Understanding Gender

A Lesson Plan from Rights, Respect, Responsibility: A K-12 Curriculum

Fostering responsibility by respecting young people's rights to honest sexuality education.

NSES ALIGNMENT:

Students will be able to:

ID.12.CC.1 – Differentiate between biological sex, sexual orientation, and gender identity and expression.

TARGET GRADE: High School – Lesson 1

TIME: 50 Minutes

MATERIALS NEEDED:

- *3Rs Teacher's Guide* (pages 14-15 and 23-24)
- Projector and screen
- Computer with PowerPoint
- PowerPoint: *"Gender Picture Examples"*
- Whiteboard and markers
- *"Gender Scripts"* worksheet (one copy per each group of three students)
- *"Gender Identity Photos,"* four unique photos in envelopes (one set per each group of two students)
- "Resources for students about Gender Identity and Sexual Orientation" - one per student
- **Homework**: "My Friend is Transgender" (one per student)

ADVANCE PREPARATION FOR LESSON:

- Review the section in the *3Rs Teacher's Guide* on "Using Ground Rules with this Curriculum" (pages 14-15). Establish ground rules, group agreements, or classroom norms with your students prior to instruction and refer to them as often as needed.
- Read through the *3Rs Teacher's Guide* on teaching about gender, gender identity, and sexual orientation (pages 23-24).
- Print and cut out the *"Gender Identity Photos"* included in this lesson plan. There should be enough photos for each pair of students to receive 4 different pictures in an envelope.

Note to the Teacher: *If there are not enough photos provided here for all of your students to have unique sets of 4 photos, you may duplicate some of the photos so that some groups of students have some of the same photos, or you may add some additional photos that you find on your own. If you add photos, please be sure they represent a range of ages, races, ethnicities, cultures, physical abilities, and body types, and include some that visually fulfill gender stereotypes, some that do not, and some whose gender is not easly recognizeable.*

LEARNING OBJECTIVES:

By the end of this lesson, students will be able to:

1. Explain what gender and gender identity are, and how they are different from biological sex. [Knowledge]
2. Define sexual orientation and how it is different from gender and gender identity. [Knowledge]
3. Define "gender script" while providing several examples of these scripts. [Knowledge]
4. Identify at least three sources of gender scripts and messages they have received growing up. [Knowledge]
5. Understand the concept of body image and how body image is shaped by external messages. [Knowledge]

A NOTE ABOUT LANGUAGE:

Language is really important and we've intentionally been very careful about our language throughout this curriculum. You may notice language throughout the curriculum that seems less familiar—using the pronoun "they" instead of "her" or "him," using gender neutral names in scenarios and role-plays and referring to "someone with a vulva" vs. a girl or woman. This is intended to make the curriculum inclusive of all genders and gender identities. You will need to determine for yourself how much and how often you can do this in your own school and classroom and should make adjustments accordingly.

PROCEDURE:

STEP 1: Say, "**Today we are going to be talking about gender, gender identity, and sexual orientation. Let's take a look at what these terms means before we do some activities.**"

Write the word "gender" on the white board. Ask, "**What does gender mean?**" In most cases, people will say, "it's whether you're a boy or a girl." After a few responses, ask, "**How does someone determine whether you're a boy or girl?**" There will likely be a range of responses, but most commonly they will get at "it's how you're born." Ask, "**When you're born, how do they know what your gender is?**" Probe for "by looking at the baby's genitals."

Explain that there's a slight difference here—that when you look at the baby's genitals and see either a penis or a vulva, all you're seeing is their body parts. Based on what we see, we assign a name to describe that baby—we say, "it's a boy" or "it's a girl." This is called a person's biological sex. Write the phrase "biological sex" on the board to the left of the word gender.

Say, "**Some people are born with external genitals that don't match their internal organs. For example, somone who has a vulva but no uterus. All of this has to do with biology: our body parts, our chromosomes, and our hormones, which all make up our biological sex. If our external body parts are different from our internal organs then we are called 'intersex.' That's a way of referring to someone whose sexual body parts developed differently from most people.**"

Say, "**Gender, however, is different and far more complex. To make it clearer, let's break it down a bit.**"

Say, "**If you were to look in the mirror and see your body, what you see in the mirror is part of your biological sex. If you were to close your eyes, how you see yourself is your gender identity. In most cases, how people feel when they close their eyes matches what they see in the mirror. This is called being 'cisgender.' You might commonly hear people refer to just being 'male' or 'female,' but the correct term is 'cisgender.' For some people, what they see in the mirror and how they feel on the inside are different. This is called being 'transgender.'**

These terms are different from sexual orientation." Write "sexual orientation" on the board. Say, "**Sexual orientation has to do with the gender or genders of the people we are romantically and physically attracted to. This is different from our sense of what our gender is. A person who is attracted to their same gender are typically referred to as gay or lesbian, and a person who is attracted to both genders are typically referred**

to as bisexual. A person attracted to only the other gender are typically referred to as heterosexual. We all have both a gender identity and a sexual orientation.

For example, a person whose biology at birth was characterized as 'female' and who also feels female on the inside, who is attracted only to people whose biology at birth was characterized as 'male' and who also feel male on the inside, will likely identify as heterosexual. The fact that she identifies as female and he identifies as male are their *gender identities*. The fact that they're attracted to each other is their *sexual orientation*.

Similarly, a person whose biology at birth was characterized as 'female' and who also feels female on the inside, who is attracted only to people whose biology at birth was characterized as 'female' and who also feel female on the inside, will likely identify as a lesbian. The fact that they identify as female are their *gender identities*. The fact that they're attracted to each other is their *sexual orientation*.

Say, "**Regardless of our gender identity or sexual orientation, we are getting lots of messages about what is or isn't okay to say, do, or wear based on which gender we are.**" Write the word "gender script" on the board. Ask, "**Has anyone here been in a play at school? What does a script tell us in a play or movie or TV show?**" Probe for it tells us what we should say, how we should move, and how we should react to others. Say, "**So our gender scripts are how we're told to be based on the answer to the question when we're born: 'Is it a boy or a girl?'" Our gender expression is a person's outward presentation of their gender usually involving personal style, clothing, hairstyle and body language.**

Note to the Teacher: *Here are the terms that should be listed on the board: gender, biological sex, sexual orientation, and gender script.*

Divide the class into groups of three. Say, "**I am going to give you all a sheet of paper and would like to ask you to think about the gender scripts you have received or have heard about people of a different gender from yours. For right now, we're just going to talk about boys and girls.**"

Distribute the *"Gender Scripts"* worksheet to each group and tell students they will have about 10 minutes in which to complete it. (11 minutes)

STEP 2: After about 10 minutes, ask students to stop their work. Create two lists on the board corresponding to the worksheet and ask students to share an example from their lists. Write their responses on the board.

Once all the responses are on the board, ask the following questions:

- **What do you notice about the two lists?**
- **How did you know that these were the gender scripts as you were growing up?**
- **From where/whom have you been receiving these scripts?**

Say, "**So far, we've been talking about people who are assigned 'male' and 'female' at birth. In most cases, people who are assigned 'male' at birth have a penis and testicles, and how they feel on the inside matches those body parts. It makes sense to them. It's**

typically the same thing for people who are assigned 'female' at birth—they have a vulva, ovaries, and a uterus, and how they feel on the inside matches those parts.

Sometimes, however, the body parts are different from how a person feels on the inside. That person may call themselves 'transgender' or simply 'trans.' For example, a trans woman is a person whose biology at birth was characterized as 'male' and who feels female on the inside. This person's *gender identity* is female. Being transgender is not a sexual orientation. A transgender person's *sexual orientation* would depend on the gender(s) that this person is romantically and physically attracted to.

How might someone who identifies as transgender react to these gender scripts?" (11 minutes)

STEP 3: Say, "**To what extent do you think our culture as a whole has been scripted around gender? Let's take a look at that now. To do so, we need to get into pairs.**"

After students get into their pairs, say, "**Each pair is going to get an envelope. Inside are four pictures. You are going to face each other. One person will start by taking out one of the pictures from the envelope without showing it to the other person. They will then describe the person in the picture and the other person needs to guess the gender of that person. Seems easy, right? But wait—there are a few rules!**"

Write key words on the board as you go through these rules:

- The guesser may not ask questions; they can only go by what's shared by their partner.
- No gender pronouns may be used by the person describing the pictures. Only "they" or "them" can be used—no "he" or "his" or "she" or "hers."
- No gender words like "masculine" or "feminine" can be used, such as "man" or "woman" and so on. For example, you cannot say, "This person looks like a man but isn't" or "This person looks really girly." Just describe what's in the picture. For example, "This person has long hair." "This person is a child. They are playing football."
- You may not refer to whatever's in the picture as a "girl" or "boy" thing. For example, you cannot say "This person is playing with a girl's doll."
- If you recognize the person in the picture, please do not say, "Oh, it's so-and-so" or describe what TV show or movie they're in. Just describe what they look like physically.

Show the PowerPoint Slide 1 with the sample photo. Say, "**For example, if you had this person, you might say, 'this person is smiling. They have dark hair that is styled up over their head. They are wearing lipstick and other makeup.' Then allow the other person to guess.**"

Before advancing to Slide 2, describe this person (or press "D" to darken the screen so the slide cannot be seen). Say, "**Let's try another one—only this time you won't see the picture yet, which is what it will be like in the activity. This person has dark hair that's**

sort of spiked up. They're wearing eye makeup and a necklace and a leather jacket." Once students have guessed about the gender of the person in the picture, show Slide 2.

Answer any questions and then distribute the envelopes, reminding students to take turns describing the photos/guessing the genders and to not show their photos to their partners. As they work, walk around the room to see how they are doing. (10 minutes)

STEP 4: After about five minutes, ask students to stop their work. Process by asking the following questions:

- **What was it like to do that? What was** [insert participant responses] **about it?**
- **Did you find it easy to guess a person's gender? What was the language that tipped you off?**
- **What made it difficult to guess the person's gender?**
- **What was it like to be the person giving clues? What was easy or challenging about doing that?**

Say, "**In the photos, there were certain features that could apply to someone who is or who we perceive to be female, to someone who is or we perceive to be male, or to someone whose gender identity we do not know or who does not identify as male or female. If these terms can apply to someone of any gender, why do you think we gender them in the first place? For instance, why would we say, 'she's dressed like a guy' vs. 'she's wearing pants?'**"

Say, "**What we call ourselves is called our 'gender identity.' And while you may assume that someone who looks a particular way on the outside identifies the same way on the inside, that may not necessarily be the case.**" Ask, "**How many people feel they guessed the genders of the people in both of their photos correctly?**" Explain that, unless the photo you had was of a famous person who's made their gender known, you actually wouldn't know for sure what that person's gender is unless you asked them.

STEP 5: Next, lead the discussion to questions about body image. Write the term "Body Image" on the white board with markers. As you ask students questions, write key words or ideas that they contribute on the white board for reference during the discussion. Ask students, "**When you looked at these photos, did you think about any of the following:**"

- **Did you think about how attrative or unattractive these people were?**
- **Did you think about their body size or shape?**
- **Were your first impressions of people that presented as female different from your feelings about people that presented as male?**
- **What about people that presented female or male compared with people that appeared gender-neutral or agender?**
- **How did you think about the white people as compared to the people of color?**
- **Do you think that bias against people because of their body size, shape, or appearance is acceptable?**

Ask if there is anyone who did not think about the size of these people in the photos as they

examined them. Point out that although each person looks happy, healthy, or active, the first impression that many people will have is about their body size.

Ask students to consider where they get their ideas about what body shape and size is attractive and healthy. Draw a circle on the board and write "BODY IMAGE SHAPED BY…" in the center. Create a web of the students' ideas (e.g., family, friends, culture, advertisements, toys, video games, TV, movies, music, magazines, etc.). Guide a discussion about the ways in which each category on the board has shaped their ideas about body image and their perceptions about people who fall outside what is considered "normal" or attractive.

Tell students that ideas in our society about body image are so ingrained that most of us take them for granted and accept them as natural and normal. This might lead us to internalize negative concepts about ourselves and others, such as feeling like a bad person for being overweight or thinking that thin people are the most worthy friends. Ideas about body image, however, are not fixed or universal, and vary depending upon the time and place. Ask students to silently reflect on how many times each day they judge (or hear others judge) their own or someone else's size or appearance, and what effect these judgments have on us cumulatively and over time.

Say to students, "**No one has the right to tell someone else how they are supposed to express their gender or how they should look. Society will continue to give messages about gender and body image, whether from the media, family, culture, or religious groups. But in the end, every person has the right to discover who they are and to let others know in ways that feel right to them.**" (15 minutes)

STEP 6: AAnswer any questions students may have, then explain that for their homework they will be watching a video from AMAZE.org, "My Friend is Transgender" and responding to some questions about it. Distribute the homework sheets and close class. (3 minutes)

RECOMMENDED ASSESSMENT OF LEARNING OBJECTIVES AT CONCLUSION OF LESSON:

The initial presentation by the teacher will achieve Learning Objective 1 and 4. The gender script brainstorm small group activity and large group discussion will achieve Learning Objectives 2 and 3. The final activity will achieve Learning Objective 5.

HOMEWORK:

Students will watch a brief excerpt from AMAZE.org, "My Friend is Transgender" and respond to the questions on the homework sheet.

(Body Image lesson excerpted from Reshaping Body Image *by Teaching Tolerance https://www.tolerance.org/classroom-resources/tolerance-lessons/reshaping-body-image)*

RESOURCES FOR STUDENTS ABOUT GENDER IDENTITY AND SEXUAL ORIENTATION

WEBSITES

thetrevorproject.org

genderspectrum.org

gsanetwork.org/ca

glsen.org

HOTLINES

1-866-488-7386 - Trevor Project

(510) 788-4412 - Gender Spectrum

(415) 552-4229 - GSA Network-CA

GENDER SCRIPTS

Names: _____

Instructions:

- From the time we are born, we are told how we are supposed to act, dress and speak based on the sex we are assigned at birth—just as if we had been given a script and asked to follow it throughout our lives.
- In the space below, please provide examples of some of the messages you or people close to you have received about how we are supposed to behave based on whether someone is assigned "male" or "female" at birth.

ASSIGNED FEMALE	ASSIGNED MALE

Homework: My Friend is Transgender

Homework (Lesson HS-1)

Name: _____ Date: _____

Instructions: Please go to https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9DO7wSU1tCA and Play the Amaze.org video "My Friend is Transgender". Once you are done, please answer the questions below.

1. Cassie goes to the store to buy clothes for her friend Glenda who is embarrassed to buy for herself. What are some other activites that a trangender person might be embarrassed or uncomfortable to do? Why do you think these activities would be challenging?

2. When Jim finds out Glenda is transgender, why do you think he does not want to be friends with her even though Jim has known Glenda since they were young? Do you agree? Why or Why not?

3. Glenda says that she is taking her time to tell people that she is transgender and asks Jim to respect her and keep this information to himself. Why is it important for Glenda to tell people and not Jim? How do you think Glenda would feel and what could happen if Jim chose not to respect her request?

4. Jim thinks that gender identity is very simple: if you have a penis you're a boy, if you have a vagina you're a girl. What are some suggestions you would have for helping Jim understand more accurately about gender identity and having a transgender identity?

GENDER IDENTITY PHOTOS

http://www.lauraajacobs.com/transgender-gender-nonconforming-issues

http://www.complexdwoman.co.uk/2013/08/complexd-women/complexdwoman-debbie-van-der-putten

www.huffingtonpost.com/nathan-manske/embracing-gender-nonconformity-in-a-mcdonalds-parking-lot_b_6665784.html

www.pbs.org/newshour/bb/right-handsome-clothing-gender-non-conformists-rise

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www.afterellen.com/movies/49317-tilda-swintons-julia-finally-crosses-the-atlantic

www.kidsinthehouse.com/all-parents/family-life/when-talking-about-childrens-gender-words-matter

http://womanonline.co.za/Beauty-detail/bearded-woman-harnaam-kaur-sends-moving-letter-to-her-younger-self

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www.huffingtonpost.com/entry/an-open-letter-to-the-tween-girls-clothing-store-justice_us_57d54f2de4b0eb9a57b7acf4

http://createdangerously.com/at-home-jobs-for-disabled-people

www.50statesstaffing.com/travel_nurse_news_july07.html

https://chccsslps.wordpress.com

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http://mensfashion.about.com/od/goominghair/ss/BlackHairstyles.htm

www.thetimes.co.uk/tto/arts/tv-radio/article2755339.ece

www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-3219111/Genderqueer-student-18-identifies-neither-male-female-just-looking-acceptance.html

http://pakistan545.rssing.com/chan-15444699/all_p921.html

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www.latina.com/lifestyle/our-issues/why-we-say-latinx-trans-gender-non-conforming-people-explain

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www.cruckers.com/best-medium-hairstyles-for-black-women

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http://everydayfeminism.com/2016/04/gnc-dont-want-pass-for-cis

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www.unmultimedia.org/radio/english/2014/12/better-access-to-technology-needed-for-people-with-disabilities

www.gabworthy.com/lifestyle/10-reasons-why-david-bowie-didnt-actually-die

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http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/nri/other-news/110-year-old-Christmas-loving-Sikh-is-oldest-man-in-Britain/articleshow/45584968.cms

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