

# Change the Gender Narrative Challenge

## Lesson plan

### Curricular goals

After completing this lesson, students are expected to be able to:

- Identify active tropes/archetypes/biases/language used in a piece of literature or media after analyzing an example in the classroom
- Reframe gender in narrative by constructing a scene that contradicts or reflects upon it
- Build an animation Scratch to critique or create their own narrative

### Non-curricular goals

- Analyze their own personal biases
- Exercise creative or critical thinking faculties
- Practice rapid prototyping with new tools

### Learning theories to employ

- Bloom's Taxonomy, as the basis for the sections of the lessons to ensure true learning from remember through to create
- Activity Theory, is the basis largest section of this lesson, in that the students drive the reframing of the narrative as students will be both interacting with new technology, each other in a group, and the narrative subject matter
- Affective Learning, using narrative to trigger a personal emotional reaction to a topic that can seem overplayed

### Target

- Beginners in physical computing and animation
- Relatively new to social justice and gender issues

### Materials

- Scratch
- Pre-test
- Demo videos
- Projection
- Post-test

### Subject

To help students see and critique gender issues in literature and/or media, using simple tech tools

# The Lesson

## Step-by-Step

### Hook min 1-5

Introduce the concept of gender issues in common perception with a fun/shocking fact/exercise. For example, use this revealing riddle:

*A young boy and his father are on their way home from soccer practice when a distracted driver crosses the center line and hits them head on. The father dies at the scene of this horrible car accident, but the boy is still alive when the emergency medical technicians arrive.*

*The boy is transported to the hospital in an ambulance and he is taken immediately into surgery. But the surgeon steps out of the operating room and says, "Call Dr. Baker stat to the operating room. I can't operate on this boy - he is my son!"*

*The question: Who is the surgeon?*

Give 30 seconds for students to populate their answers in a survey form. Display and discuss the class results and general results—majority adults get it wrong while majority of kids get it right (that the surgeon was his mother).

### Survey min 5-7

Survey students' existing biases, comfort level and background knowledge with the subject matter.

### Discuss min 7-17

Talk about types of voices and language in historical narratives, as well as common gender archetypes.

Ask students to recall a recent assigned reading. Discuss and survey the gender landscape with them—for example, how heavily does male genius play a part?

Do gendered characters fall into common archetypes? Are they oversimplified? Pose a question that brings it to a personal level. For example, what about your own family narrative of your own family history?

### Guided practice min 17-30

Teach the tech—watch Scratch video tutorial and then guide students through booting up the program and doing the first couple commands and a simple circuit.

### Free practice min 30-45

Group students in 5 groups. The goal of this exercise is to ask them to help change the narrative in a quick and dirty way. If they decide to use Scratch, they should reframe, rearticulate or reflect the passage/scene in a way that critiques or eliminates the issue. They can create a piece of media—a song, an animated scene, a written story. It's very open.

### Sharing min 45-55

Have each of the 5 groups present and evaluate their prototype in 2 minutes. Ask them to consider how the narrative hung together or fell apart when they had to depart from common tropes. Ask them what they'll carry forward in their reading and writing as a result.

### Conclusion min 55-60

Ask a student or two to summarize what they've learned aloud for the class. Clarify any gaps in understanding. For follow up, refield the survey from beginning with tweaks to see whether students have absorbed the lesson, changed their position, or have thoughts on the lesson content or format.