

### 4.3 How does Gender Influence Identity?

#### Objectives

- To encourage students to think about how gender influences identity and to explore their own perceptions and stereotypes
- To encourage critical thinking and discussion

#### Previous Preparation

#### Introduction (20%)

##### Explanation by teacher

Explain the difference between 'sex' and 'gender' to the students. Sex is the biological characteristics which distinguish between males and females and gender can be defined as the state of being male and female in relation to social and cultural differences rather than biological ones.

#### Development (30%)

##### Group Work

Split the class according to sex, with the boys in one group and girls in the other. If your class is very large you may wish to split it into two groups of girls and two groups of boys. If your class is same sex split them into two or more groups. Ask the groups to write down as many characteristics that they can think of associated with females and males. Ask the boys to write down the characteristics associated with females and the girls write down the characteristics associated with males.

#### Conclusion (50%)

##### Whole Group – Discussion led by teacher

Write the following table on the board and fill in the characteristics that the students came up with in the correct columns:

<i>Associated with Sex</i>	<i>Associated with Gender</i>	<i>Associated with Neither</i>

What did the group find? Which characteristics were positive and which were negative? Which characteristics could be defined as 'stereotypical'? Which characteristics do the girls most strongly associate with? Which do the boys most strongly associate with? Who defines the characteristics associated with gender? Can this change? Can you think of any examples of famous people or people you know who do not conform to these characteristics?

#### Extension:

If you wish to study this issue further with your group you could look at professions and how gender influences opportunity and how that further influences identity. You could do an exercise similar to the one above, looking at professions. An assembly activity looking at gender difference can be found at: <http://www.womankind.org.uk/ass-gender-difference.html>

