

Based upon the following article "*Stereotypes and the Female Student*," write an essay with 350-500 words. Your essay needs to present your agreements and disagreements to the writer's statements.

Don't forget to give a title to your writing. (100%)

Language use 30% Contents 30% Structures and Organizations 30% Title 10%

Stereotypes and the Female Student

written by Monir Shirazi

(1) Do women and men receive an equal education? Although women go to the same lectures, listen to the same professors, take the same notes, and study the same texts as men, their education is inferior. This educational inequality stems from a number of factors, some of which are related to stereotypes.

(2) Adrienne Rich, a well-known author and advocate for women's rights, suggests that "the content of education itself validates men even as it invalidates women."¹ Rich believes that education teaches students that "men have been the shapers and thinkers of the world and that this is only natural." Education is biased, she believes, and this bias is white, male, racist and sexist.

(3) I think of my own classes. In my English literature survey course, only one or two female authors were presented. In my philosophy class, men, and men alone, were presented as the great philosophers. No one questioned why there was no female author's work worthy of being in the curriculum. No one questioned why there were no female philosophers discussed in the class.

(4) By focusing almost exclusively on men, the educational system is perpetuating stereotypes. Men are doers. Men are the thinkers. Men are rational. Men produce masterpieces. Men are capable of genius. Men achieve great goals. What messages do the female students receive? Women are *not* doers. Women are *not* thinkers. And so on. How can female students receive an equal education if they are receiving those messages? What do those messages do to a female student who has dreams of success or achievement?

(5) Stereotypes begin affecting the female student long before she reaches higher education. A girl is told (from a young age) that relationships are more important than work, that how she dresses is more important than how well she does in school, that she will not get married if she is too intelligent, that the most important job she can do is serve her husband and children, that women should be quiet and unassertive. A female student, thus, feels many conflicts about speaking up in class, excelling in class, taking time away from others to pursue her selfish goals. With all of these messages built up inside of her over the years, how can she receive an equal education?

(6) Rich asks her readers to watch male and female behavior:

Look at a classroom: look at the many kinds of women's faces, postures, expressions. Listen to the women's voices. Listen to the silences, the unasked questions, the blanks. Listen to the small, soft voices, often courageously trying to speak up, voices of women taught early that tones of confidence, challenge, anger, or assertiveness are unfeminine. Listen to voices of the women and the men. Observe the space men allow themselves, physically and verbally, the male assumption that people will listen, even when the majority of the group is female. Look at the faces of the silent and of those who speak. (Rich 1979, p. 241.)

(7) I asked earlier whether males and females receive an equal education. Women may sit in the same classrooms as men, but the education that they receive is inferior because of the stereotypes women face. As long as stereotypes of men and women perpetuate educational inequality and men and women fail to question these stereotypes, inequality of education will persist.