

## SCHOOL OF EDUCATION

### Essay/Assignment Cover Sheet

Name of Student: Shannon Dowdall

Course: \_\_\_\_\_

Submission Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Lecturer/tutor \_\_\_\_\_

Essay/Assignment title \_\_\_\_\_

Criteria	Ex	VG	Good	Fair	Poor	Comment
Introduction (statement of problem, response to task)						
Range and use of appropriate sources						
Development of argument (analysis, interpretation)						
Conclusions (application, findings, outcomes)						
Presentation, language, academic conventions						

Please tick Y/N for Profile of Needs

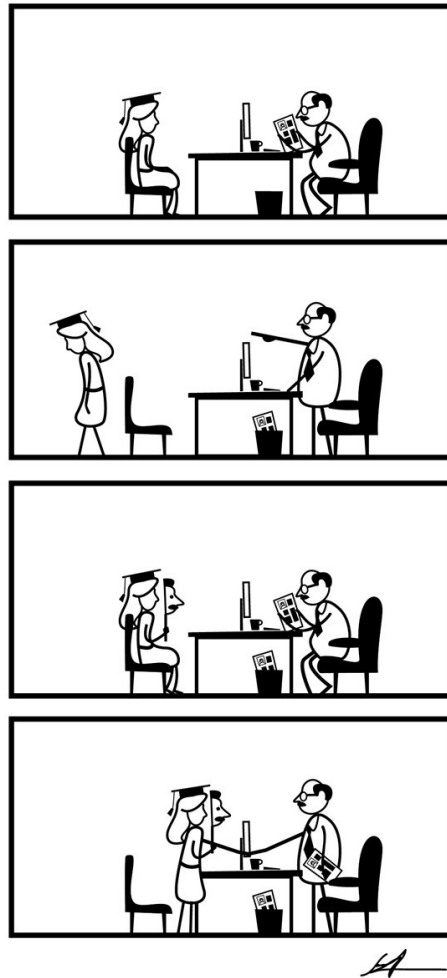
General comment:

Indicative grade:

Tutor: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Copy of this sheet must accompany all written submissions



In the image I have chosen, it depicts the inequality women face in the workplace. It features a woman with the same qualifications applying as a woman and getting turned down, but being successful when posing as a man. The reason I have chosen this image is because I feel like it accurately portrays the unfair treatment of women and that when after spending years of hard work and studying in the education system to get over any obstacles in the process of obtaining a degree, finally when it comes to getting a job there is still one major obstacle in the way, gender. The reason I feel like this image applies to me is because even though it hasn't affected my life up to this point, I can't help but wonder will the mere fact of being a woman hold me back from achieving a goal in my future, big or small. I am currently studying at my dream college on a degree I feel is perfect for me but when it comes to getting

a job will my gender really be a deciding factor? I want to explore this question by looking at the sociological aspects surrounding gender.

According to A. Jule (2014), gender theory is the study of what is understood as masculine and/or feminine and/or queer behaviour in any given context, community, society or field of study. The term sex refers to the biological human body, male, female or intersex, while the term gender refers to the categories of social expectations, roles and behaviours. B. Smith (2020) states that gender theory developed during the 1970's and 80's. This theory proposed looking at masculinity and femininity as sets of mutually created characteristics shaping the lives of men and women. It challenged ideas of masculinity and femininity and of men and women as operating in history as according to fixed biological determinations. For some, gender theory transformed the ways they approached writing and teaching about men and women.

Gender normativity is behavior that is compatible with cultural expectations and assumes each persons gender identity based upon their percieved sex assignment (K.Hogan, 2014). This behaviour can put daily challenges in place for gender non-conforming people not only in adulthood but also in schooling. There are a lot of problems associated with gender and schooling all over the world, some places more than others.

By having an understanding of gender theory and gender normativity we can have a look at how gender based inequalities in education exist around the world in a number of different forms.

A common way the educational system discriminates towards females is through course-taking. This is important because course-taking represents a large gender gap in what courses males and females take, which leads to different educational

and occupational paths between men and women. According to UNESCO (2020), Large gender gaps exist in education in many settings, most often at the expense of girls, although in some regions boys are at a disadvantage. Despite progress, more girls than boys still remain out of school and up to 16 million girls will never set foot in a classroom. Only in North America, Latin America and the Caribbean are girls as or more likely to attend school than boys. In the rest of the world, more girls remain out of school than boys and "women make up two-thirds of the 750 million adults without basic literacy skills" (UNESCO, 2020). By looking at these facts we can see that girls are at a disadvantage in terms of engaging in an education which is a big problem in today's climate in both developed and developing countries. In developed countries, women are still being underrepresented in STEM occupations. According to OECD 71% of men who graduate with a science degree work as professionals in physics, mathematics and engineering, whereas only 43% women work as professionals (2020). They also stated that fewer than 1 in 3 engineering graduates and fewer than 1 in 5 computer science graduates are girls. "This is likely because of stereotypes and expectations, rather than performance differences in math and science" (OECD, 2020). In underdeveloped countries, Child marriages can be another determining factor in the ending of education for women and a significant reason contributing to the low rates of education for women. According to research conducted by UNICEF in 2013, as an accepted practise in many cultures, one out of three girls across the developing world is married before the age of 18. This shows that education for girls and women is given little priority and that men are seen to be the money makers and women to be the caretakers, a common stereotype.

There is also what's called second sexism in education which happens against males, this is a form of sexism that unfortunately needs to be taken more seriously

even by people who oppose sex discrimination. Second sexism in education makes male students face more punishment than female students. "This is regrettable not only because of its implications for ongoing unfair male disadvantage, but also because, discrimination against women cannot be fully addressed without attending to all forms of sexism" (D.Benetar, 2003, p.117). Another discrimination we see in schooling against boys is the grading bias, studies show that male students will be considered more negative than female students by teachers, especially female teachers. "Many teachers feel more connection to girls and feel rejected toward boys which leads to a negative relationship with boys. For this reason, male students will more likely receive lower grades than female students because of teachers' grading bias" (R. S Prawat, R. Jarvis, 1980).

This leads to problems within gender differences in education based on a teachers gender. Teachers were found to also have a tendency to praise students matching gender expected norms. Students were praised more often by female mathematics teachers than female literature teachers, but praise was more often given by male literature teachers than by male mathematics teachers. (J.Duffy, 2001) This shows that even regardless of a student's gender they could potentially be subject to a difference in treatment in relation to what gender teacher they have for what subject. This, if applicable, points out a huge irregularity in educational facilities.

A hidden curriculum may add to discrimination in the educational system. Hidden curriculum is the idea that race, class, and gender have an influence on the lessons that are taught in schools (J.Esposito, 2011). It is the idea that values and norms are instilled through a school curriculum and setting. Some subjects may be gendered, such as mathematics and sciences may be viewed as more masculine whereas subjects such as art or home economics are seen as feminine (V.P. DeFrancisco,

2014). This can mean that girls may be encouraged to learn skills valued in female-dominated fields, while boys might learn skills for male-dominated occupations, for example as mentioned earlier, male dominated STEM courses.

A clearly ongoing serious breach of respect and form of gender discrimination in schooling is that against transgender, LGBTQIQA and gender non conforming individuals. It is evident from reasearch and studies done that transgender individuals do not recieve the same support level as gender conforming students in the same schools. "Rather than focusing on their education, many trans students struggle for the ability to come to school and be themselves without being punished for wearing clothes or using facilities consistent with who they are. Some are denied opportunities to go on field trips or participate in sports. Together with bullying and victim-blaming, these conflicts can lead to disproportionate discipline, school pushout, and involvement in the juvenile justice system. 59% of trans students have been denied access to restrooms consistent with their gender identity" (NCTE, 2020). This comes in the form of heteronormativity. Heteronormative views involve the belief that the alignment of biological sex with sexuality, gender identity and gender roles. Heteronormativity is often linked with heterosexism and homophobia (J.H. White, 2018). The effects of heteronormativity can be examined as 'straight privilege'.

Gender discrimination in education can also exist from household discrimination. Parents may spend time and money differently based on the gender of their children which can also be classed as a form of discrimination. This could raise some serious issues in the case of homeschooling. In the case of parental treatment of girls and boys in the home, it was noted that females were more likely than males to have less time spent socializing with friends based on parental involvement, reflecting the

concept that parents put forth greater efforts to protect their daughters. Data has also shown that parental attendance at school events is greater for daughters than for sons, and when controlling for academic factors it has been found that over half of the gender differences that had been found were explained by academic factors, meaning that parental involvement in these events were influenced by daughter's academic performance (R.A Wojtkiewicz, 1992).

There has also seen to be consequences of sex discrimination in education, for example, teachers and staff may reinforce certain gender roles without thinking. A gendered example of this would be to assume girls as good at colouring and boys are good at building blocks but not praising and encouraging the vice versa as much unknowingly. This may in turn lead girls not to approach or try out building blocks and the same for boys with colouring. This is because gender is something that we learn and day to day experiences for children can be an influential factor in their perception and understanding of gender. This could also be categorised within the hidden curriculum.

By outlining the gender discrimination in education we should outline the gender pay gap. "In 2020, women make only \$0.81 for every dollar a man makes." (payscale.com, 2020). This is another major problem surrounding education, pay and fuels discrimination. In this year so much change and progression has come about I am amazed at how we have not fixed this issue.

I feel that the image I have chosen best represents the challenges faced in today's post education environment by gender stereotyping and discrimination and spreads awareness on this subject. As a woman I feel passionately that women and men should have equal and fair chances at doing the same things, be it applying for a job or something less significant. I know also that this is not only the case for

women in particular but also for members of the LGBTQIQA community and for people of colour also. It is time for these issues to be stopped and it is important that action be taken to prevent these injustices. I feel like by analysing the problems I have laid out previous and making more moves towards normalisation and acceptance of non conforming gender individuals we can help overcome these issues. In my opinion the first thing we need to do is educate. We need to educate not only our students but our parents and teachers on subjects like, gender normativity, gender gaps and the treatment of LGBTQIQA individuals in not only school settings but day to day settings. This can help open the eyes of those who may have been unknowingly ignorant based on the fact of pure lack of education on the matter. It may be an uncomfortable conversation for some but with support and education it can be made easier. This will benefit the lives of many students and also staff out there struggling with problems caused by these derogatory social barriers that limit the way in which they express themselves.



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