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"Help Make the World Safe for Diversity"
John F Kennedy

Julie McCann

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Introduction:

I am fortunate to be a third grade teacher whose students are generally hard-working, young people who truly love to learn. My children come from many diverse backgrounds, but we are able to learn so much from one another. One of the most important things I have learned through my teaching and from my students is the value of diversity.

West Park Place Elementary School is a small suburban school in the Christina School District. We have about 400 students from kindergarten through fifth grade. West Park is a diverse school, hosting the English as a Second Language (ESL) program, Delaware Autistic Program, and REACH (Realistic Educational Alternatives for Children with Disabilities). According to the annual report generated by the Christina School District, about a third of our students are English as a Second Language Learners (ESL): representing about 25 different countries. About 45% of our population are free/reduced lunch students. Our demographics are 20% African American, 26% Asian, 46% Caucasian and 4% Hispanic. As a third grade, self-contained teacher, I teach all subjects: math, reading, writing, science and social studies. A typical school year provides me with 22 students, a third of whom are usually active or recently dismissed ESL.

A strength of our students is attendance and a desire to learn. Additionally, West Park is a mile from the University of Delaware, so we have many resources available. At times, we have many college students doing placements, tutoring and student teaching. Based on the data from the Christina School District annual report, the teachers at West Park are predominately Highly Effective and Highly Qualified, most of them having obtained at least a Master's degree and having many years of experience. As a staff, we work in Professional Learning Communities to analyze data and provide appropriate instruction for our students.

The areas of struggle for West Park are typical. The most obvious concern is lack of funding. Additionally, a third of our students and their families are ESL, with many parents not able to speak English at all. As a result, we have low parental involvement. Finally, families are reeling from the current economic situation. Many of our families are of low socio-economic status.

Rationale

The desire to create this unit began because the idea of equity or equality comes up frequently throughout the school year and throughout one's life. Sometimes, we might have an issue with race, other times the issue might be gender or income level or some other form of discrimination. No matter what kind of inequity we may be dealing with, I think that directly teaching about diversity and equality will make my students more sensitive and propel them to make changes in their futures.

Personally, I wanted to create this unit because of something I am experiencing at home. I have a daughter preparing to leave for college in a little over a year. She will be pursing an engineering degree. Through the courses my daughter is taking in high school and through the process of searching for a college, we have experienced some uncomfortable situations regarding gender. She has selected a non-traditional major for females and has faced some discrimination in her STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math) classes. STEM education is stressed so much currently that I would like to see equal opportunity for all to participate. If one does not participate in high quality STEM classes, future opportunities and earning power will be diminished. I want to make sure that my students are aware of their options. I want them to be cognizant of the direct and indirect messages they will receive throughout their tenure in school (and life). I want them to be educated enough to decide for themselves what they believe is possible. I want them to challenge traditional practices.

Common Core State Standards (CCSS) make this unit important. It is equally important to make students "college and career ready". Being an open-minded person, who is able to work well with others, may very well be the most crucial career skill. Teaching my students about the problems of inequity and the value of diversity is my goal for the unit. Exposing students to a variety of material and requiring them to utilize higher order thinking skills will benefit them through their schooling and their life, as well as, making them more successful on the state test.

This unit will be appropriate for any elementary grade. The students will participate in three main components of the unit. First, we will learn about the problems of inequality.

Second, we will discuss many examples of books, movies and other media that perpetuate these stereotypes. By becoming aware of stereotypes, students will be able to make better judgments and decisions for themselves.

The last component of the unit will require students to conduct research to report on a historical person or phenomenon dealing with discrimination or to develop a project to promote diversity and equity within their school or community.

The unit fits perfectly into my curriculum in all subject areas. It addresses almost all the reading and writing standards and the speaking and listening standards. This unit is linked to history through the Industrial Revolution and civil rights, economics and many other subject areas. Within this unit, I will cover many of the Common Core Standards that are essential for student success, but I will focus on three main standards. I will select one standard each from Reading, Writing and Listening/Speaking.

- *Reading Literature 3.6 or Reading Informational Text 3.6*: Distinguish their own point of view from that of the narrator or those of the characters or from that of the author of the text
- *Writing 3.2:* Write informative/explanatory texts to examine a topic and convey ideas and information clearly.
- *Speaking and Listening 3.1:* Engage effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups and teacher led) with diverse partners on grade 3 topics and texts, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly.

Objectives

The objectives in my unit are cumulative. First, we will set a foundation. The students will learn important vocabulary and concepts about discrimination, stereotypes and equality in order to determine how diversity should be valued in our society.

Second, the students will learn about widely held stereotypes. We will explore some historical information, picture books, shows, movies and other areas where discrimination is found. We will discuss current social problems that are based in inequality.

Finally, the students will develop a project that addresses an issue of equality. They may do a historical report on a problem, or a past social change or propose a new idea to promote diversity and equality, like those of Project Citizen.

Enduring Understandings

Students will understand:

- The vocabulary introduced and taught from the unit.
- The value of diversity in our society.
- The causes of inequality and the costs incurred to our society.
- The rewards and challenges of acceptance of diversity and equality.

Essential Questions

What are stereotypes?
Where do they come from and why are they so pervasive and persistent?
What is diversity and why is it important?
What are the causes and costs of discrimination?

Background Information/Content

Vocabulary

Equity- each gender is to be treated in accordance with its biological make-up. Educational equity is achieved when members of both genders have an opportunity to participate in whichever courses and activities they prefer and to achieve up to their different potentials, when they are treated in accordance with their needs, and when they are prepared for different social roles.[1]

Stereotype- a widely held but fixed and oversimplified image or idea of a particular type of person

Diversity- a range of different things; variety; the inclusions of individuals representing more than one national origin, color, religion, socioeconomic stratum, sexual orientation
Discrimination- the unjust or prejudicial treatment of different categories of people based on gender, race, age...

Parental Impact

Gender is the very first thing assigned to us when we are born. From that moment on, parents treat children differently based on gender. Boys and girls are not born with a clear understanding that they should behave in a certain way in order to achieve acceptance within society. This is learned behavior and the learning begins at birth.[2] These gender roles represent society's expectations for masculine and feminine behavior. It is called "Public Pedagogy", how we learn what we know about others and about the world. Self-concepts, psychological traits, family, occupational and political roles are assigned dichotomously to make each sex.[3] This is how we learn what it means to be a boy and what it means to be a girl. We notice information that confirms our stereotypes and ignore information that dis-confirms it.[4]

Girls are treated more gently. They are spoken to more softly, disciplined less and treated as if they require fewer interactions. Girls are known to have low activity levels and prefer to play in highly structured activities. By 18 months, girls are already quieter and calmer than boys. Girls show fewer anger or frustrated outbursts.[5] By age 2-3 children become conscious of their gender. They play with gender roles, crossing the borders and enjoying it. Education has the power to make a difference by encouraging students to be gender sensitive.[6]

Girls are considered altruistic, polite, and helpful. They share and support others. They are less competitive and avoid conflicts. Girls share their feelings and thoughts more often than their male counterparts. When children understand their feelings, they can better relate to others and how they feel.[7] Girls are more likely to express fears and anxieties, while boys express their feelings with more intensity.[8] Girls seek approval from grown-ups and seek their help when needed. Females play with dolls, beads, make-up, art, dress up and kitchen areas. Their play is more organized, with more "rules". Girls tend to take fewer risks, academically and behaviorally, and are less likely to be seen as leaders. To be a leader, especially later in high school, would mean a display of assertiveness and competitiveness, that would conflicts with the expectations of more passivity from girls.[9]

Carol Gilligan's work on female adolescence in the 1980's revealed that girls' self-esteem drops during their teenage years. Slowly they lose their voice, become less intellectually and socially confident.[10] Others hide, or downplay, their effort because although academic achievement is not uncool, working too hard to achieve it is uncool. Girls express less confidence in math by middle school, so they take fewer and easier courses.[11] Girls are more likely to modify their opinions and attitudes to conform to others and to copy what others model. Boys tend to maintain their ideas and opinions, despite what others think or feel.[12] Not all girls aspire to be popular because being in the popular group often indicates more about how much social power a girl has than how much she is liked and respected.[13] Popular girls are pretty, fashionable and sociable, but most importantly, they must exhibit an air of indifference about academic achievement.[14] Historically, boys have dominated tracks that train them for a wide variety of work options. Girls have been prepared within the domestic or clerical tracks or for the fields of teaching or nursing.[15] The relative roles and position (status) of women and men in society, their different responsibilities and privileges and their unequal control over societal resources point to a major power indifference between them.[16]

Conversely, parents are more robust with boys. Males are disciplined more and have

more interactions with parents. Boys are assertive, aggressive, and dominant. Boys seek new solutions to problems when old solutions no longer apply. They enjoy rough and tumble play, play with vehicles, blocks, water and sand. They have few rules in their play. They play in groups, but boys are more exclusionary in their play, preferring to remain within same-sex groups. They do not tolerate other boys who cross traditional lines. There appears to be three reasons why kids play in the same sex groups. First, boys and girls have different styles of play and cannot always be compatible. Girls find it difficult to influence boys, an outcome less desirable to girls. Finally, there is greater institutional support for same-sex play.[17]

Parental expectations about academic self-concepts are stronger and more influential for middle-class families, than for working-class families. When parents support, monitor and spend time with their children on school issues, they have an increased level in achievement. Parents have a strong influence on a child's perception of confidence, values and performance in school. Many girls' evaluation of their math ability and their decision whether or not to take advanced math courses are more influenced by their parents' support than their teachers' opinions or expectations.[18] Parents are often prepared to allow their daughters to proceed to further advanced course work as long as they received positive reports about their daughters progress from school. There are great benefits from encouraging parents to become involved in community and school management.[19] Parents can play a huge role in the success of their student with some very small actions.

Grossman suggests that parents allow their children to play with nontraditional materials and engage in activities that may not be considered traditional. Children should be exposed to non-sexists roles. In school, students should experience diverse guest speakers and a non-sexist curriculum. Nontraditional careers and occupations should be encouraged. Teachers and parents should foster higher student self-confidence, especially for girls. Male children should be supported in their attempts to be more cooperative and concerned about others.[20]

Male

Since the 1990's, many commentators have expressed concern about the under achievement of boys relative to girls. They are concerned that girls' levels of achievement at important stages of schooling have far surpassed those of boys and that girls leave school better qualified than their male counterparts.[21] This is one argument in support of additional help for male students. While I do not want to ignore the boys in my class and I believe their needs need to be addressed, the crux of the problem is that every society values men's contributions and resources, their activities, privilege and even their responsibilities more highly than women's. This general valuation of males stems from and points to serious power differences between women and men.[22]

Why male dominance? In the beginning, it was because the males provided food. Religion underscores the superiority of males, as we worship male deities. The increase in industrialization also improved the male standing, as not everyone needed to work anymore. Social stratification is framed along gender lines. In almost every society, masculine social roles are more valued than feminine roles. Gender and role status have become inextricably tied. If a man chooses a typically "female" occupation he will get the label "male nurse" or "male secretary". Women are more likely to opt for "male" occupations than men are for "female" occupations.[23] When we do not perform in gender

specific ways, within the acceptable range, we are punished. However, crossing the boundaries of stereotypical role models is more acceptable for girls than for boys.[24] But widely held stereotypes often make it difficult for females to cross those boundaries.

There are some key differences between boys and girls. Some researchers reported that the increased levels of male hormones (testosterone) makes males more active and aggressive. Developmentally, boys are not as mature as their female counter-parts during the early grades. They also have been socialized differently. While girls have been engaged in quiet activities, boys have been active and loud. Once in school, boys discover that boisterous behavior is not appropriate and they are disciplined more than girls.[25] Teachers reprimand males more often and in different forms. Poking, grabbing, pushing, squeezing, negative comments or disapproving gestures are used more with males than for females. This may be why males report a less positive view of school.[26]

Girls prefer to learn in cooperative settings, males prefer learning environments that involve working independently, actively and through manipulating materials.[27] Males use invented strategies, while girls are taught strategies. Boys are rewarded more for learning by their teachers and counselors.[28] Men tend to attribute the causes of their success to their own ability. Failure is based on lack of effort. Females attribute success to external forces like teachers. Failure is a result of the lack of their ability. Although female engineering students tend to score better than their male counter-parts in college, they end up dropping out of engineering programs because they are not getting A's. The men continue in the engineering even while getting average grades. We lose strong candidates as a result. Male students are more likely than female students to consider math important, particularly in careers.[29] Boys gravitate disproportionately to engineering and business.[30]

Males' language is used to exert control or influence others, while females use language to demonstrate solidarity or closeness.[31] Men's language is instructional, succinct and derivative. Women are elaborative, indirect and detailed. Men's brains are lateralized, the two hemispheres have distinct functions. Women's brains are more bilateral. Women are more likely to use either hemisphere to perform specific functions.[32]

Female

Women bear the brunt of inequality. Historically, women were not allowed to vote or own property. Male privilege has been a main stay of western culture. At one time, only men could serve in the military. Men have greater access to jobs and politics than women. Until 1972, women could not run in the Boston Marathon. As recently as the 1990's women were not permitted to attend the Citadel or the Virginia Military Academy. Women still are forbidden at the Augusta National Golf Course.[33] In 2006, girls accounted for 55% of the world's out-of-school children. They are far more likely than boys to never enroll in school. Women account for a majority of the illiterate people in the world because of historical gender disparities in access to education. When women who have been denied an education become mothers, their children inherit diminished life chances.[34] A women's standard of living drops 73% after a divorce, a man's standard of living increases by 42%.[35] Girls drop out of high school gifted tracks at a higher rate than boys. In spite of this all, girls are more positive about school than boys.[36]

However, school must do more to encourage them. The formal school curriculum

must include the experiences of woman and men from all walks of life. Girls and boys must see women and girls reflected and valued in the materials they study. Girls who do not see themselves in powerfully technocratic roles must be encouraged to understand that math and science are important to their lives. Girls must be actively supported in pursuing educations and employment in these areas. Girls are not inherently more talented in writing, language or music. Yet the majority of girls focus on foreign language, social sciences, health services, education and fine arts.[37] Opportunities and expectations shaped by social phenomena push girls into these directions. So we need to change the social push. Historically, girls have been significantly more likely to end their math education at the Algebra II level. Stopping math at this level can close the door to future studies, scholarships and careers. A greater percentage of female high school graduates took science courses in 1994 than in 1990. Girls' enrollments are up in math and science courses and the difference between boys' and girls' course patterns is beginning to narrow. In fact, course enrollments suggests that now girls may receive more education than boys, gaining knowledge in more areas of study than their male counterparts. Girls Advanced Placement and honors course enrollment are commensurate with or greater than those of boys now, except in physics.[38] Girls' are more likely to have their ability in math or science overlooked. For reasons that are unclear, girls consistently earn better grades than boys, but score lower on standardized tests.[39] As educators, we have to level the playing field.

Girls are less likely to get into trouble for behavioral problems, less likely to be disciplined by teachers or suspended from school and less likely to be placed in special education.[40] Since the 1990's, women have begun to exceed men in college attendance rates.[41] By the time they leave school, however, students exhibit deeply entrenched ideas about male and female domains of competency. Perceptions intensify in fourth grade and are most dramatic in the last years of high school. Yet boys and girls do not begin their formal education with these notions. As educators, we are responsible to ensure that these misconceptions are not perpetuated any longer. Nelson Mandela said that education is the most powerful weapon you can use to change the world. Yet schools continue to shortchange girls. Females get less teacher attention. When they do interact with teachers, they get less complex, constructive, challenging feedback or conversations. Teachers provide less wait time for girls. There is a variety of gender bias across the subject areas.[42] Educators must be made aware of this and we need to make changes in our instruction.

Textbooks pose an additional problem. Textbooks dedicate only about 3% of their content to gender-related issues. Authors and publishers still use male pronouns and descriptors. Stories are mostly about males rather than females. Roles show fathers working and mothers staying home. Females are portrayed as emotional, dependent and concerned about others. While males are actively involved in problem solving.[43] True, today's textbooks are less sexists and racist than those of the 1970's. Textbook producers have made a greater effort to include others, but much more emphasis needs to be placed on women and minorities. Books promote literacy skills, understanding relationships and feelings, and thinking more broadly about the world. So educators and parents must be mindful of the messages they are consciously and unconsciously sending to their children. Fictional male characters are traditionally assigned stronger roles; more adventurous, capable and independent. Fictional female roles tend to be pretty caretakers who need assistance from males. Books have the potential to be one of the few places that portray men and women in a variety of gender roles. We need to demand more from publishers.

Television is another barrier. By age 16, children have spent 15,000 hours in front of a TV versus 11,000 hours in school.[44] If we ignore the huge impact TV has on children, we are missing a great opportunity to educate. Media and pop culture seem to have a significant role in the change in what is masculine and feminine. TV has great influence on gender stereotypes. Girls 16-18 are more likely to consider being beautiful and popular with males more important than other girls their age who have not watched a lot of television with commercials for beauty products.[45] Watching TV encourages stereotypical beliefs about gender roles. There are less stereotypical roles now than there were years ago. We see more diversity in programming with shows like *Modern Family*, *Blackish* and *Speechless*.

Opportunities do open for women. Women are gaining traction in the business word, but the differences are apparent. Women lead differently than men. Women make webs instead of pyramids. They tend to transform people's interests in organizational goals. Women encourage participation and sharing of power and information. Female leaders try to increase others' self-worth and get excited about others' accomplishments and work. Minority women make up 13% of university students, but only 4% of the faculty. Women of color report one of three experiences during higher education: feeling invisible, feeling multiple oppression or engaging in acts of resistance.[46] Young Muslim women feel that they need to work twice as hard to succeed.[47] In order for girls to produce themselves as academically successful they have to identify with a masculine example such as in *Good Will Hunting* or *A Beautiful Mind* or *Enigma*. It is harder for girls to be popular *and* high achieving academically. "Being the best" is rarely a desirable option for "nice girls" when fitting in is a priority.[48] For women to succeed in a man's world they often find themselves down-playing their feminine characteristics.[49] So although opportunities are available, successful women are perceived differently. Successful men are admired. Successful women are perceived in a negative way, as the "Iron Lady" or worse. Often their success is attributed to other things rather than hard work, intelligence and dedication. High-power positions for women often require a decision between a successful career or family, that men need not face.

Toys

Toys are a very important part of how children play. The availability of toys and books that expose children to a balance in gender roles is much better today. These encourage children to broaden their views and extend their circle of knowledge.[50] Toys are marketed toward members of different sexes by the color of the packaging. Boys typically play with vehicles, machines and construction sets while girls play with dolls, domestic toys, and plush animals. An organization that rates toys has found that toys that are rated as neutral or moderately masculine were the highest in educational value, scientific attributes, cognitive skills development and physical skill development.[51] The types of toys we encourage our children to play with does matter.

Sports

In 1997, one in three girls took part in high school sports, compared to one in two boys. Sports participation is linked to high academic achievement, better physical and mental health and leadership capacity.[52] Girls from different racial and ethnic groups appear to participate in sports at the same rate. Girls have higher self-esteem, more positive

attitudes toward school and less destructive behavior when they participate in sports. Girls are 40% less likely to drop out of school and 30% less likely to get pregnant when they play a sport. They are less likely to smoke and have higher science achievement. Eighty percent of females in Fortune 500 companies have played sports.[53] Women have been under-represented in sports. Even though women's sports are taken more seriously today, they receive very little attention. Less than 2% of network time devoted to sporting events is for girls' sports, while 96.3% is reserved for male sports. In the late 1990's, major sportswear companies launched national campaign advertising featuring girls. Women's sports received approximately five percent of TV and print media.[54] 72% of radio announcers are male voices likely to project authority. For women, appearance and nurturing qualities are emphasized. The schedules for female practice are often determined by when males are not using the facilities and coaches of male teams are paid more than female teams.[55]

Schools/Classroom

Education plays a critical role in producing the learning and skills needed to generate the productivity of a nation that affects growth.[56] We need to expand gender roles in a way that treats children as individuals, rather than representatives of their stereotypical gender roles. Early childhood teachers are well aware that an effective way to nurture students' long-term interest in math and science is to use their natural curiosity.[57] Cooperative classrooms where students are motivated to work together to complete tasks benefit all. Positive communication and positive interpersonal relationships can be better established and maintained within these cooperative classrooms. Academic achievement can improve, particularly for the higher and lower achievers. It is the teacher's responsibility to challenge the narratives that confirm that gender means exclusion and to provide alternatives both in action and in story in our classrooms.[58] Educators need to provide active learning experiences that genuinely challenge thinking. We need to provide a learning environment that helps both boys and girls gain self-confidence in thinking and problem solving.

Assessments

Assessments have been found to show gender bias against females. The multiple-choice section of the Advanced Placement test reveals a great deal of gender bias. The free response or essay section of the exam, by contrast, "shows little gender difference".[59] These high-stakes tests, with disproportionate power to affect students' lives, are the tests that most dramatically reflect gender differences in performance. College admissions tests are often described as underestimating girls' performance in college. National data indicates that girls earn equivalent or higher grades than boys in all subject areas at all points in their academic careers.[60] The National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) findings from 1978-1986, however, indicates that not only are males test scores higher than females scores but that the gap appears to be increasing.[61] High-stakes tests may be reducing opportunities for girls in education.

Classroom Activities-Books

I will teach this unit through a variety of picture books, video clips and activities. Here are some of the books I plan to utilize:

Oliver Button is a Sissy by Tomie dePaola

This is a book about a little boy who must come to terms with being teased and ostracized because he prefers to read books, paint pictures, and tap-dance rather than participate in sports.

Amazing Grace by Marty Hoffman

This is a story about a creative girl who is wants the lead in the school play. She is told she cannot be Peter Pan because she is a girl. Then she is told she cannot be Peter Pan because she is black. She shows everyone that hard work and talent are all that matters.

The Princess Knight by Cornelia Funke

This story is about Violet, a young princess, who wishes she could show the world that she is just as brave and strong as her brothers. Her father insists that she get married. Violet has a strong and creative way of gaining her freedom of choice!

Paper Bag Princess by Robert Munsch

The story reverses the princess and dragon stereotype. This princess is a strong independent character not worried about her looks or material things.

Derek the Knitting Dinosaur by Mary Blackwood

Derek is a small, green dinosaur who enjoys knitting, not being ferocious. He worries others will not like him, but when the weather turns cold, Derek's hobby becomes useful.

Princess Pigsty by Cornelia Funke

Isabella has had enough of being waited on hand and foot, of having to smile all the time, and of wearing beautiful dresses. She was to have fun and be herself- her true self!

Mirette on the High Wire by Emily Arnold McCully

This book is about Mirette, a French girl who learns to walk on the tightrope.

Not a Box or Not a Stick by Antoinette Portis

These books are about using your imagination to create something from something.

Owl Moon by Jane Yolan

This is a book about a father and child going owl hunting. The book never identifies the gender of the child.

Boy He Can Dance by Eileen Spinelli

This story is about a boy who loves to dance. His father wants him to follow the family business and become a chef. It seems that the story will not end well, but in the end their differences are celebrated.

Anna Banana and Me by Lenore Blegoad

This is a story about a shy boy and his brave friend, Anna Banana, who is fearless. Each day he learns to take on more and more and conquer his fears.

The Story of Ferdinand by Munro Leaf

This bull would rather smell flowers than do bullfights.

Lon Po Po by Ed Young

A version of Red Riding Hood from China.

Mufaro's Beautiful Daughters by John Steptoe

An African American version of Cinderella.

One Green Apple *by Toyomi Igus*

A story about a Muslim Immigrant making connections with her new classmates and new home.

Little Blue and Little Yellow by Leo Lionni

A story of tolerance and acceptance that focuses on two colored dots who want to be friends.

Jack and Jim By Kitty Crowther

A story about two birds from different parts of the world who learn it's what's inside that counts.

The Big Orange Splot by Daniel Pinkwater

A story about accepting people for who they are.

Whoever You Are by Mem Fox

This story reminds us that we are all alike no matter who we are.

Many more books may be found by searching "Best Multicultural Books" or "Equity in Children's Literature".

Classroom Activities- Lessons

LESSON 1- I will start my unit with a very simple lesson. Prior to beginning our first science unit, I will ask the children to draw a picture of a scientist. Most of the third graders will draw a picture of a "mad scientist". Typically, it is a picture of a man in a lab with test tubes and chemicals. A few students will draw something different, and we will

share and discuss them all. I will ask them, "Why did most of you draw these types of scientists?" We will discuss their answers which usually sound something like "that is what you see on TV or in the movies". We will talk about these widely held stereotypes and begin to dispel them.

I will define a scientists as Webster's does; "a person engaging in learning to acquire or gain knowledge. A scientists is a person with advanced knowledge in one or more sciences". I will finish this lesson with the children brainstorming other kinds of scientists. Once we define a scientist, the children will create a list like this:

biologist	chemistry	oceanographer	geologist
computer scientist	doctor	teacher	mathematician
paleontologist	physicist	astronomer	psychologist

This is a very simple lesson, but it is usually the first time that the children recognize that they rely on stereotypes. Once that fact is discovered, we can have discussions and investigate those beliefs and their origins. I will read the story Owl Moon- by Jane Yolan, then ask, "Is the child a boy or a girl?" We will discuss our answers and determine that the gender does not matter, just as gender does not matter when you are a scientists.

LESSON 2- In lesson two, I want the children to think about heroes. I will ask them to generate a list of people who are heroes to them. I hope they will generate a list such as MLK, Jr., sports stars, Mother Teresa, Gandhi, parents, teachers, George Washington and the like. Younger students may include for Disney heroes or other fictional figures. We will generate a huge list on the board.

Working in pairs or small groups, I will ask them to agree on their TOP TEN list. Each group will prepare and hang up their TOP TEN list. The class will look at each list. I will ask "What are the three most important qualities that a person must have to be a hero?" We will list those qualities for all to see.

Then we will identify how many males were selected versus females. I will ask, "Why do you think you selected more male heroes than female?" Again, the children will likely reply that there are more male heroes than female on TV and in the movies. So I will ask "Why do you think that is?"

We will explore the patriarchal structure of our society and the creation of stereotypes. Then we will read Paper Bag Princess by Robert Munsch. We will discuss the stereotypes in the story and the ways the princess rebels against those limitations. I will ask, "What are some positive qualities the princess had?" "Are they similar to the list we made earlier?" "Do you have these qualities?"

I will show 3 Tips to Boost Your Confidence- Ted-Ed. (Tip 1-Try a Quick Fix, Tip 2- Believe in Your Ability, and Tip 3- Practice Failure.) For older students Christopher Bell has a great Ted Talk: Bring on the Super Heroes, which demonstrates how there are only six companies that control the media. Their desire to promote some merchandise basically eliminates all the female role models for Marvel characters. It is enlightening! (Some editing may be required depending on age- since attempted suicide is mentioned toward the end.)

LESSON 3- In this lesson we will continue to develop the ideas of stereotypes.

I will ask, "How would you define *stereotype*?" I will write their responses and then ask, "What are some typical examples of stereotypes?" I will generate a list of their responses. They may say things like:

GIRLS   BOYS
play with dolls   play sports
good at reading   good at math
talk a lot   play rough
raise children   go to work
don't fight   don't cry

I will ask, "Where did you learn these ideas?" After they answer, I will read Amazing Grace by Mary Hoffman. We will discuss what stereotypes are and how Grace endures through them. I will ask, "What qualities did Grace need to have to get what she wanted and deserved?" We will generate a list of qualities that we will need as we grow up to be strong like Grace. I will point out, "Stereotypes try to fit us into a box and keep us there. Being boxed in does not give you a lot of choices. Grace wanted to make her own choices, so she thought outside the box. I will ask, "Did Grace have the same qualities as our heroes from yesterday?

I will ask the students to complete a worksheet. They will write their name, list their three strongest qualities, and give examples of when they had to use these character traits. When this worksheet is cut and assembled it will make a cube with all their positive traits on the OUTSIDE of the box, for everyone to see.

LESSON 4- We will read Oliver Button is a Sissy by Tomie dePaola (or Derek the Knitting Dinosaur by Mary Blackwood). I will ask the students to think about Oliver and how he is like Grace. We will have a class discussion following the story about how Oliver was placed in a box too. This story will demonstrate that discrimination can happen to anyone.

I will talk to my class about my daughter. "My daughter is a second degree Black Belt. She played baseball with boys until she was thirteen and had to change over to softball. She loves math and science. She thinks they are fun. She played with Legos. We never bought her a Barbie and Santa never brought her one either. My daughter wants to be an engineer when she grows up. She wants to build things and help people. What would be a word that people might use to describe Abby when she was young and played baseball and did karate?" I hope someone will answer "Tom boy" (which implies that because she has those qualities- strength, intelligence, speed - she must be a boy? This diminishes her!)

Then I will ask the following questions:

"What happens to people who don't "fit in the box" that stereotypes create for us?"
"What names do people use to hurt others who don't fit in the box?"
"How do these names make us feel?"
"How do you think the person saying those things is feeling?"
"Why do you think people do these things?"

"Have you done this to someone in the past or seen it done on TV or some place?"
"What do you think we should do if we hear it or see it now?"

   We will watch PBS Kids Arthur Stands Up To Bullying (12 minutes long). I will end this lesson with a discussion about standing up for your rights and beliefs and those of others. Children need to learn to not use hateful words or tell off-color jokes and instead become agents of change to stop the cycle of discrimination and inequity.

   We run a campaign at school "To spread the word to end the word". We teach the kids that "retard" or "retarded" are hurtful words that should be replaced that with another R word- respect. Children can be taught this lesson about all hurtful words. Children need to be taught that name-calling is not acceptable and that they can use a simple phrase to combat hurtful words. We can teach them to say something like, "Those are unkind words that I do not use. If you continue to talk like that, I will not be able to play with you". Children need to learn socially acceptable interactions like saying "please" and "thank you". But now they also needs tools to combat traditional practices that are no longer acceptable.   People will not do better unless they know better. Our children can help other people learn how to do better!

   Even well-intentioned people perpetuate stereotypes. When my daughter was little, people used to comment on her curly, red hair and tell me how cute or pretty she was. I would always answer, "Thank you. She's very fortunate because she even smarter than she is cute." I never wanted her to focus on her looks, but rather on her intelligence

LESSON 5- We will read The Princess Knight by Cornelia Funke. We will discuss what the princess wanted and what the king wanted for the princess. Then we will talk about what we want and what the kids think is important for themselves and their future.

   My hope is that the children will touch on the idea of going to school and getting a job that pays well to support themselves. This will open up discussion about STEM instruction. My students need to understand that there will be barriers placed in front of them in the upcoming years. Some barriers may be obvious, but most are subliminal. They need to have the tools to see these obstacles and make decisions to work against them. We will take a look at the ways the media sends messages to us whether we like it or not. We have to be aware and actively accept or reject these messages.

   I will show the students several commercial clips. One possibility is a Campbell's soup commercial in which a child dressed as Spider Man is imitating the hero by doing different moves. At the end, the mother places the bowl of soup on the table. The child cannot eat without removing the mask, revealing that the child is a girl dressed as Spider Man. Another is Verizon's "Inspire Her Mind" ad to get more girls involved in STEM education. Another is the Ariel "Share the Load-(English)" commercial, which shows a father watching his adult daughter scrambled around the house doing everything for everyone while her husband sits and watches TV. He makes a promise to do better now because he sees that he was a bad example. Many others may be used.

We will talk about the characters in the commercials.
Commercial #1 "Did you think Spider Man was a boy or a girl?"
Commercial #2 "What did the girl's parents say to her?"
                 "Were they being mean to her?" (examples of well-intentioned people)
Commercial#3 "What was the mother doing in the commercial?"

"The dad?"
"The grandfather?"

I will conclude by asking, "What have we learned from these few commercials?" and "What do we do to perpetuate the biases these commercials have revealed?"

LESSON 6- Formally introduces STEM education. I will explain the importance of STEM to obtaining a job and income. Not everyone will want a job in STEM, but we want to make sure everybody has the opportunity to have a career in STEM if they want to because choices are good, and when we limit ourselves we have fewer choices. We read Anna Banana and Me by Lenore Blegoad or The Story of Ferdinand by Munro Leaf. We discuss how the characters take control and make more choices for themselves.

I will take an article or graph from the Federal Reserve Bank website to show the earning potential from students who have been college-educated or trained in a trade versus those with only a high school diploma. The students need to know that if they do not pursue advanced math and science classes, this decision will diminish their employment opportunities and their income later.

We will watch My Sister is A Sissy in which Arthur reads a poem by Jack Prelutsky.

LESSON 7- We will read Little Blue and Little Yellow by Leo Lionni or Jack and Jim by Kitty Crowther and discuss why acceptance is important and how everyone benefits from one another. I will ask, "What do we gain from one another?"

   As a homework assignment, I will ask the students (with help from their families) to pick a topic for their project. We can start the research and work on projects in school.

LESSON 8- We will read the Big Orange Splot by Daniel Pinkwater, continue class discussion and continue with working on projects.

LESSON 9- We will read One Green Apple by Toyomi Igus, continue class discussion and continue to do research and work on projects in school.

LESSON 10- We will share projects when they are completed and read Whoever You Are by Mem Fox.

LESSON 11- We will host an Equality Night to share our projects with the entire school. We will play Ted Talks: *Teach Girls Bravery, Not Perfection* by Reshman Saujani. (Some editing may be needed around minute 12 if anyone is likely to be offended by the "Tampon Run" comment).

Classroom Activities- Additional Articles

This unit should naturally generate additional topics of equality as the year progresses. I anticipate discussing racial equity in depth in January and February. After a quick search

of Read Works, additional articles with comprehension questions may be located to supplement the unit with information about equity with respect to race. We will read Ruby Bridges, Martin Luther King, Jr. and other books about racial equity. I have located many additional resources about African American civil rights leaders and other to supplement and continue this unit throughout the school year. Search Read Works for stories with questions such as: <u>Famous African Americans: Adam Clayton Powell, Jr.</u>, <u>MLK, Jr.</u>, <u>In Memory of Dr. King</u>, <u>Walking Tall</u>, <u>Harriet Tubman and the Underground Railroad</u>, <u>George Washington Carver,</u> and Winning the Vote.

Classroom Activities- Final Project

For our final activity, the children will do a report or presentation on one of three topics.

   First, they may choose to do a report or presentation on a civil rights leader or historical subject dealing with equality and how things were changed as a result.

   Second, they may write a research report on a current situation they want to shed light on and foster change. An example may be equal pay for equal work or for the higher grades, "Black Lives Matter".

   Some students may want to create a project that may be implemented in our school or community, on the model of Project Citizen. They may want to establish a program to promote equity and diversity. As an example, Girls on the Run promotes life skills, confidence, health and fitness through accomplishments.

   This culminating activity on Equality Night is designed to show students that they have a voice and that they may be agents of change, even at a young age.

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This book examines the disparity between males and females in education, the biased ways teachers treat students and the stereotypical roles which the schools prepare our students.

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