

2 The teacher randomly nominates students to give a brief description of their project rationale. Students get up one by one to do this.

3 The teacher re-emphasises important points to follow prior to nominating a few other students, maybe 4 or 5. Students who haven't had turns follow suit.

4 Shared reading of short story – the teacher nominates a student to begin reading 2–4 lines and the reading goes around the room until everyone has a turn (30 minutes of class).

5 In a brainstorming session, the teacher initiates an interaction pattern by a random selection of students to provide responses to her line of questions.

Mathematics

1 The teacher signals (non-verbally) to students not to talk and gets on with the work on the board. Girls do the task in uncertain slow

motion.

2   The teacher nominates a student to read out his/her answers to homework problems.

3   The teacher further demonstrates solving some complicated maths equation on the board, calling out for students to take part in the process.

4   The teacher calls out to continue with the rest of the problems in the textbook for the remaining class time and for homework.

5   The teacher goes around the room interacting with individual students, assisting and checking their progress.

[Samoa Gender Analysis Study]

The third examples give very personal accounts from the viewpoints of a teacher and student from the Trinidad and Tobago Action Project.

Reflections from a teacher and student

A teacher's viewpoint

Situated in the foothills is School A. Expectations are high among the teaching fraternity, and why not? Here we have a creative bunch of students who find novel ways of expressing themselves verbally and otherwise. It is not uncommon to be passing by a classroom and hear conversations that describe their exploits. Their language is usually colourful, and if you stay long enough, you would see actions and gestures that are commensurate with what is said. Those activities though, are the adventures of students who were sentenced here. Their days are spent dodging the Safety Officers and Deans who are yet to find equally creative ways to counter theirs.

There are others who believe school is a large baby-sitting facility. Informal conversations with them reveal that they 'don't like school' but they have to come because no one is at home to look after them, and 'my mother say she not leaving we home alone'. In spite of teachers' discomfort with the focus of the students, they spend their time counselling, guiding, chiding, scolding, empathising, reprimanding and loving these students.

At the school we compete with the groundsmen and women, who whack, pound, saw, drag and do all manner of physical labour, for a time to teach in relative silence. As far as the sights and scents go, at any time during the day one can get a strong 'whiff' of tobacco from the nearby cigarette factory, or the over-powering 'fragrance' of the garbage dumpster when being emptied can certainly nauseate you. The pile of rubble at the side or back of the school appears to be a permanent fixture. I hate to mention having to work in an environment so cramped for space that the assembly hall is shared with the driveway that carries one from the gateway to the muster point

cum play area cum car park. Do we have fun here? Do we enjoy our teaching experience? We manage, particularly when we are reminded that every setback is supposed to prepare us for something more worthwhile. We liaise with parents in an attempt to get them more involved in the learning experience of their children, but alas, they seem more wary than we are. We need a culture change.

A student's view-point
I hate school and I hate them teachers. They always 'jumbie-ing' [harassing] we.

Teachers always seem to be interfering with our games of cards or shilling throws or cell-phone conversations. In addition, why not allow us to wear our uniforms as we please? After all uniforms have nothing to do with learning. All yuh teachers should concentrate on teaching and doh bother with we. We know all yuh doing all you job but we like what we doing.

Yes, education important but we know a lot of people who did not finish school and they are making more money than you teachers. Anyway when I leave here I am going to meet my mother in America. My pardner here, he is getting everything he wants so he doesn't have to bother about school. The girls could get rich men to take care of them, so they are cool. Not all of them though. Some of them prefer to do hairdressing and fixing nails. You don't see their bags? Gel, powder, lip-gloss and combs; but school doesn't cater for that.

We don't really see the need for Spanish and science because we really not looking for any big work. We just want to survive. No, we cannot stay at home. Our parents say it is not safe and they are not leaving us at home alone. Look, I want to be successful but success does not have to mean books. Everybody cannot take books. Who could take it, that's good for them. I am not on any fighting scene. No, we are not on any fighting scene, I only want to survive. Yes, we only want to survive.

[TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO ACTION PROJECT]

Did you recognise aspects of your own experiences in these accounts? Did you respond more to the personal accounts or the more factual observations? Building up a picture of what actually goes on can help you observe and analyse all aspects of the situation.

Now look again at your own description with a more critical, analytical eye. Think about the issues raised by the examples. Think about what is going on in terms of gender. To do the next activity, look at your account, and answer 'yes' or 'no'. If you answer 'yes', then see if you can write short answers to the questions. For each question, ask too 'which boys? and 'which girls?' rather than seeing them as uniform blocks.

ACTIVITY **Analysis of reflection**

From your reflection and in your experience:

Do any social issues affect boys and girls differently?
Yes/ No Which issues?

Do girls and boys see themselves differently?
Yes/ No In what ways?

Do classroom arrangements and relationships affect boys and girls differently? Yes/ No In what ways?

Do boys and girls have different levels of achievement?
Yes/ No What are the differences?

Do boys and girls relate differently to different subjects?
Yes/ No Which subjects?

Do they learn in different ways?
Yes/ No What are the differences?

Does the way you teach affect girls and boys differently?
Yes/ No How?

ACTIVITY 4.1.2

Remember, there are no right or wrong answers. Just try to understand exactly what is going on and why. For example, many teachers find on reflection that they have different expectations of boys and girls influenced perhaps by the kind of stereotypes discussed in Topic 1.2. In addition, classroom processes themselves are involved in creating the children's gender identities.

The main themes that emerge from these and other teachers' accounts, and perhaps too from your activities, are:
- Curriculum issues
- Classroom dynamics
- Children's perceptions of what it means to be a girl or boy and the different forms that masculine and feminine identity may take
- Underachievement
- Teaching and learning styles

The rest of this unit looks at these themes. Although they are discussed as separate topics, they are of course tightly connected in practice.

ACTIVITY **Prioritising**

Before carrying on with this unit, which of these themes are the most important in your context?

Prioritise them from 1 most important to 5 least important.

☐ Curriculum issues

☐ Classroom dynamics

☐ Children's own perceptions of what it means to be a girl or boy

☐ Underachievements

☐ Teaching and learning styles.

ACTIVITY 4.1.3

In trying to better understand and analyse what goes on in your classroom, there are two useful approaches covered in Unit 5.

- Action research. Your reflection on your practice is the first step in action research – understanding what is going on and what the issues are before taking action to make changes.
- Gender analysis. Your account of your classroom is a first step – as a description. You can carry your analysis further, adding more detail or quantitative data.

You may find it useful to look now at these topics in Unit 5 to see how these approaches can help before working through the rest of this unit.

Review

As in earlier units, at the end of each topic there is a chance to review what you have covered. Look again at the objectives at the beginning of this topic and at your answers to the activities. You should now be better able to:

- Build up a picture of gender issues in the context of your classroom
- Identify the main themes in teaching and learning that affect gender equality
- Analyse and reflect on your own experiences as the first steps to thinking about change

Topic 4.2 Curriculum

When what happens in the classroom is considered, the curriculum always emerges as a key theme.

This topic will help you to:
*   Explain how the curriculum can affect gender equality in the classroom
*   Identify actions that you could take in your own classroom and changes that call for a whole school approach

To recap from Topic 2.2 The national context, the word 'curriculum' in its broad sense is all the experiences that students undergo at school. It includes the official curriculum, the enacted curriculum (what is taught) and the hidden curriculum.

However, the word may be used more specifically to mean different things in different contexts. For example:
• A syllabus/ a body of knowledge
• A set of objectives or goals
• The process of teaching and learning
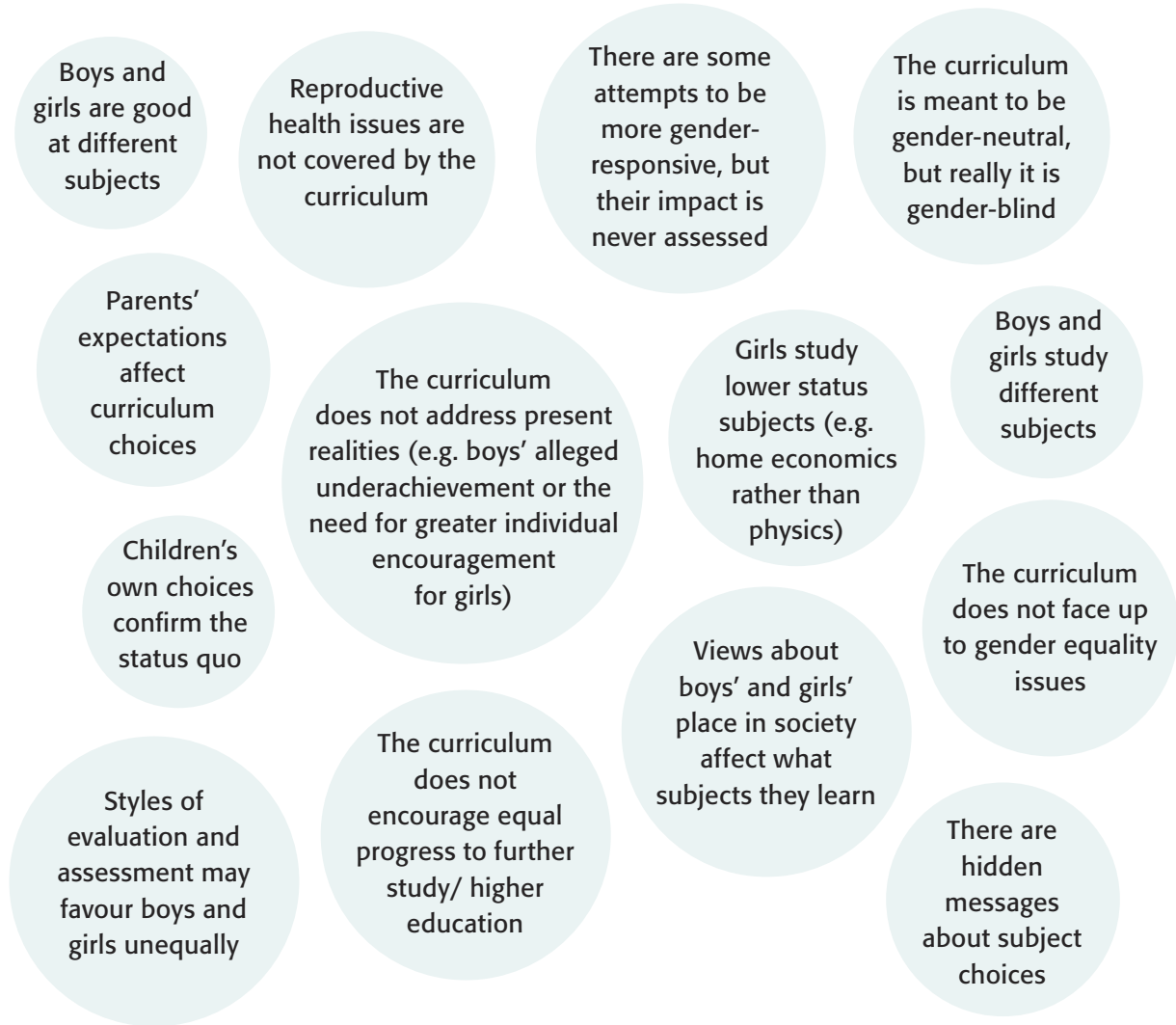• A commitment to values, e.g., emancipation or transformation.

In this topic it is used mainly to describe the subjects taught or the courses of study available in a school. It covers the curriculum offered to students, the choices they make and curriculum content, including textbooks and materials.

The curriculum may be laid down at the national (or sub-national) level. It may be limited by assessment and qualification frameworks. But whatever the constraints, you need to understand the impact of the curriculum and identify openings for making change, whether within your own practice and school or by efforts to influence policy and the wider context.
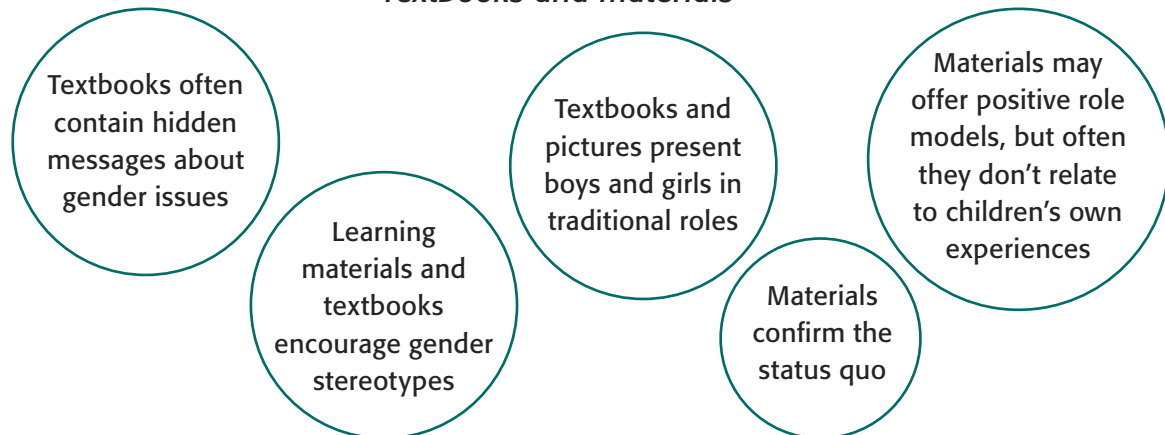
Here are a range of statements about gender equality and curriculum questions.

The curriculum, learning materials and gender equality

Curriculum offer, choices and content

Boys and girls are good at different subjects

Reproductive health issues are not covered by the curriculum

There are some attempts to be more gender-responsive, but their impact is never assessed

The curriculum is meant to be gender-neutral, but really it is gender-blind

Parents' expectations affect curriculum choices

The curriculum does not address present realities (e.g. boys' alleged underachievement or the need for greater individual encouragement for girls)

Girls study lower status subjects (e.g. home economics rather than physics)

Boys and girls study different subjects

Children's own choices confirm the status quo

The curriculum does not face up to gender equality issues

Views about boys' and girls' place in society affect what subjects they learn

Styles of evaluation and assessment may favour boys and girls unequally

The curriculum does not encourage equal progress to further study/ higher education

There are hidden messages about subject choices

Textbooks and materials

Textbooks often contain hidden messages about gender issues

Learning materials and textbooks encourage gender stereotypes

Textbooks and pictures present boys and girls in traditional roles

Materials confirm the status quo

Materials may offer positive role models, but often they don't relate to children's own experiences

ACTIVITY **Curriculum impact**

Look carefully at the statements above and tick the ones that you think apply to your classroom or your experience.

ACTIVITY 4.2.1

Here are some examples relating to gender equality in the curriculum and possible ways to develop a more gender-responsive curriculum.

First, here's a reading that considers what is meant by 'a gender-just and empowering curriculum' with an example.

A gender-just and empowering curriculum

A gender-just and empowering curriculum should have the potential to enable students to critically engage with and challenge received knowledge about fixed gender identities. Insights from women's studies and the women's movement both in this country and in other parts of the world over the past twenty years have enriched our understanding of how education can form a part of this project of possibility.

Experiences of literacy activists and those engaged in teaching women's studies at the university level show that it is possible to integrate gender into the curriculum, not as marginal or incidental but as critical to the content of different subject areas. The content itself can then be made to take on wider dimensions, involving various subject areas in the school curriculum. Feminist critiques of knowledge also have the potential to influence more just and inclusive pedagogical practices and facilitate creation of 'child-friendly' classrooms that empower students as well as teachers. They open up possibilities for gender inclusion in an integrated approach within and across different core academic areas of the school curriculum.

Assuming that the evolutionary approach to education involves building upon experiences and thought structures that are familiar, the curriculum will have to be designed such that it helps the child critically understand her surroundings before recognising and negotiating other contexts. The themes that become important in such a context will have to relate to work, body, sexuality, marriage, parenthood, family, caste, community, state, modernity, economy, violence, conflict, heterogeneity and hierarchy. These cross cut into language, social science and science. As against the surfeit of information that is sought to be passed on to the student, the emphasis should be on introducing these issues and developing critical thinking through them. These themes could be taken up in each of the subjects that are taught at school at every stage. Complexity in thinking can be introduced as the stages advance. Higher stage here would therefore indicate strengthening of critical tools rather than accumulation of information.

Source: National Council of Educational Research and Training (2006) 'National Focus Group on Gender Issues in Education', Position Paper, National Council of Educational Research and Training, New Delhi.

This is an example of an integrated approach across disciplines. It comes from a curriculum module developed by Nirantar for rural girls and women.

Properties of water

How does rainfall occur?	Three states of water • Water cycle • Rainfall • Monsoon
How do plants absorb nutrients from the soil? How does water get polluted?	Solvency • Plant nutrition • Water pollution
How does life exist in water?	Oxygen content • Life in water

Water and the environment

Where does water come from? How are seas, oceans, rivers formed?	Natural sources of water • Rivers, lakes, seas • Underground water
What are our local water resources?	Water resource mapping· • Local/regional/national
Why do wells dry up? How do handpumps work? Are big dams more beneficial than small?	Relationship between natural and man-made sources of water • Understanding the water table • Handpumps • Systems of irrigation • Environmental impact of big dams
How do people in desert areas procure water? What causes droughts?	Water in different eco-systems • Water sources in desert areas • Water sources in mountainous regions • Droughts and floods

Social aspects of water

Who controls the village well?	Caste and class • Purity and pollution • Control over water resources

Who fetches water?	Gender division of labour and water
Do we have enough water?	Availability of water

Availability of water
- Local and regional agitations for drinking and irrigation water
- Government structure: Water Department·
- Alternative efforts at making water available

Why is clean water essential?	Health

Health
- Body's need for water
- Right to potable water
- Water-borne diseases

Nirantar (1997) 'Windows to the World: Developing a curriculum for rural women', Nirantar, New Delhi, pp. 90–91 (cited in National Council of Educational Research and Training, 2006 – see previous box).

The second example, from the Indian Social Learning Package (see Appendix III for more information), looks at the social themes the package deals with and how children can learn complex values, processes, relations and positions through this holistic approach to the curriculum, with the main focus on objectives relating to understanding, values and attitudes rather than on subject-specific knowledge and competences. (This is for Class 6, Upper Primary School.)

Social learning themes

The Social Learning Package deals with a range of themes that are based on the belief that schooling is an important and influential form of socialisation. Children from an early age are capable of learning complex values, processes, relations and positions, if these are taught and transacted through appropriate methods and tools. The focus is on awareness and empowerment leading to development of critical life skills. It tries to address the established notions of femininity and masculinity in patriarchal societies and is designed to attend to the needs of both boys and girls.

Objectives

Children should be able to:
- Express their thoughts and feelings effectively in different situations and develop basic skills of structured communication
- Establish coherence and harmony within themselves as well as harmony in their relationships with others from different groups.
- Understand the complexities of moral judgements and the gravity of truth and its application in daily life

- Understand the diversities that different cultures have in family structures and practices, and recognise the inequalities that are prevalent in their families and society at large
- Appreciate individual, cultural, social and lingual diversity and understand the social issues connected with them
- Learn team work and understand the importance of organisation, together with adherence to rules
- Acquire skills to plan for a journey and understand the importance of travel for enriching experiences
- Comprehend the functioning of schools and understand the necessity of school as an institution
- Understand the various aspects of elections and democratic governance
- Imbibe some basic survival skills and extend support to accident/disaster victims when the need arises

Unit 1 Expression

Unit 2 My identity

Unit 3 Making one's own judgement

Unit 4 Family

Unit 5 Diversity

Unit 6 Organisation and rules

Unit 7 Travel

Unit 8 School as an institution

Unit 9 Elections and democracy

Unit 10 Our response to accident and disaster

[India Social Learning Package]

The third curriculum example from Trinidad and Tobago shows a teacher taking steps to broaden students' horizons. The example involves looking at career choices, but also at ways of recognising and encouraging children's interests, talents and learning choices.

Broadening student horizons

This report documents some of the events that have taken place at School B with the pilot project that is subsumed under the Action Gender Project. Part of the pilot project revolves around talks by former students and persons who are experts in various non-stereotypical fields with the aim of broadening the horizons of the students. I am documenting two of those experiences.

Visit on 11 February 2009

Eric was a former student of School B. At present he works at one of the oil giants in Trinidad and Tobago and he is also heavily involved in the entertainment industry. I asked him to talk to the students in the latter capacity. He spoke about his years at the school, the passes he

attained and how he went on to further his studies. He said that he learnt some valuable lessons along the way; the theme of 'Never giving up' was one of them. He made special mention of a friend who always told him that he had a gift that should be nurtured.

He mentioned that he worked with some renowned artistes. He has released some videos in various musical genres, but most of his work seemed to be heavily infused with soca. The students seemed to enjoy his presentation as it was spliced with him performing two of his songs for them and a video presentation. He gave the students CDs when they answered questions or participated actively in the session.

In interviews with some of the students after his presentation, two male students revealed that they were also musically inclined; in fact one has participated in a soca competition within his home region and placed third. A female student stated that she has already written songs. When asked what her parents thought of her compositions, she shrugged nonchalantly. She was encouraged to continue writing, continue exploring her talent and perhaps find someone who could nurture her gift.

Visit on 11 March 2009
A five-member team comprised of paramedics and team assistants in their official work gear from a divers company came to speak to the students on possible careers within this field.

The interactive session not only gave the students valuable information in terms of the different levels of emergency response personnel and the necessary qualifications but was also punctuated by demonstrations. The team used the students to feature certain procedures such as cardio pulmonary resuscitation, use of the defibrillator, bandaging and rescue operations on crash sites using specific equipment. The students were also told about the correct use of medication. They were even treated to a tour of an ambulance.

In conversation with two of the male students after this session, they revealed that they do not think that they can see themselves in this line of work. When probed further, they said that they were squeamish and could not stand all the blood and cuts. They said that they feel like vomiting under those circumstances. Some female students, however, did not express such sentiments. In fact, two of them did not have any reservations about this line of work and eagerly grasped the opportunity to explore the ambulance and ask questions.

Another tier of the pilot project involves an on-going student portfolio. As the sessions continue, the students are asked to document their thoughts, beliefs and feelings as well as reflect on their own situations at home and in their community. This portfolio would help give some definition and voice to their ideas.

[Trinidad and Tobago action project]

The final curriculum example is about gender analysis of textbooks. While critiquing the gender messages of traditional textbooks, it also mentions how a team of women were able to produce a more gender-inclusive textbook.

Gender analysis of textbooks

To achieve curriculum objectives, Pakistani schools heavily rely on textbooks as the legitimate and only source of knowledge. Therefore, textbooks were analysed to understand what gender-related messages were passed on to the students. While all textbooks were scanned to identify gender messages, Urdu and English books were particularly analysed because all secondary school students, regardless of their subject stream, study these books.

The analysis revealed that:
- Deeply rooted traditional beliefs and perceptions of women's position in society were portrayed in the text and illustrations. Women are shown in their reproductive roles. Men, on the other hand are portrayed in productive and decision-making roles.
- The visibility of women is very low as compare to men's appearance in the textbooks.
- Women and men are identified with certain stereotypical attributes. For instance, bravery, heroism, honesty and strength are portrayed as male attributes. Caring, self-sacrificing, love and kindness are associated with women.
- Members of the textbook review and authors are almost all men with an insignificant number of female authors.
- However, in one instance, a team of female authors and reviewers were able to produce a comparatively more gender-inclusive textbook (class IX).

The analysis confirms that textbooks used in secondary schools perpetuate the dominant gender ideology.

[Pakistan Gender Analysis Study]

From these examples and your experiences and reflection, try to identify changes that could be made to make the curriculum you teach more gender-responsive, and how these changes might be made. Divide the changes into:
- Things you yourself could do,
- Things that need a whole school approach, and
- Things that demand change on a wider scale.

Try to think of at least one change relating to each area.

ACTIVITY **Changing the curriculum**

	Changes in your classroom	Whole school approach	Wider policy change
Curriculum on offer			
Curriculum choices by students			
Curriculum content			
Textbooks and materials			

ACTIVITY 4.2.2

Here is how a group of teachers from Malawi responded to this activity.

Changing the curriculum

	Changes in your classroom	**Whole school approach**	**Wider policy change**
Curriculum on offer	Introduce a new subject Infuse some emerging issues	Form clubs Invite specialists from outside Look at spread of subjects on termly basis and change where necessary	Govt to offer guidance through policy
Curriculum choices by students	Give students information through careers talks – information to be gender-neutral	Introduce a curriculum form and give to students Avoid offering subjects not helpful in future	Incorporate ideas from school and form a policy for all
Curriculum content	Infuse emerging issues e.g. gender, HIV and AIDS	Have support structures through meetings/ committees Balance number of boys and girls in subjects	Curriculum panel to incorporate different practices
Textbooks and material	Not to use books that are not gender-sensitive Use books on gender-sensitivity for purposes of discussion	Monitor textbooks used and avoid wrong books Selection committee to be set up	Curriculum to prescribe gender

[SOUTHERN AFRICA TRIALLING WORKSHOP]

Further suggestions include:

- Involve pupils in the processes of change, for example, through discussion, challenging their assumptions and choices or using role-play to raise their awareness (see Topic 4.5)
- Discuss with colleagues and make alliances in the search for solutions
- Get the issue included as part of staff development and ongoing professional development
- Raise it as part of a whole school approach
- Raise the issue with parents to encourage them to think about their own expectations and assumptions

Review

As before, at the end of this topic here is a chance to review what you have covered. Look again at the objectives at the beginning of the topic and at your answers to the activities. You should now be better able to:

- See how curriculum issues and choices can have an impact on gender equality
- Find ways of making changes to the curriculum to make it more gender-responsive

Topic 4.3 Classroom dynamics

Whatever the curriculum as discussed in Topic 4.2 may be, it cannot be separated from the dynamics of a classroom. By this we mean the relationships among the children and between the children and teacher – the way they interact and behave towards each other – and also the practical and physical arrangements that can affect the dynamics.

This topic will help you to:
- Explain how classroom dynamics can affect gender equality
- Identify actions that you could take in your own classroom and changes that call for a whole school approach

Here are some accounts of aspects of classroom dynamics for you to read. Once again, as you read, think about how these experiences compare with your own. The first two examples are from Pakistan. One looks at the way students occupy physical space, while the other looks at the complex issue of mixed or single-sex classes.

Gender and space

Gender differences were observed in the four study schools in terms of how male and female students occupied physical space. Observations of classroom teaching and learning, games lessons and recess hours revealed a gender pattern in this regard. For instance, girls were found huddled together both inside and outside the classroom, while boys occupied space more comfortably by spreading around. This was also explicit in teachers' descriptions of how boys and girls occupy space available in a science laboratory. According to a science teacher, generally girls would hover around one table while doing experiments. Boys, on the other hand, would spread out and occupy all the tables. The science teacher interpreted it as girls' attempts at seeking security and help from their peers. These patterns of students' occupying space, in other words, can be associated with hierarchical social structures in which women are considered weak and dependent. Furthermore, socialisation of females into feminity and feminine ways to conduct themselves could be yet another explanation of this behaviour.

[PAKISTAN GENDER ANALYSIS STUDY]

Studying together?

The case study schools offer an interesting picture of schools' and communities' efforts to ensure gender equity in accessing education at secondary level.

Except for the single-sex government girls' school, all the schools offered co-education. School D was established as a facility for both boys and girls from a community with a low socio-economic background. To address disciplinary issues arising from boys' conduct towards girls, the school administration and the board of governors decided to shift to single-sex classrooms. At present, girls and boys from grade six onward study in their own sex groups. The chairman of the School Management Committee regarded it as a timely measure to encourage girls to stay on. The single-sex instructions have posed a huge challenge to the teachers. The disruptive attitude of boys has been reported as a constant hindering factor in these classrooms. Boys admitted creating nonsense in the classrooms and believed that girls' presence there would have made them more focused on their studies as their underperformance in front of girls would be unacceptable to them. Girls, however, felt more comfortable in single-sex classrooms and did not see any reason for replacing this with co-education. Minimum interaction with boys, they viewed, makes the classroom an enabling environment and more acceptable for their parents.

On the other hand School P started off as a secondary school with single-sex instruction for girls and boys. The school management, particularly the principal, found boys underperforming due to their disruptive behaviour in the classroom and decided to switch to co-education as a measure to address these issues. Both female and male students find that co-education boosts their confidence and that it keeps them (boys) focused on their studies. Inability to respond to teachers' questions or low-level participation in classroom processes becomes a challenge for male students in female classmates' presence. Studying together with boys in the same classroom boosts girls' confidence and morale. Besides, girls reported on the liveliness of the classroom environment due to boys' constant jokes. Observations and focus group discussion data reveal boys' visibility in the classrooms through their jokes and disruptive attitude. As a result, they remained the focus of teachers' attention in all lessons. In one instance, an extra teacher was present to monitor boys' engagement in the assigned tasks. While there was unanimous agreement on bringing challenging tasks to the teaching and learning to engage boys, female teachers disagreed with a male teacher that boys posed more challenges to female teachers than to male teachers.

This school offers an opportunity for boys and girls to study together throughout their school years in the same classrooms. However, the

gender divide is very visible outside the classroom. The playground and courtyard where students spend their recess and sports periods are separate for boys and girls. Both courtyards have separate tuck shops with exclusively male and female staff.

[Pakistan Gender Analysis Study]

The next example looks at 'eve-teasing' as an example of sexual harassment in the dynamics between boys and girls, and sometimes between students and teachers.

Eve teasing

A research study in Rajasthan in India looked at the problem of 'eve teasing' among school-going girls in an in-depth manner. The study addressed the following broad questions:

- Is eve-teasing a widespread phenomenon, or non-existent?
- Who are the eve-teasers and how do they behave?
- How do girls in the given social environment deal with eve teasing?
- How does society view this problem and what concrete help can girls who face eve teasing anticipate from it?

The findings were that eve teasing is a social crime and happens everywhere in schools and in homes irrespective of caste and creed. Many girls who encounter eve teasing are unable to share their experiences due to deep-seated socialisation patterns and there is loss of self-confidence. Some of the findings of the study include:

- A significant result of the survey was that as high as one-third of the respondents faced at least one incident of eve-teasing in their lives.
- The analysis of eve-teasing faced by rural and urban school students disclosed that a higher proportion of girls going to schools in rural areas faced eve-teasing compared to those going to urban-based schools.
- The most common forms of eve teasing included staring, winking, following and whistling/singing. A significant 13 per cent of the girls stated experiencing more serious forms of eve-teasing, which involve physical harassment.
- A considerable proportion of the eve-teasers belong to the age-group 15-20 years in every category of eve-teasing.
- As high as one half of the girls were too scared to react, or ignored the eve-teaser at the point of time they were being harassed. However, in one-third of the cases, the girls actively retaliated, either verbally or by striking back. In another 4 per cent of cases, the girl looked for help either from people around or by calling someone on the phone.
- During the study 83 students in the five blocks spoke clearly of an experience of eve-teasing by their male teachers or staff that they had personally gone through, or knew of a school student

who had. It was found that harassment by male teachers or staff usually takes several forms. Calling a girl student to his room on the pretext of checking her copy and then trying to touch her; attempting to force himself on a girl student who comes to him for tuition after sending off the rest; putting his leg on a girl student's feet after making her sit next to him and so on were the various ways of sexual harassment by teachers described by the students.

A teachers' discussion raised various questions related to these findings. Some of the teachers felt that girls themselves are to be blamed, as they 'invite trouble'. Others argued that such problems faced by girls should be taken seriously and redressal mechanisms should be put in place. It was felt that with support/help from teachers and parents, the ills of eve-teasing within and outside schools could be addressed.

[India Action Project]

The third example is an account of changes to arrangements and how they changed relations and behaviour in the classroom.

Changing the environment
OBJECTIVE 1: Create more gender-friendly school and classroom environments

Context and Progress

The research project carried out in 2007 identified the practice of ability-streaming as one of the root causes for the persistent gender gap in performance between boys and girls in Seychelles. The trend has been for girls to outperform boys in national exams at primary six and secondary five levels for the last few years and for top ability classes to be dominated by girls. The report also noted the segregated seating arrangements in classrooms, which did not favour healthy relationships and exchange between boys and girls.

Activity 1: De-stream classes and introduce more gender balance

> *Indicators:* *Percentage of high/low achievers in each class*
> *Ratio of boys/girls in each class*

At the start of the academic year in January 2008, Secondary School B de-streamed all of its five secondary 1 classes and introduced more gender balance. Clear and transparent criteria for grouping students, taking into account performance, gender and feeder schools, were established. This is in sharp contrast to situations prevailing in previous years where all top classes were skewed in favour of girls. There is now a healthier balance of boys and girls in each class both in terms of ability and gender. Seating arrangements are mixed.

At School A, classes continue to be streamed by ability but efforts have been made to have equal numbers of boys and girls in each class.

Seating arrangements have been modified so that boys and girls are mixed and not strictly segregated as was the case last year.
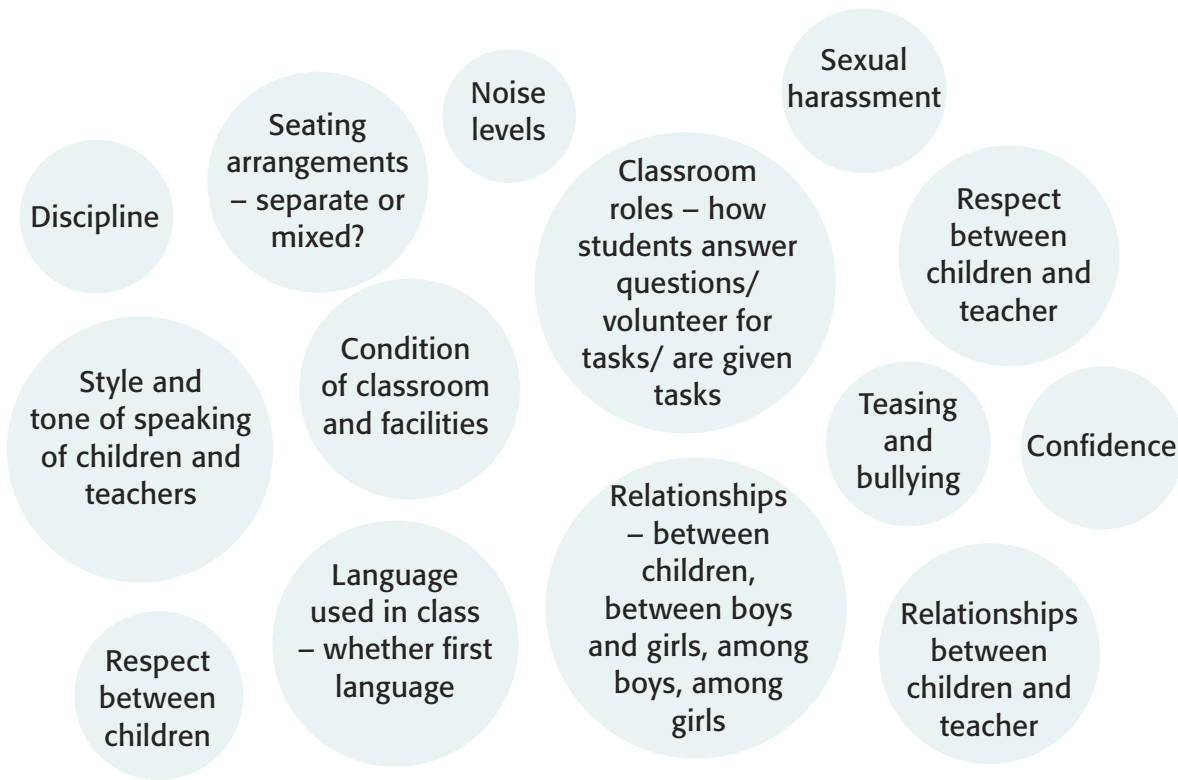
Initial reactions

Questionnaires were distributed to 148 parents of secondary 1 students at School B on 22 January to gauge their reactions to the changes, and 120 questionnaires were returned. Results show that the majority are in favour of gender-balanced and mixed ability classes. All respondents (87) who commented on gender-balanced classes were positive about the change, stating it would develop friendship, understanding and respect and create a better society by promoting equal opportunities and life chances. Parents were more apprehensive of mixed ability classes: 76 parents commented positively on mixed ability classes, stating it would benefit the weaker pupils and encourage competition; 21 parents expressed concern that weak students would disturb the class and slow down the pace of work of brighter students; and others felt that the weak ones would be left behind. Parents will need to be reassured that mixed ability teaching will not adversely affect their children's progress.

At Secondary School A, the headteacher and teachers have remarked on a significant change of ethos in the classes as noted in diary entries and minutes of meetings. The noise level has reduced and classes remain on task even when left unsupervised. Some parents have already noticed a positive change in the attitude of their boys.

[Seychelles Action Project]

Of course here we can only include a small number of examples, covering just a few aspects of classroom dynamics – use of space, mixed versus single-sex classes, sexual harassment, and changing ability streaming and segregated seating. Do these echo your experiences or would you stress other aspects?

Here are some features affecting classroom dynamics and gender relations that different teachers have observed.

Sexual harassment

Noise levels

Seating arrangements – separate or mixed?

Discipline

Classroom roles – how students answer questions/ volunteer for tasks/ are given tasks

Respect between children and teacher

Style and tone of speaking of children and teachers

Condition of classroom and facilities

Teasing and bullying

Confidence

Relationships – between children, between boys and girls, among boys, among girls

Language used in class – whether first language

Respect between children

Relationships between children and teacher

And going beyond the classroom itself:

Behaviour in playgrounds

Behaviour in corridors

Use of toilet and other facilities

Next as an activity, go back to the picture of your own classroom you built up in Activities 4.4.1 and 4.4.2, looking again at the question:

• Do classroom arrangements and relationships affect boys and girls differently? In what ways?

ACTIVITY **Gender impacts of classroom dynamics**

Note which of the features described in this topic and listed above are relevant in your classroom.

Note other features that you think influence the gender dynamics in your class.

ACTIVITY 4.3.1

This activity will have drawn on your own experiences. It is another example of gender analysis and small-scale investigation that could be the first step of an action research process for you – identifying a problem and observing what is going on.

The next question is what causes the problem(s)? You may find deep underlying causes: how girls and boys see themselves; social, family or peer expectations; fixed ideas about what girls and boys are like; and also set views of what a teacher should be like. In Topic 4.5 we will look at some ways of tackling these deep-seated issues.

But you may also give simpler reasons, and for these there could be practical solutions to make the classroom more gender-responsive.

Here are some possible solutions to issues of dynamics and communication from other teachers' experiences in one secondary school in India.

Some practical solutions
School S

- **Prayer:** Equal participation of boys and girls in leading prayers during prayer meeting, group song, pledge, news reading. To encourage the use of musical instruments during morning assembly
- **Classroom Cleanliness:** Identifying four students each day according to their roll numbers for cleaning the classroom.
- **Toilet Facilities:** Regular cleaning of the toilets by using phenyl, napthelyne balls, acid.
- **School Management:** Reorganising of present school committees by ensuring equal participation of male and female teachers.
- **Games:** Due to the lack of playground facility in the school, indoor games such as badminton, carom-board, chess, table-tennis, ludo, ring ball, skipping and disc throwing will be encouraged.
- **Library:** Forming a library committee for boys and girls for issuing books to them.
- **School Incharge:** To ensure equal participation of male and female teachers by allotting equal duties/tasks to them.
- **Educational Tour:** Organising excursion /educational tours in a year according to the session calendar.
- **Student Assembly and Cultural Programmes:** Ensuring equal participation of boys and girls in the programme according to their skill. Rewards will be given to the students to encourage their participation in school activities.
- **Health Programme:** Organising a health camp in the school for regular health checkup of students and teachers and to generate awareness among the adolescents regarding health and hygiene.
- **Social Awareness:** Encouraging the students to participate in role-

> plays, discussions etc. on topics related to social issues to make them aware about these
> - **MTA/Teachers Meeting:** Creation of Mother-Teacher Association to provide individual and group counselling to boys and girls to deal with the problems they face during the adolescent period.
>
> [INDIA ACTION PROJECT]

These may seem relatively straightforward solutions, but they call for consultation and for support from the head or colleagues. Each change could be a small action research project; after observation and analysis, a change is planned and implemented, and its impact is monitored and evaluated.

In this way teachers can be empowered to make their own changes.

ACTIVITY Changing classroom dynamics

Identify three changes you could make in your classroom that will improve classroom dynamics and make it more gender-responsive.

1

2

3

ACTIVITY 4.3.3

We will come back to your ideas at the end of this unit.

Review

Now that you have reached the end of this topic, here is a chance to review what you have covered. Look again at the objectives at the beginning of the topic and at your answers to the activities. You should be better able to:

- Think about relationships and practical arrangements in your classroom to see how they can have an impact on gender responsiveness
- Analyse causes and effects of these dynamics
- Identify possible areas for action in your classroom

Topic 4.4 Underachievement

We've talked about providing equality of opportunity and trying to make sure that in terms of both the curriculum and the classroom dynamics you are gender-responsive. In this topic we explore further the whole question of underachievement – of both boys and girls.

This topic will help you to:
•   Explain what you understand by underachievement
•   Analyse examples of underachievement in your context
•   Plan ways of tackling underachievement

Before going on with this topic, think quickly about what you understand by the term 'underachievement'.

ACTIVITY **What is underachievement?**

What were the first things you thought of when you saw the heading 'Underachievement'?

ACTIVITY 4.4.1

The kind of things people often come up with are:
•   Girls doing badly at maths
•   Boys doing badly at English
•   Boys or girls not choosing certain subjects
•   Girls not taking part in sports
•   Boys' exam results being worse than girls'
•   Students dropping out of school

One definition would be: 'An underachieving child is a child who fails to achieve the performance appropriate for her or his abilities'.

Two aspects of underachievement are:
* Under-performance by either boys or girls at any stage and in any area/ subject
* Under-participation by either boys or girls at any stage

As with inequality, there are many dimensions of underachievement – not just gender but also race and ethnicity, location, class and other social or economic groupings. It is always important to take into account the other aspects and ask 'Which girls? Which boys?' when talking about underachievement.

Now read these accounts of underachievement. As you read, think about which boys and which girls are involved. Think about possible underlying reasons, from the kind of factors looked at earlier – such as stereotyping, identities and expectations by teachers, parents, society or children themselves. How do these case studies compare with what you noted down in Activity 4.4.1 – your own definition of underachievement?

The first example is from a secondary school in Mozambique where most students live in rural areas. It shows the multiple factors that result in girls' underachievement.

Girls' underachieving

Secondary School B is largely composed of students who live in a rural area where education is not a priority. Parents and the community expect boys to go on to be providers but girls to get married and look after their families.

The students
* Are respectful
* Are not committed to studies and school activities in general

Girls
* Are not encouraged to study
* Their perception of themselves is that they are weak
* React slowly when questioned during classes
* Are sexually abused by their male colleagues
* Give up school before they finish 12th grade

The school
* Teachers perceive there is gender inequality in the classroom
* Problems /difficulties identified in this school:
  - Lack of furniture in the classrooms
  - No labs for chemical experiences
  - No library
  - High number of students per class
  - Teachers concerned with the transmission of knowledge only

- Low number of teachers participating in activities related to the girls' club
- Lack of extra-curricular activities such as gardening, sewing, cleaning
- Absence of cultural activities

[SOUTHERN AFRICA TRIALLING WORKSHOP]

The second example looks at boys' underachievement and how to address it.

Boys' underachievement
Background
At the inception of Secondary School A in the early 1970s, students were expected to perform creditably with the introduction of a system of education that exposed them to a range of vocational activities that moved them away from the traditional subjects.

However, on the whole very little effort was made to allow the process to work at its best. Despite this negative input, many students performed way beyond the expectations of the nay-sayers. Particularly within the first three-year tenure of the school, graduates, both male and female, later became doctors, lawyers and successful businessmen as well as skilled tradesmen. But as the years progressed, rather than capitalising on these early gains, the school fell into a 'rut'.

The late 1990s saw the administration and staff of the school undertaking the task of introducing contemporary technology-based and vocational subjects into the curriculum. In addition to providing resources to the deficient labs and workshops mainly through fundraising activities, efforts were being made to introduce hairdressing, beauty culture, nail artistry, and computer programming and technology. Like almost everything else at the school, there was a false start that has not yet been rectified.

Though the public cry of dissatisfaction with the Junior Secondary system was unrelenting, it took over 30 years to create any impact. An accelerated attempt is now being made to convert all Junior Secondary Schools such as School A to all-day schools.

To the present day, the process is incomplete, in spite of the fact that students and teachers were mentally prepared for the imminent changes. This state of uneasiness and the continued apparent indifference to the situation had a negative impact on both teachers and students. The students were perceptive enough to recognise that they were not benefiting from the present circumstances and they lost interest, leading to diminishing academic returns on their part.

On the whole, the school suffers from low achievement levels, which is more pronounced among the boys. The test scores and grades of

students, both males and females, have been in continuous decline. A cursory glance at scores at the school shows that many of the students are failing. However, the failure rate among the boys is much higher.

This situation, though not unique to the school is cause for grave concern there. The pertinent questions to be asked are:

• Why aren't boys more fully engaged in the classroom?
• Why aren't they in the classroom?
• Why are they in school, if they are not 'interested' in learning?
• Is it that their brains are structurally different from the girls? Or are their needs different?

This topic of boys' underachievement has found an audience on talk shows, in magazines and in roadside rum-shop bars. There has been at least one clarion call for policy-makers to make schools more 'boy-friendly' (Newsweek, 2006). This call is echoed at the school – to maximise the learning capabilities of our students, particularly our boys.

The Study

This study will use an action research intervention that addresses the sometimes peculiar situation of boys and their need for freedom of self-expression in a non-threatening environment.

Prior to the intervention, attempts would be made to include an insight into the demography and home environment of the students. It would also be necessary to explore some of the gender-related attitudes and expectations of teachers and of the pupils themselves, as well as some of the sub-cultures of the school. The study of these facets is necessary as they contribute to the academic/ educational experience of the students. The students' strengths and interests would be acknowledged, valued and used.

In an attempt to address the particular concerns of the school, the researcher formed a focus group to assist in identifying and refining the problem, to offer suggestions for possible interventions and to assist in their execution.

The Way Forward

1   Data collection on the nature of the problem of boys' underachievement at this school (a low status, failing school in the eyes of the public)
2   Analysis of the data towards designing an intervention
3   The development of an intervention
4   Implementation of the intervention
5   Evaluation of the intervention

[Trinidad and Tobago Action Project]

In both these examples, the underlying reasons seem to be deep-seated. But the two examples also raise the question of boys' underachievement vs. girls' underachievement – and the issue of gender equality in relation to underachievement. Boys' alleged underachievement is regarded as a growing phenomenon, and girls' improved performance may sometimes be put forward as the cause. Indeed, since the 1990s there has been something of a moral panic in some countries about this issue.

The following reading looks at this and argues that this is not a war of the sexes. Neither boys' nor girls' achievements should be at the expense of the other.

Three myths about boys' underachievement

The underachievement of boys in education is a subject that raises heated debate and a host of conflicting hypotheses. Three persistent myths surround the subject:

Myth one is that it is about 'boys versus girls. It is not. The Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), agreed by all Commonwealth governments in 2000, commit States to eliminating gender disparities in education. That means addressing the needs of whichever gender – girls or boys – is falling behind in either access to education or achievement. We want therefore to understand and address boys' underachievement in education in the contexts where it is an issue whilst continuing to focus on girls' access to education elsewhere. It is not either one or the other. We are committed to doing both.

Myth two is that boys' underachievement results from 'a war of the sexes', and that somehow girls and maybe female teachers are responsible for boys falling behind. The roots of girls' exclusion from education lay in discrimination whereby girls in some places were banned from education, or more school places were provided for boys than girls. There is no such suggestion here that boys' underachievement is a result of any similar formal discrimination. In fact, this study argues that the same socially determined gender roles may impact negatively on both boys and girls. Both sexes can be victims of a culture that, for example, prescribes education as not 'cool' for boys and also tolerates violence against girls.

Myth three is that boys' achievement at school should be measured against that of girls. To further demonstrate that this is not a war of the sexes, both boys' and girls' achievement at school should be measured against objective education standards for all children at that stage of education. We are not saying, therefore, that boys are underachieving in education compared to their female classmates but that they are doing so against objective standards of literacy, numeracy, etc. for their peer group.

Source: Jha, J and Kelleher, F (2006) *Boys' Underachievement in Education*, Commonwealth Secretariat and Commonwealth of Learning, London, p. xiii

The questions that need to be addressed in this context are:
- What are the finer aspects of this phenomenon as they are seen in different countries?
- What are the variations in the nature of the trend as seen in different countries?
- What are the trends when it comes to specific social/geographical/ethnic groups in a particular country or region?
- Do socio-economic practices play any role in this and, if so, what are these and how do they operate?
- How are these related to the socialisation process of boys and girls and to the expected gender roles in particular societies?
- How is this connected to curriculum and teaching-learning practices adopted in schools?
- Does this have any link with teachers' expectations and, if yes, what are these?
- Is there any difference in the level of motivation between girls and boys and, if so, what are the reasons?
- Do school and schooling processes question or reinforce the existing societal norms of masculine and feminine behaviours, images and practices?
- How do these various factors, socio-economic backgrounds, socialisation, expected gender roles and schooling processes act on and interact with each other and get manifested in boys' underachievement?
- Does the trend of boys' underachievement mean a situation of gender privilege for girls?

Answers to these questions should help in understanding the trend, appreciating the underlying causes and developing various ways to address the issue.

Source: Ibid., pp. 10–11.

The next activity asks you to reflect on an example of gender-related underachievement in your country in the light of what you have learned from the previous examples and reading.

ACTIVITY **Analysing underachievement**

Choose an example of gender-related underachievement in boys or girls from your experience. Describe it briefly.

Then relate it to the questions raised by the previous reading. For example:

What aspects are specific to your example?

What are the trends in your country/ for particular groups in your country?

What (if any) are the social and economic influences on your example?

How does your example relate to:
• expected gender roles/ norms of behaviour?

• curriculum and teaching/ learning practices in your school?

• teacher expectations?

ACTIVITY 4.4.2

Here is a second case study of boys' underachievement. It summarises overheads from a presentation describing an action research project. The focus of the study is the boys' learning of the English language and why they do not perform as well as the girls.

This example brings in a number of factors already mentioned – e.g., expectations, classroom organisation and dynamics – and identifies the action research approach to tackling the problems.

Boys and the learning of English: An issue of ability, attitude or assessment?
Why don't boys perform as well as girls in English?

Statement of the problem
- Poor behaviour in class often caused by inability to follow lessons due to poor foundation.
- Poor concentration skills, often pupils sitting next to their friends.
- Poor attitude towards learning reinforced by family background.
- Students' lackadaisical attitude towards and low interest in the English language
- Teacher's effect on the teaching of English in school

The design of the study: action research methodology
A number of cycles. Each cycle consisted of four components:
- Planning
- Observation
- Data collection and analysis
- Deflection and assessment

Cycle 1: Establishing the context of the study
Framing the problem – questionnaires
Acting and observing
Data collection and analysis

Questionnaires to students about:
 Homework
 Preference for learning
 Preference of time spent
 Learning style
 Learning new words
 How they like to be corrected
 Correction of work
 Learning gadgets
 Preferred feedback

Emerging themes/categories
Three issues:
 Ability
 Attitude
 Assessment

Ability
 Lack of reading – lack content knowledge
 Boys' short span of concentration
 Boys as dependent learners
 Lack of interest – dysfunctional families
 Teacher factor – teacher-centred, passive learning,
 own inadequacies

Attitude
 Poor concentration skills – lessons slow pace
 Poor behaviour – bored
 Family background
 Ethnocentric views toward learning English

Assessment

  Boys' preference for practical activities

  Did not want to appear as failures

System:

  Too exam-oriented

  Not boy-friendly

  Non-constructivist approach

Cycle 2: Creating an atmosphere of incremental improvement

Reading material – suitable level

Student-centred

Extra classes by other teachers to create variety

Assignments marked and commented on by teachers

Appropriate discipline measures

Involvement of parents

Improvements

More peaceful environment

Hand up homework

More co-operation from the teachers

Cycle 3: Deepening the commitment

Motivation – computers

Other teachers involved

Conclusion and reflection

Link between class participation and achievement.

High expectations on boys – opposed to the Asian mentality of boys a level higher than girls.

Lessons should relate to boys' interests, e.g., sports, astrology, aeroplanes, Mike Tyson, David Beckham

Computers and Internet have important role

Agenda for the future

Relate the interest of the boys to what they read
Help boys to be more meticulous in what they write
Make sure even the most reluctant actually to do their homework
Plan lessons well so that they are short, well-focused and well-paced

Likely challenges in the future
•   Relate the interest of the boys to what they read. It is difficult to find out each boy's interest and if that is possible, it would take a long time. Time is what teachers do not have.
•   Make sure even the most reluctant boys actually do their homework. This is near to impossible because of the inclination of the boys to be absent from school when the things get tough for them.

•   Teachers need to be aware of students' learner characteristics and to make use of the knowledge to facilitate the learning process. Teachers are not qualified nor do they have the time to learn about learner's characteristics. They lack the innovative and creative elements in solving problems. They tend to wait and follow instructions rather than to think of their own ideas.
[MALAYSIA ACTION PROJECT]

This example from Malaysia seems to highlight some success factors relating to a whole school approach (collaboration with other teachers, parental influence) and some relating to classroom arrangements and learning and teaching (behaviour, motivation, use of computers).

ACTIVITY **Tackling underachievement**

List three strategies from this case study or the rest of this topic that could be used in your context to tackle the example of underachievement you described and analysed in Activity 4.4.2.

1

2

3

ACTIVITY 4.4.3

The strategies you choose may relate back to curriculum and classroom dynamics, or forward to different teaching and learning styles to bring about deeper transformative changes, which we look at in the next topic.

One final comment should be made on underachievement. An important point from much research on boys' underachievement is that teaching techniques that engage boys are also girl-friendly. They characterise quality teaching and are just as desirable for girls as for boys. An active classroom benefits both girls and boys. Girls may manage to perform better than boys in passive situations, but their performance will also improve in active situations. Concern about boys should not be at girls' expense.

Review

Now that you are at the end of this topic, here is a chance to review what you have covered. Look again at the objectives at the beginning of the topic and at your answers to the activities. You should be better able to:
- Analyse examples of gender-related underachievement from your experience as a teacher
- Suggest strategies for tackling them

Topic 4.5 Teaching and learning for change

In this unit and Unit 3 you have looked at ways of becoming more gender-responsive, with practical approaches to doing things differently across the whole school and in the classroom. The issues of gender equality that arise involve people's sense of personal and social identity as well as complex attitudes and behaviour. These call not only for technical and practical changes but also for a different approach to teaching and learning.

This topic will help you to:
- Identify ways of teaching and learning to enable changes in ideas, attitudes and identities
- Plan different approaches to teaching and learning

Why are fresh approaches needed? Think of the kind of questions this guide raises: what does it mean to become a boy or a girl? What are the expectations of parents and the community? How do teachers see their role and status? These reflect deep-seated beliefs and expectations. Changing these calls for the school to become an agent of change. The teacher's role is about transforming lives and empowering students, not just handing on knowledge.

As you have seen, schools can often reinforce existing ideology, stereotypes and attitudes, for example, through what teachers expect of their pupils, practical arrangements in the classroom, students' choices of subjects and careers, and students' own aspirations, perceptions and sense of masculinities and femininities.

So what kind of approaches to teaching and learning can counter this?

Here are some approaches that the action projects have found can help changes ideas and attitudes.

Seeing teachers as facilitators of learning rather than deliverers of knowledge

Envisioning an expanded and different future

Shifting teachers' attitudes – self-awareness

Encouraging critical thinking

Engaging in dialogue

Encouraging challenges to the culture of authority and social control

Challenging bullying, racism, sexism and homophobia

Breaking down hierarchies

Involving children in planning and evaluating their own work

Questioning the curriculum

Challenging narrow-minded concepts and prejudices

Recognising the range and diversity of children's experiences and knowledge

Placing value on this experience and knowledge

Increasing participation by children

We start this topic with a range of examples of teachers trying out new ways of teaching and learning. As you read them, try to compare more traditional kinds of teaching with these approaches for the activity that follows. Are there approaches and techniques that you use or could adopt?

The first example comes from the manual for the Social Learning Project described in Topic 1.3 Gender and education and Appendix III. It underlines the importance of dialogue and openness with children, and the need to make the process of teaching consistent with its message and content.

Dialogue with children

The Social Learning Package hopes to deal with the themes in an honest, straightforward manner. It takes up deeply held assumptions and values for exploration and questioning. This can be done only when what is taught in the package is consistent with how it is transacted. Hence, part of the content of the package is in its practice.

If we want to teach children that they should give importance to their own selves and others equally, the teacher herself is required to give equal importance to every child. If we want to teach democratic values to children, our practices have to be democratic too. If not, a child is liable to get conflicting messages with harmful consequences. Many activities in this curriculum are designed in a manner to be communicated not through words, but through what is implied in the activities.

An attempt has been made while framing the package to avoid making it dull, uninteresting and academic. Stories, poems, role-plays, games and outdoor visits have been included wherever possible. But the main vehicle for the transaction of this package is dialogue with and among children. We discuss below some important points for the benefit of teachers who want to use this manual.

Dialogue and questions

This package depends for its success on the dialogue that takes place between the teacher and the student, as well as between student and student. Dialogue takes place in conversations, discussions and questions and answers. The children have to begin to trust the teacher and develop a close relationship with her for an open and honest dialogue to take place.

Try to know your students individually. Irrespective of whether the transaction of the package is effective or not, a relationship in itself is cherished by the children.

First of all, one must believe that a real dialogue, a serious conversation can take place between you and the children. It is often assumed that we should speak to a child as a child. We should feign a childish posture and diction when talking to one. This is not needed. Talk to children in a normal manner, unless you are doing it on a specific occasion for a specific purpose.

A serious dialogue requires self-reflection on the part of the teacher as well as the children. In fact, these conversations provide an opportunity for the teachers to examine their own beliefs and experiences. Do not rush; keep the tempo of the conversation slow and relaxed, even if it means you will be unable to cover the intended portion for the day.

The children will hesitate and falter many a time. This requires careful listening. Train the children to listen when their colleagues are speaking and not only when the teacher speaks. They must listen in order to be heard.

Source: Care India (2008) 'Guidelines for use for Grades 6, 7 and 8', *Social Learning for Upper Primary Schools: A Reference Manual for Teachers*, Care India, New Delhi, pp. 8–9.

Do you have experience of this kind of dialogue with your students? Can you think of a situation where you could try out such an approach?

The next case study describes a teacher's action research project in Malaysia concerned with boys' underachievement in reading. It shows too the teacher's concern with changing her teaching and her self-awareness about what is needed. The school involved is a public co-educational semi-urban lower secondary school. The class consisted of 22 students aged 14.

Read and reflect: children's reading preferences

The project

My way of teaching did not encourage students to find information on their own. I was spoon-feeding my students most of the time. Therefore, this action research is to find ways to improve my teaching approach and to help boost boys' interest in reading. At the same time I was trying to change my teaching style from a teacher-centred approach to a student-centred approach.

My initial observation in the reading classes.

- Boys usually kept quiet or resorted to talking about other matters that were not stated in the text that was being studied, or even made silly jokes that had nothing to do with the topic. It was as if what they read did not catch their interest at all!

- My informal interview with the boys found that…
  - Boys felt that reading is a girly stuff – it is an activity that girls do.
  - Boys felt that they take a longer time to read, in contrast to girls who usually read faster.
  - Boys have much less interest in leisure reading.
  - Most of the boys declared themselves as non-readers.
  - Boys do not like to talk about or openly respond to their reading as girls do.

- Boys prefer active responses to reading in which they physically act out responses, do, or make something.

To strengthen my initial findings, I then came out with this action research. My intention – to see the relationship between gender and reading preferences among my students. Once the reading preferences could be identified, it will be able to help me to choose the right materials for reading activities. I also hope to be able to find ways to boost the boys' interest in reading.

Questionnaires showed:

- Students' reading preferences:
  - Boys' reading preferences (genre) – History, sports, transportation, war stories
  - Boys' reading preferences (parts of newspaper items) – sports, political stories
  - Girls' reading preferences (genre) – romance, detective
  - Girls' reading preferences (parts of newspaper items) – headlines, current events, entertainment.
  - Both liked humour, mysteries and adventure

- Students' reading attitude
  - Only 60 per cent of the boys claimed that they 'like to read' while 90 per cent of them said that they 'like to read the newspaper'. (Girls – 100 per cent)

- Only 50 per cent of the boys claimed that they read quite frequently (once or twice a week). (Girls – 100 per cent)
- Both boys and girls did not really go to the library
- Girls 'read for fun' more frequently than boys (20 per cent of boys claimed that they have never or hardly ever done so).
- Reading is not one of the most popular past-time activities enjoyed by the boys. Boys preferred participating in sports and playing computer games.

The Intervention Plan

1) RnR (Read and Reflect) Project

To promote reading through project-based activities.

Activity 1 – Info Hunting

- School's Resource Centre (Library) and school's (Internet) Access Room.
- Students were to search for the necessary information needed regarding the topic (Japan and its culture)
- The students were focusing on five subtopics: Kimono, Origami, Geography and History of Japan, Tea Ceremony, Food.
- A field trip to the Japanese Language Room at Sekolah Berasrama Penuh Integrasi (SBPI) Batu Rakit.
- The students then had a discussion in their own groups to compile and share the information that they got.

Activity 2 – Put Your Hands On

- Students prepared scrapbooks based on their own subtopics as listed above.

Activity 3 – Showtime!

- Mini exhibition on the occasion of a visit to the school by the deputy minister of education. Students displayed scrapbooks and products, and spoke about them.

2) RnR Log Book

To reinforce reading and to make reading more personal to the students.

Activity 1- Log Book Making

- Students produced their own Log Book. The books could be decorated according to their own creativity, so that they became more personal.

Activity 2 – Read and Reflect (on-going process of writing about what they read twice a week)

- Students wrote in their RnR Log Books twice a week.
- Students given total freedom on what to write but it had to be based on their reading, e.g., students could write just a phrase from a paragraph and explain their feelings, or simply reflect on the reading material in general, or even write a quotation from the reading materials.

Activity 3 – Sharing is Caring

- In every English class, for just 2 minutes, students took turns to talk about or share with their friends one of their entries in the RnR Log Book.

Observation

The activities done under both projects, RnR Project and RnR Log Book, provided totally new experiences for both my students and me as we shared a common interest during the teaching and learning process. The students enjoyed learning and reading what they liked while I could optimise the students' potential in the reading classroom. Both boys and girls who found reading to be a boring activity at first started to participate actively in the classroom and contributed to the production of materials.

I personally believed that the three specific objectives of the research had been achieved. In choosing the right materials for the reading lessons, as both gender preferred the genres of humour, mysteries and adventure, I could incorporate these elements in the reading texts that I was using in the class. Meanwhile, the activities conducted had somehow helped to increase the boys' interest in reading, and thus, a fun and enjoyable learning environment was created.

I am aware now that boys and girls have a different attitude towards reading, so I have to keep on motivating the students (especially boys) to read.

[Malaysia action project]

The next example illustrates ways of getting students to communicate freely and participate actively. The methods used are an envisioning exercise, icebreakers and a rule-setting session.

Helping students to communicate
1 Envisioning exercise: 'Image of a dream school'

At a workshop several exercises were carried out with students to elicit their responses on schooling experiences and processes.

- I dream that my school should have all the qualities of a good school i.e., able teachers who will take the responsibility of teaching children who can be 'nation builders'. I dream that every student in the school is an achiever; I dream that there is no discrimination in my school and my school sets an example for other schools in the country. I wish to have a school where equal attention is given to computer teaching and sports activities as well as classroom studies (Class XI, male student).
- The school should provide a clean environment. There should be discipline in the school. Teachers should be appointed for all

subjects. Students cannot be made to learn under pressure or fear so teachers should be friendly and willing to help the students. Sports facilities should be provided in the school as physical activity is necessary for overall growth(Class XI male student)

- Every student dreams that he/she should study in a 'good' school where there is discipline and the teacher-student relationship is friendly and respectful. The attitude of teachers towards students should be positive and inspiring. The school premises should be clean and both students and teachers should work towards maintaining a clean environment in the school. The teachers should also give boys and girls equal opportunity to participate in sports and cultural activities (Class XII, female student).

While there was little difference in responses of male and female students, the analysis of student responses does indicate that students highlighted those issues that were relevant to their current schooling experiences. Issues of teacher absenteeism, monotonous teaching methods, lacks of sport facilities and library facilities are common problems encountered in these schools.

2 Icebreakers

Given the fact that adolescence is a critical stage, which is often fraught with peculiar anxieties and problems, the second set of student workshops focussed on exploring issues related to 'Adolescent Identity and Relationships'. The main objectives of the workshops were to facilitate an understanding on Life Skills Education (LSE) from a gender perspective. Different methods were used during the workshop to facilitate the discussion-group work, case study analysis and role play.

The introductory sessions in the workshop consisted of some defreezing exercises wherein students were asked to introduce themselves and state his/her name and their favorite actor/actresses.

Introducing each other
In School A after the introduction of the resource team, all the students were told to sit in a circle. Students were then asked to introduce themselves. After the introduction of each student, boys were supposed to identify girls by their names and similarly girls were supposed to identify boys by their names

It was observed that since girls and boys of Class IX sit in separate sections, both were uncomfortable sitting together in mixed groups. In order to break the ice the students were divided in pairs with the use of match cards (table-chair and sun-moon, etc.). Each student had to find his/her pair and was expected to introduce the partner to the larger group. It was observed that students were excited and shed

their inhibition and got busy finding their partners. After finding their partners all the students were given five minutes to find out some details about their partners viz. name, hobbies, aspiration and name of favourite actor and actresses. After this activity students got to know each other better. It was observed that girls took the initiative in introducing their partners. Both boys and girls showed different areas of interest and aspirations.

3 Setting the rules

After the introductory session, students were also invited to set some rules for the workshop. It was discussed that these rules would be applicable to all and that every member of the group should follow the rules. All the students (both boys and girls) enthusiastically participated in this exercise. Four rules were framed for the workshop:

1. Discipline must be maintained in the class
2. Each student should co-operate in the class
3. Student should be attentive in the class
4. Discussions would be issue-based and not pertain to any individual

All the rules were written on a chart paper and put on the wall. The research team then asked the purpose of making the workshop rules from the students. The boys and girls replied that the rules would help in making the workshop successful.

[INDIA ACTION PROJECT]

The next example shows a teacher carefully observing her students and what helps them to learn, e.g., praise, discussion, active participation and enjoyment.

Teacher diary extracts
4 September 2008
Today the boys participate actively in the lessons as opposed to the previous lesson and produce some very good pieces of work. David, one of the weakest boys in the class who today has understood the lesson, requests my permission to help George who is the weakest student in the class. George was very happy and he also managed to produce a good piece of work. I congratulate both of them and talk to them about the importance of helping each other to succeed in life.

Errol and Richie were called for a small conference because they did not do much work in the previous lesson. We discuss the importance of doing the class work and proving to other people what they can do. They promise to do their class work. They continuously seek help during the lessons. This proves that the conversation with them was effective.

5 September 2008

I took the students on the beach today. The lesson was on coordinates and the objective was to use the coordinate system to locate position.

I explain the objectives of the lesson to the students. Without hesitation two boys, David and Irwin wanted to draw the grid in the sand. I asked the girls to help so that they do not feel left out. They did so. They were all eager to get started, both boys and girls. It was so interesting to see the boys so involved in a lesson, which was one of the rare occasions. A student would call out a coordinate and another would move to that position, respecting the order of plotting coordinates points. The girls would just walk along the x-axis, and then the y-axis in a very obedient manner, but the boys were having fun. Irwin was doing rabbit hops to get to the location while George was pretending to drive. Students who got the location wrong were given another chance. All students were ensuring that all of them got it right.

9 September 2008

Today the students were allowed to choose their own sticker to put in their exercise book if they get all their work correct or produce a very clean and neat work (quality work). There were smiley faces and butterflies stickers and they were of different sizes. Everyone work really hard to finish fast so as to get the better sticker. Richie, Pascal and Robert, who rarely complete the work, manage to do so today. Those who got it wrong did their correction willingly, which is something that previously they were reluctant to do.

To my surprise many boys chose the butterflies stickers though some did choose smiley faces. The girls also chose butterflies and smiley faces. At first I thought that the boys would not choose butterflies. All the boys participated actively in the lesson and produced quality work.

[Seychelles Action Project]

Thinking about these four examples – of dialogue, motivation, communication and sensitive observation – note down differences in approach from traditional teaching and learning or the formal classroom, where the teacher's role may be seen mainly as passing on information and keeping order. What kind of processes and methods do the examples show? What are the advantages? And are there perhaps disadvantages too?

ACTIVITY **Comparing teaching and learning approaches**

Methods and processes

Advantages

Disadvantages

ACTIVITY 4.5.1

The differences seem to lie in things like listening to children, encouraging questioning, enabling dialogue and accepting what children say. This can involve major changes in teachers' approaches and can be challenging.

Plan an activity now to try out new approaches to problems you identified in earlier topics in this unit. Look back through earlier topics and your activities and notes to find the problems you uncovered. First, list the problems.

ACTIVITY What are the problems?

Examples of problems
Stereotyping in subject choices
Communications between students in the classroom
Underachievement by boys or girls in a particular subject

Problems you identified

ACTIVITY 4.5.2

Choose just two of the problems you want to tackle. Describe briefly how you usually deal with them in the classroom. Then outline how you will try dealing with them in a different way.

ACTIVITY **Trying new approaches**

Problem 1
The problem

What do you usually do?

What will you try?

Problem 2
The problem

What do you usually do?

What will you try?

ACTIVITY 4.5.3

Here are some examples of approaches teachers use to help children explore and question values and assumptions.

Range of possible approaches

Role-play

Interviews

Discussion or focus groups

Answering questions

Reflection

Dialogue

Drawing

Debates

Outdoor visits

Critical thinking

Children's decision-making

Mentoring

Role models

This is a challenging topic. It may have asked you to think about your teaching in a quite different way. It raises other questions – how to make such changes and how they relate to the rest of the school – that we will look at in Unit 5.

To end with, here's another teacher's reflection:

Changing the focus

So if I ever carry out such a project again, I must keep reminding myself that the kids' world is completely different from the one I was thinking of. Therefore I must vary my task to kindle the interest of the kids and not to please myself.

[SEYCHELLES ACTION PROJECT]

Review

Now that you have reached the end of this topic, here is a chance to review what you have covered. Look again at the objectives at the beginning of the topic and at your answers to the activities. You should be better able to:

- Recognise the kind of changes needed in teaching and learning to enable change in ideas and attitudes
- Reflect on your own teaching
- Plan activities to experiment with new approaches

Topic 4.6 Making changes last

After working through this unit you may be inspired with ideas about how you might do things differently – from the details of seating plans, to changes in curriculum, to more radical changes in your teaching style. But you may also be feeling uncertain – how can you make these changes, and how can you make them stick?

This topic will help you to:

•   Identify your challenges and opportunities for making changes
•   Devise ways of making them part of a whole school approach
•   See how the action research approach can empower you as a teacher
•   Draw up a personal action plan

First, think about the challenges and opportunities. Draw on examples from this guide as well as your previous experiences of making changes – what worked and what didn't work. For example, look back at Activities 4.1.3 on prioritising, 4.2.2 on curriculum, 4.3.3 on dynamics and 4.4.2 on underachievement.

ACTIVITY Challenges and opportunities

The changes you want to make

Challenges

Opportunities

ACTIVITY 4.6.1

Some of the challenges mentioned in this guide are things like resources, time, timetable, exam pressures, management structure and lack of interest from parents. But you may see opportunities in supportive colleagues, your school's gender policy, scope for planning your own classroom work or undertaking an action research project, and enthusiasm from your students for new approaches.

Whatever the challenges and opportunities, two basic questions are:
•   Can you make the change on your own?
•   Can you make the change only by working with other people?

Even if you answer 'yes' to the first question, you will almost certainly need to work with other people to make a change that lasts.

This shows the importance of the interplay between a whole school approach and an individual teacher's approach. What happens in a classroom, between a teacher and her or his pupils, is underpinned by the whole school approach aimed at making changes and becoming more gender-responsive.

Look at these aspects of a whole school approach from Unit 3. Highlight those where you can make a contribution or participate, and note how you could do that.

ACTIVITY **Working together**

Area	How you can participate
Developing whole school ethos	
Communication	
Management structures	
Curriculum	
Reproductive health education	
Extra-curricular activities	
Careers education	
Premises	
Any others:	
Staff development	
Involving wider community	
Producing whole school policy	

ACTIVITY 4.6.2

On the other hand, if you are unlucky enough to be working in a school that is not committed to developing a gender-responsive ethos, what are your options? Basically you need to build alliances and win people over – for example:

- Find colleagues who share your ideas
- Talk to colleagues about your ideas
- Share practice and compare experiences
- Work with colleagues to get issues raised on school agendas
- Ask for staff development
- Raise issues with head/ management

ACTIVITY **Enlisting colleagues**

Which colleagues could be your allies?

What joint action can you take?

Which people do you need to influence?

What action can you take to influence them?

ACTIVITY 4.6.3

Here is a realistic description of getting started with a group of colleagues – the challenges of getting people involved and then finding the time to meet and work together.

> ## Focus groups
> The relative success of the research projects at each of the four selected schools is largely a result of the ease with which some groups formed and developed their plan of action. In each school the lead researcher, a member of staff, sought to recruit other members of staff to form a focus group – the foundation for any action research project. In all schools, the focus group comprised five or six members and followed the basic research design:
>
> *   From February 2008 the researcher and the focus group in each school discussed the issue of gender and educational experience in relation to student well being. These meetings took place over two or three months and were frequently disrupted by school factors – very busy times of the school cycle, national celebrations, early dismissals for lack of water, teacher absenteeism. In all schools this phase took longer than expected and one school is still at this stage.
>
> *   Eventually the group sought consensus on the gender issue they thought was most problematic for their own situation and resolved to investigate that issue with the intention of exploring ways to effectively intervene in that situation. This phase has been taking place as the school term drew to an end (July 2008).
>
> [TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO ACTION PROJECT]

Topic 5.3 Change management looks at the kinds of skills and qualities needed to make changes. What we are talking about here is influencing upwards and leadership from below.

Now we turn again to the action research approach that has been mentioned a number of times and that underpins this whole Action Guide.

Action research is an approach that can
*   Empower you as a teacher to act to change your own practice
*   Empower groups of teacher to work collaboratively on a problem
*   Provide a way forward for a whole school approach

It gives you a framework to reflect, plan action, take action, evaluate the action and start a new cycle. It is called action research because it enables you both to act and to research your own practice.

Topic 5.1 looks in more detail at the action research process and outlines the steps involved. We suggest you look at that topic, thinking which issues you could tackle with action research – either as an individual or working jointly.

ACTIVITY **Action research ideas**

Brainstorm your first thoughts about three issues you might tackle with action research.

1

2

3

ACTIVITY 4.6.4

Here is a range of action research ideas from other teachers.

Action research ideas
Action research topics from Mozambique teachers

1   Reduction of premature weddings and pregnancies

2   Boys achieving low marks in English

3   Opportunities in the classroom; maths 13-14 years; girls' lack of confidence

4   Addressing possible gender bias in textbooks

5   Failure of girls in science

[SOUTHERN AFRICA TRIALLING WORKSHOP]

> **Topics from Malaysia action project, which identified boys'
> underachievement as the main problem.**
>
> 1 Boys and the learning of English: an issue of ability, attitude or
>   assessment?
>
> 2 Gender reading preferences: a selective guide to material sourcing
>
> 3 Improving gender writing style: a study in students' narrative essay
>   writing
>
> 4 Visual technique: the way to increase the interest of Form 4 MPV
>   male students in science subjects
>
> 5 Enhancing the achievement of boys in Form 5 Beta in the topic
>   thermo-chemistry using the DIY method
>
> 6 Mastery in biology facts through 'Bio-score module + Act' and
>   reduce achievement gap between genders in the cell division topics
>
> 7 Mastery learning through action gender: a success story of a rural
>   school
>
> 8 Improving the achievement of male students in addition and
>   subtraction of integer through 'make the difference method'
>
> [MALAYSIA ACTION PROJECT]

As these examples show, action research can be used to tackle specific
problems in a practical way. It means an individual teacher can make a
difference.

Finally in this unit we ask you to bring together your ideas. Draw up a
personal action plan for the next steps you will take to make one change to
become more gender-responsive in your approach to teaching and learning.
If you want to start planning an action research project, there is more about
that in Topic 5.1.

Define your own task, purpose, steps, timeframe and so on, and your first
steps.

ACTIVITY **A planned change**

Action What is the planned change?

Purpose Why are you doing this? What do you plan to achieve?

Steps What steps can you break your task down into? What are your priorities?

Timeframe How long have you got?

Completion date?

Time (in hours) for task?

Who else will be involved?

What are the gaps? What do you need in order to do the task that you don't yet have? E.g.,
• people
• information
• equipment/ resources
• skills
• other

How will you get them?

How will you know if you have succeeded in your task?

Next steps you will take over the next month to get started on the task

ACTIVITY 4.6.5

To end this unit, here are some next steps that participants planned to follow up the workshop.

'Practise, apply, improve, share'

Practise and apply

Will do action plan and implement; talk to students

Keep gender issues in mind when planning and teaching

Use what I have learned in my classroom.

Work on debates in classes; invite gender specialist to debates

Create opportunities for girls to express themselves

Need to think about Mozambican context

Plan project of what I want girls to be in future; coordinate with colleagues

Incorporate it in school activities wherever possible as a school manager

Improve

Will help with ideas for projects already planned relating to teacher support

In review of curriculum assist reviewers to be more gender-sensitive.

Find ways of using the manual/ guide in existing interventions

Share

Share ideas with colleagues/ small circles/ groups

Integrate ideas into capacity building

Use activities to train senior management so that we can engage the whole school

As action items in meetings: wellness, retreats and training workshops

I will first orient my fellow teachers by using in in-service training

Follow Action Guide steps and use activities and case studies as group tasks to help participants to be empathetic

Orient other schools.

[Southern Africa trialling workshop]

Review

Now that you have reached the end of this topic (and unit), here is a chance to review what you have covered. Look again at the objectives at the beginning of the topic and at your answers to the activities. You should be better able to:

- Assess the challenges and opportunities for the change/ changes you want to make
- Identify ways of making them part of a whole school approach
- Explore the action research approach
- Draw up a personal action plan, with short-term steps