



2.5 Construction of Masculinity and Femininity

Suggested Grade Level: 6- 12

Time: 40 minutes

Subject Area: Gender

Overview:

This activity will explore the concepts of masculinity and femininity. Often times these two concepts play a large part in how people perform their genders and what certain people should and should not do or feel. This activity will break down those gender norms and help students come to the conclusion that masculine and feminine are just social constructions and not rules that need to be followed.

Goals:

- Have a deeper understanding what masculinity/ femininity are
- Gives students a deeper understanding on the complexity of gender
- Creates a space for students to be honest and secure in their idea of gender and femininity/ masculinity

Materials:

- Large poster paper
- Markers
- Tape
- Scissors

Suggested Follow-up Lessons:

- 2.6 Masculinity in Media

Procedure:

Step One:

Create two outlines of bodies on the large pieces of paper. In these outlines label one ‘masculine’ and one ‘feminine’. In these outlines write the stereotypical traits associated with either masculinity. It’s important to express that these traits are traits that society has assigned to these two sections.

Step Two:

Tape these two outline on a wall, one should be at one end of the wall and the other outline at the other end. After placing the outlines on the wall, handout character cards to the students. These character cards can be found at the end of this lesson.

Step Three:

With these character cards assign where these characters would fall on the spectrum of masculinity and femininity. Allow student to read aloud their individual character cards, after each student reads their character card they will move between the space in between the posters. The GSA will direct when the student should stop moving and then they should drop their card where they stopped. Repeat until all cards are on the line.

Step Four:

The fun part of these character cards are that they describe famous figures in the world today, the identity of these characters should be kept a secret until until after the put all their cards down. The facilitator will reveal that all these characters are actually celebrities and then they will re read the card and allow the GSA to guess the person. After a few guesses then the facilitator will reveal who the celebrity is.

If the GSA Leadership or the individuals facilitating this activity can create more character cards if they would like.

Step Four:**Discussion Questions:**

By doing this students will find that more often than not people do not fall on opposite sides on the spectrum but instead fall in the middle.

- What was your biggest takeaway from this activity?
- Why to we associate certain traits with certain genders?
- What role do you think sexuality plays in masculinity and femininity?
- What role do you think culture and race plays in masculinity and femininity?

Pro Tip:

If students want to learn about the construction and at times the toxic roles that masculinity and femininity can take please advise them to watch the films “The Mask You Live” and “Miss Representation”. These films are a great to show during movie nights.

<http://therepresentationproject.org>

Character Cards

A.

This person has a passion for mathematics. They are a straight A student graduate and will be attending MIT. They are big football fan.

B.

This person is known for their fashion looks, they walked in the Louis Vuitton fashion show. Up until recently they had long hair. They are the face of Louis Vuitton's womenswear.

C.

This person is a skilled martial artist who has dark long hair. One of their many roles includes solving crime.

D.

This person enjoys wearing eyeliner and nail polish. They were an all state soccer player.

E.

This person has created a global empire. They often have been described as "powerful", "inspiring", and "determined". They have can be seen in football stadiums and events such as the superbowl.

F.

This person was former Abercrombie and Fitch model. They are known for portraying athletes on screen.

G.

This person has 3 children. They graduated high school school at age 14 and became a famous mathematician.

- A. John Cameron Urschel - retired NFL player
- B. Jaden Smith - Actor/Musician/ Model
- C. Lucy Lu - Actress
- D. Pete Wentz - Musician
- E. Beyonce - Musician (performs in football stadiums and performed at the Superbowl)
- F. Colton Haynes - Actor (identifies as LGBTQ)
- G. Katherine Johnson - NASA Scientist (Hidden Figures)