

How can we achieve gender equity in the classroom?

Teaching English with the British Council: Series 3 episode 1 overview

The TeachingEnglish podcast is back! In episode 1, we're discussing how we can achieve gender equity in the classroom. We talk to **Dr Aisling O'Boyle**, Director of the Centre for Language Education Research at Queen's University, Belfast. We look at how discrimination against women in areas like education has deep historical roots, but we now have more useful language to discuss it. We talk about how inequalities persist in many areas today and how language and textbooks can reinforce gender stereotypes. We're later joined by **Araceli Salas** and **Grazzia Mendoza**, teacher educators from Latin America and editors of [Empowered women in ELT: A collection of worldwide stories](#). Together, we look at practical ways English teachers can tackle gender equity, including raising awareness, working together and adapting classroom materials to reflect local contexts.

Show notes and transcripts in English and Arabic are also available to download.

Detailed notes

Introduction	
Series 3 of Teaching English with the British Council	You can access previous series of the British Council 'Teaching English' podcast here .
International Women's Day	International Women's Day is celebrated on 8 March in many countries around the world. It is a day to recognise women's achievements and demand equality without regard to divisions, whether national, ethnic, linguistic, cultural, economic or political. Discover more here .
Chris's PhD	If you are interested(!), the focus of Chris's doctorate is language-in-education policy in South Sudan. Please contact him if you would like to read a copy.
Teaching English with the British Council team	The TeachingEnglish online Facebook community can be accessed here .
Gender equity vs gender equality	The following short, concise article by the UN Population Fund explains this difference.
Social construct	A social construct is an idea that is created and made real by people and society. According to the World Health Organization, 'Gender refers to the characteristics of women, men, girls and boys that are socially constructed. This includes norms, behaviours and roles associated with being a woman, man, girl or boy, as well as relationships with each other. As a social construct, gender varies from society to society and can change over time.'

Interview 1	
Dr Aisling O'Boyle	Dr Aisling O'Boyle is Director of the Centre for Language Education Research, Queen's University, Belfast. You can see her profile here .
Gender equality in English language teaching practice: A resource book for teacher education	There are two volumes in this series. The first is a series of reflective essays by practitioners, and can be accessed here . The second focuses on resources, and can be accessed here .
One of the essays in the volume that you co-edited	This particular essay, Essay 1.1, is called 'Towards gender equality: Breaking stereotypes together' and can be accessed here .
Annual reports on gender equality	UN Women produce an annual report every year. The UNDP Gender Equality Strategy 2022–2025 may also be of interest.
Measurements of gender equality	You can find out more here about Sustainable Development Goal 4, which is a commitment to 'ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all.' This goal is a pivotal driver for positive change, emphasising the transformative power of education in fostering a sustainable and equitable world. You may also be interested in the Gender Development Index and the Gender Inequality Index .
Gender stereotypes	According to the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), a gender stereotype 'is a generalised view or preconception about attributes, or characteristics that are or ought to be possessed by women and men or the roles that are or should be performed by men and women'.
The difference between gender and sex	People may often state their pronouns in order to tell other people about their gender. This link provides a concise overview about the way in which people use pronouns.
Essentialist binary view	Gender essentialism is a theory which attributes distinct, intrinsic qualities to women and men. Based in essentialism, it holds that there are certain universal, innate, biologically (or psychologically) based features of gender that are at the root of many of the group

	differences observed in the behaviour of men and women.
The way, for example, that professions are represented in English language textbooks	See, for example, the following sources: here , here and here .
There's a really interesting essay in the collection called 'Anyone can carry chairs'.	This particular essay, Essay 8.3, is called 'Anyone can carry chairs', and can be accessed here .
Interview 2	
Araceli Salas and Grazzia Mendoza, teacher educators from Latin America	Their collection, <i>Teacher educator empowered women in ELT: A collection of worldwide stories</i> , can be found here .
USAID	The United States Agency for International Development (USAID) is an independent agency of the United States government that is primarily responsible for administering civilian foreign aid and development assistance. You can find out more about its work here .
Honduras	Honduras is a country of nine million people in Central America. It faces a number of gender-specific challenges, an overview of which can be found here on the Oxfam website.