

# **INQUIRY PROPOSAL:**

## **Gender Imbalance in the Technology Education Classroom**

### **Introduction:**

Through this inquiry I hope to discover why female representation in Technology Education classrooms is so low compared to other subjects. It is my hope that through research and observation I will be able to discover why this trend exists and create a means to encourage its reversal. Having worked in the trades for numerous years I have witnessed the blatant sexism that festers there. I wish to deduce if this exclusion of women in the trades is born in the high school or a product of the trades themselves.

### **Inquiry Questions and Problems:**

- Why is there such little female representation in the Technology classroom?
- Is the unbalance a product of ingrained societal and cultural belief?
- What are some ways I can change my Tech Ed classroom to make females feel welcome?
- Is segregation the best method to raising the female presence in the Tech Ed classroom?
- If a change is made in the high school environment could that help change the low female representation in the trades post-graduation?

### **Inquiry Purpose:**

This is an extremely important subject for everyone. If there are sexist cultural and/or societal beliefs within our school system, we have a problem that needs immediate addressing. By shutting out an entire gender, Technology Education lags behind in regards to gender equity and social justice. Furthermore, it ignores half of a school's entire population which is a ridiculous practice in a time when some shop classes are being cancelled due to lack of interest. I hope to include all my students, of all gender types, in helping me (and themselves) discover the means to open up Tech Ed to everyone.

### **Key Concepts:**

**Trades:** The trades have very low female representation. There are many reasons for this unbalance and I hope to identify them and discern ways of addressing them with my students.

**Segregation:** Some teachers have designed Tech Ed classes which separate females and males. It is my intention to explore the two different types of classrooms (segregated and non-segregated), list their pros and cons, and compare and contrast.

Equity: In both the trades and the Tech Ed classroom the male rules. This seems to go mostly unnoticed and/or ignored, sometimes it is even encouraged. The sexism that happens daily on work sites and in the classroom is behind the times and archaic. Change and a more inclusive attitude needs to take hold in technology and trades.

### **Ethical Considerations:**

I will have far more male students than female students which may cause for a more male bias in my research and reporting. Furthermore, I myself am male and my biases and privilege may skew my attempts to find information. It is my hope that I can find an equal number of male and female representation (students and teachers) to inquire and question with.

### References and Apps:

Sadker, D. & Zittleman, K. (2009). *Still Failing at Fairness: How Gender Bias Cheats Girls and Boys in Schools and What We Can Do About It*. Scribner: NY.

Braundy, M. (2011). *Men & women and tools: Bridging the divide*. Winnipeg: Fernwood Pub.

<http://www.statcan.gc.ca/start-debut-eng.html>