5.5 Teaching and learning self-assessment checklist for teachers

INEE Minimum Standards	**Domain 3: Teaching and Learning** Standard 3 – Instruction and learning processes: Instruction and learning processes are learner-centred, participatory, and inclusive.
Primary users	National, sub-national • education personnel at sub-national level (teachers, instructors, field staff); • education managers and technical specialists at national and sub-national level (for information).
Purpose of tool	To provide a simple checklist for teachers working in EiE contexts to self-assess the level of gender-responsive pedagogy in their classrooms. Self-assessment responses can help to identify teachers' capacities and strengths, and any gaps where they need more support. The focus should be on identifying their needs. The checklist can be a consultative and collaborative way to develop an action plan for increasing and monitoring the use of gender-responsive pedagogy. There are no right or wrong answers; this is a tool to promote growth. EiE project managers and government education personnel can also use the checklist to review classroom practices (e.g., to observe teachers in host communities). EiE personnel may integrate questions on gender-responsive pedagogy from this tool into existing teacher observation tools promoted at the national or regional levels in countries.

Introduction

In the classroom, teachers can reinforce existing gender biases, sometimes unintentionally. For example, they may ask only boys to answer questions or expect girls to sweep and tidy the classroom. This checklist can help teachers to question their practices and habits and make teaching and learning more inclusive and responsive to the needs of all learners. It can also help teachers identify and remove gender-related barriers faced by learners.

The criteria provided in the tool are also valuable for monitoring visits and setting indicators for a quality learning environment.

Key information

Inclusive education:

- recognizes all children can learn;

- acknowledges and respects differences in children: age, gender, ethnicity, language, disability, and health status;

- enables education structures, systems, and methodologies to meet the needs of all children;

- is a constantly evolving process;

- aims to create a more inclusive society.

Negative attitudes can be the most significant barrier to including children in education. Teachers can be supported to speak out and act against discrimination resulting from traditional social, cultural, and religious beliefs. For example, in Nigeria[22] Malala Fund and Forum for African Women Educationalists (FAWE) supported young female teachers to voice their concerns about girls' education in emergency contexts and build their capacity to advocate safely and effectively for change.

Discrimination may also arise from beliefs about what certain children can and cannot, or should and should not, do. Teachers need basic knowledge and skills to respond to children's learning needs in the classroom. They can build on this foundation as they develop as teachers.

The checklist below is based on:

- UNRWA (2017) Towards gender-sensitive classrooms for teachers

- DFID Girls Education Challenge (2020) Teaching and Learning Self-Assessment Tool for Projects.

22 Yusuf, A (2017) 'I speak out for girls who can't'

Checklist for teachers

- This checklist is relevant for use and adaptation by teachers and instructors at early childhood education (ECE), primary, secondary, and tertiary levels of EiE.

- Teachers should rate their level of confidence for each question. The four levels of confidence are: very confident, confident, some concerns, and need support (see <u>Table 5.5.1</u> for descriptions). Education personnel can also complete the questionnaire while observing teachers in class. They can discuss with teachers after they have done the self-assessment to see how the two sets of responses correlate.

Table 5.5.1: Descriptions of the four levels of confidence

😊	**Very confident**	Teacher can answer questions positively and demonstrate corresponding action or examples from classroom practice.
🙂	**Confident**	Teacher has a good response to questions. Teacher recognizes that there may still be areas for improvement.
😐	**Some concerns**	Teacher has doubts or concerns about their ability to implement suggested action.
☹	**Need support**	Teacher recognizes a gap in knowledge and skills and identifies a need for support.

Table 5.5.2: Teachers' self-assessment checklist

School/learning environment	
Question	**Confidence level**
Are girls and boys learning in safe and protective learning spaces? If not, what measures can be taken to address the gaps?	
Example	
The school site is a safe space, accessible to girls and boys, including those with disabilities. All learners are actively encouraged to attend, participate, and achieve in learning. For example, after a crisis, opportunities were taken to provide psychosocial support for children in the curriculum, and separate water, sanitation, and hygiene facilities were built for male and female learners and teachers. ✂ **5.2: Facilities and services** ✂ **5.3: Protection and well-being**	
Question	**Confidence level**
Are fun, familiar, and safe recreational activities available for girls and boys? These can help provide and promote psychosocial support and well-being during and after crises.	
Example	
Set up sports clubs and encourage female and male participation. For example, ensure girls can participate in ball games (football, basketball, etc.) and boys can participate in dance clubs. Do not reinforce stereotypes. Ensure recreational games are age-appropriate. In Bamyan, Afghanistan,[23] UNICEF established volleyball and football clubs for girls to help them recover from their experiences of gender-based violence (GBV) at home.	
Question	**Confidence level**
Do seating arrangements enable girls and boys to cooperate and learn together, as well as learning from the teacher?	
Example	
Arrange the space flexibly to encourage teamwork between boys and girls. For example, arrange desks in a U-shape or group seats together. This can work particularly well for adolescents and tertiary students. For ECE settings, girls and boys could be seated on mats in a circle or brought together in small learning teams to work on projects. Space is not always available, especially in refugee camps. Is it possible to group learners in different ways, mixing up genders and providing opportunities for class cohorts to move around and change seating between different sessions? For example, it may be possible simply to ask learners to turn around and work with the learners seated behind them for a change.	

23   UNICEF (2010) 'Promoting girls' empowerment through sport in Afghanistan'

Teaching approach/participation	
Teacher beliefs/attitudes	
Question	**Confidence level**
Do you ask girls and boys equally to participate in class?	
Example	
Ask girls and boys to answer questions, offer their opinions, and act on what they say. Alternate by gender. Select names at random from a box or hat to encourage equal participation. Reward participation with praise and encouragement for both girls and boys. Do you give girls and boys the same classroom/school tasks? For example, do boys also sweep the classroom, and do girls also lead class clubs?	
Question	**Confidence level**
Do you use positive reinforcement techniques?	
Example	
Praise learners when they demonstrate good behaviour in gender roles (such as assigning equal gender roles in teamwork, and positive girl-boy cooperation). This can promote positive gender relations in the classroom.	
Question	**Confidence level**
Do you encourage boys and girls to work together and on an equal basis in groups?	
Example	
Create classroom norms for group work that ensure mixed-sex groups and equal participation. Award points for participation to groups and individuals as an incentive for broader participation. If girls are playing with dolls and boys with brick blocks in an ECE setting, encourage them to work together. For instance, they can design and build a house for the dolls and make the dolls do some building.	
Question	**Confidence level**
Do you give girls and boys tasks in class that avoid gender stereotypes?	
Example	
Rotate roles for boys and girls in groups. Create roles such as 'group leader', 'researcher', 'classroom cleaner', and 'scribe', and allow both girls and boys to fill each role.	
Question	**Confidence level**
Do you make sure when praising learners that you avoid gender stereotypes?	
Example	
For example, do you avoid praising girls for being 'gentle' or boys for being 'brave'?	

Question	Confidence level
Do you use inclusive language in your teaching, and challenge gender stereotypes when they arise in learners' language and attitudes?	
Example	
When talking about jobs, avoid stereotyping. You can say things like: 'the nurse looked after his patients', or 'the scientist conducted her research'. Positive reinforcement of these messages can raise girls' aspirations and normalize inclusion.	
If textbooks and materials contain sexist stereotypes, use them as discussion points with your learners. Question why the stereotypes might be inappropriate and/or offensive, and talk about the gendered expectations learners have of themselves. This can work especially well with adolescents and young men and women.	
With younger children, intervene when peer pressure discourages a learner from exploring different gender roles.	
Question	**Confidence level**
Do you avoid using gendered terms unless it is essential?	
Example	
For instance, you can refer to 'people' or 'children' instead of 'men' or 'girls.'	
Question	**Confidence level**
Do you avoid generalizing about boys and girls unless it is essential?	
Example	
For example, do you avoid saying 'boys are like this…', 'girls are like that…'	
Learners' beliefs/attitudes	
Question	**Confidence level**
Do you actively challenge learners who use gender-biased language?	
Example	
For instance, if someone says to a boy 'you are crying like a girl,' or says to a girl 'you cannot play football', you can use this as a positive opportunity to teach children and young people about gender stereotypes. You can discuss where stereotypes come from, why they are used, and what we can do to challenge them.	
Question	**Confidence level**
Do you discuss the division of power or react to any perpetuation of unequal relationships when boys and girls work together; and do you offer more equitable ways of functioning?	
Example	
For instance, if boys dominate discussions, intervene and point this out. Actively encourage girls to participate. If girls are less forthcoming due to cultural norms, talk to the class about how they could find better ways to include girls (e.g., use smaller group work to build girls' confidence).	

Question	Confidence level
Do you support boys and girls to work together on tasks when this sort of collaboration is unfamiliar to them?	

Example	
For instance, in a camp or other setting where boys and girls are not used to being educated together, can you allow children scope to play games and get to know each other before they focus on learning tasks? Can you use ice breakers?	

Question	Confidence level
Are you able to speak to parents about the importance of and rights to education for girls and boys? If not, what are the barriers to this?	

Example	
For instance, can you liaise with school (or learning space) management committees (SMCs) or parent-teacher associations (PTAs), or use parent consultation meetings to raise issues around sons and daughters attending and not attending school. Can you speak to parents about the transition routes for girls and boys to higher levels of education and/or training and the options available in a crisis setting? (See Box 5.5.1 for strategies from teachers for engaging with parents.)	

Content of teaching and learning	

Question	Confidence level
Do girls and boys face specific barriers to learning? How can you work in school to remove these barriers and enhance access for girls and boys?	

Example	
A range of economic, socio-cultural, and geographical factors can prevent girls, boys, women, and men from participating in all levels of education. Such factors include higher rates of school-related GBV (SRGBV) and early marriage as a result of crises; increased demand for boys' labour as a result of economic insecurity due to crises; and the risk of children being recruited into armed groups on the way to school. ⊕ **Introduction** There are many ways teachers can support out-of-school children. This is one example: Engage with parents via PTAs/SMCs to discuss the reasons for girls' and boys' exclusion from schooling and ways to address this. Solutions might include outreach to the authorities to advocate for a 'bridging' programme for children who need to catch up before re-entering formal schooling. ⊕ **7: Accountability to affected populations**	

Question	Confidence level
Has a gender review of the curriculum and teaching and learning materials been carried out to make sure that materials are gender-responsive?	
Example	
For example, have teachers and the principal from the learning centre reviewed the curriculum for gender bias? Have they agreed on ways to omit bias from teaching and/or found ways to question and challenge gender bias in teaching and learning materials? ✂ **5.6: Curricula, teaching and learning materials**	
Question	Confidence level
Do you have an understanding of how girls' and boys' learning of literacy and numeracy may have been affected by gendered barriers to accessing education?	
Example	
For example, in some contexts, girls may face greater barriers to learning in specific subjects (e.g., where people perceive maths and numbers as 'masculine' subjects). Girls may have been excluded from education before the crisis and may need additional support to catch up with male peers or may require alternative provision through an accelerated learning programme. Provide differentiated support for learners. ✂ **5.1: Accelerated and alternative education**	
Question	Confidence level
Do you integrate life skills, sexual and reproductive health/rights, and peace education into your teaching?	
Example	
Plan this in consultation with colleagues, head teachers, and female and male student representatives to ensure a coherent approach. ✂ **5.6: Curricula, teaching and learning materials** ✂ **5.1: Accelerated and alternative education (part 2)**	
Question	Confidence level
Is it possible to create a safe space for girls where they can discuss issues that are important to them, such as reproductive health? Can the same space be created for boys?	
Example	
For instance, can you conduct sessions in a private, separate, or side room with doors that can be closed, or find ways to schedule male and female groups at different times? Speak to girls and boys about what spaces to set up, which would be safe and supportive of their needs. ✂ **5.6: Curricula, teaching and learning materials** ✂ **5.2: Facilities and services**	

Institutional arrangements	
Question	**Confidence level**
Does the school or learning space ensure that boys and girls have the opportunity to get involved in decision making?	
Example	
Set up a learner council with equal gender representation. Coordinate engagement of the learner council with school management structures such as SMCs and PTAs.	
Question	**Confidence level**
Does the school or learning space have a code of conduct which emphasizes the values of gender equality, inclusion, and diversity? If not, can one be developed?	
Example	
Create a code of conduct for teachers and learners, in consultation with the learner council, which enshrines the values of gender equality and inclusion. ✕ **5.4: Teacher recruitment and support**	

📄 **Essential resources**

> Global Working Group to end SRGBV (2018) A Whole School Approach to Prevent School-Related Gender-Based Violence: minimum standards and monitoring framework.
>
> This document contains useful advice and guidance on the role of children and youth in making spaces safe, supportive, and relevant to their needs.
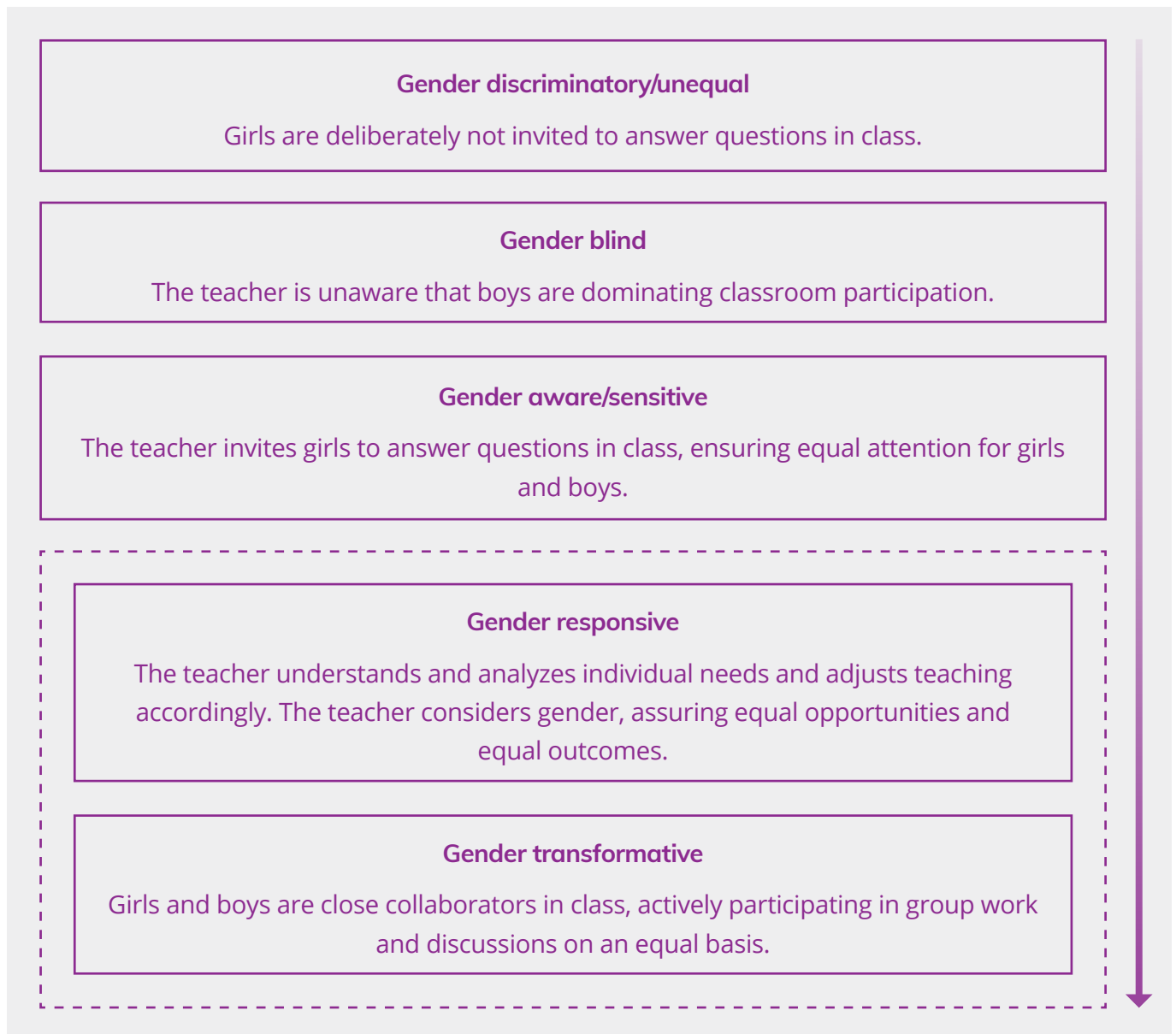>
> For children in ECE settings, design a poster with boys and girls to put on the wall. It should show all children playing together, including boys and girls playing with 'non-traditional' toys. Show girls and boys holding hands. Title the poster 'We Are Friends' and talk about kindness, friendship, and respecting and helping each other.

Box 5.5.1: Strategies from teachers for engaging with parents[24]

- Invite parents to attend a school career fair. This is an opportunity to educate parents on the importance of allowing their sons and daughters to complete their studies and pursue higher education.

- Organize meetings with parents to encourage them to avoid assigning duties at home based on gender.

- Arrange seminars for parents on gender equity in collaboration with school counsellors.

- Work with parents to promote fathers' roles in supporting and raising children and forming their personalities.

- Encourage parents to support their children's dreams. For example, if a student wants to be a lawyer, practise calling him/her Attorney [first name] to keep their dream alive.

- Hold teacher-parent meetings to regularly build trust with parents and discuss the investment of their children's education.

- Arrange focus group discussions with successful female leaders, and invite girls, boys, and their parents to attend.

- Collaborate with parents and teachers to provide special assistance for girls who may face early marriage or pregnancy. For instance, offer guidance on what to do if they miss school. Offer to reschedule exams or prepare remedial activities so that they can finish their secondary education.

- Establish and maintain PTSs and SMCs to implement the above strategies. Ensure gender-balanced membership and leadership.

24   Source: adapted from IREX, 2016 Creating Supportive Learning Environments for Girls and Boys: a guide for educators, p. 8

Table 5.5.3: Gender continuum – examples of classroom practice

> ### Gender discriminatory/unequal
> Girls are deliberately not invited to answer questions in class.

> ### Gender blind
> The teacher is unaware that boys are dominating classroom participation.

> ### Gender aware/sensitive
> The teacher invites girls to answer questions in class, ensuring equal attention for girls and boys.

> > ### Gender responsive
> > The teacher understands and analyzes individual needs and adjusts teaching accordingly. The teacher considers gender, assuring equal opportunities and equal outcomes.
>
> > ### Gender transformative
> > Girls and boys are close collaborators in class, actively participating in group work and discussions on an equal basis.

📖 Further reading

- INEE offers a range of resources for teachers (note these resources are not necessarily gender-responsive or gender-transformative).
- INEE (2019) Guidance Note on Gender, pp.68-77
- IREX (2016) Creating Supportive Learning Environments for Girls and Boys (available in French and English).
- FAWE (2020) Gender Responsive Pedagogy Toolkit for Teachers and Schools. 2nd Edition.
- VVOB and FAWE (2020) Gender Responsive Pedagogy in Early Childhood Education