

Gender Assessment of Pre-Service Midwifery: Case Studies for Student Discussions

Instructions

The total number of students for this exercise should be no more than 15. Begin by explaining the process and purpose of the gender assessment to students. Then explain the exercise to the students: Students will be divided into 3-4 groups of approximately 3-5 students each. The small groups should be single-sex only – either all female or all male. Each student in each small group will be provided with one hypothetical case study, accompanied by the series of questions. One student should read the case study out loud, while the rest of the small group listens and follows along. Then the students in the small group should work together to answer the questions. Students will have approximately one hour to discuss their case study and answer the questions. A facilitator should drop by each group at regular intervals to address any questions the students may have and support or mediate debate as needed.

Each group will present their case study, questions, and the small group's answers to the questions. The presentation should take 5-10 minutes. Then the workshop facilitator will lead a discussion for the whole group of students on the small group's presentation and findings.

Supplies: Printed Case Studies (have 10 copies of each case study available in case of need), flipchart, markers.

Case Study I: Beatrice

Beatrice (*context appropriate names to be substituted as needed*) is 18 years old and a first year student in her first semester. This is her first time to be living away from home and she is excited to begin her studies. Beatrice wants to become a midwife/medical laboratory technician. She studies hard, but is having a difficult time in some of her classes. When the teacher asks students to answer questions, Beatrice does not feel comfortable to raise her hand to answer, even when she thinks she knows the answer. Also, the teacher has not called on Beatrice to answer, even when she does raise her hand. Lately, Beatrice has been sitting at the back of the class keeping quiet during the lessons. In her family, Beatrice is the only girl. She has three older brothers. When Beatrice lived with her family, she was responsible for helping her mother with the housework, cooking and cleaning. She rarely spoke at dinner time, and it was her job to serve her brothers and father, before she and her mother ate themselves. Beatrice's father was not very pleased that she wanted to go to school to study to become a midwife/medical laboratory technician. He thought she should stay at home, help the family, and get married, and he did not want to spend extra money to pay for his daughter to study at the school, because he already spends a lot of money to educate his sons. However, he did agree to allow her to go to school, so long as she promised to study hard and do well. After several months, however, he stopped sending her money to support her during her studies, and Beatrice is wondering what she will do. Beatrice wants to do well in school, but now she is worried that she will not be able to participate in classes and this may affect her grades. She is starting to think that because of the problems she is facing in her classes and the money problems with her family, she should drop out of school.

Discussion Questions:

1. In your opinion, what are the main reasons that Beatrice is having trouble in school?
2. In your opinion, why has the teacher not called on Beatrice to answer questions in class?

3. Beatrice's father was opposed to her attending school. In your opinion, what are the main reasons for his opposition? Do you agree with his reasons, or disagree? Why?
4. Besides the reasons described in this case study, can you think of other reasons that Beatrice may be having problems in her classes? What reasons?
5. On your flipchart, please make a list of the problems that your group thinks Beatrice is facing. In your opinion, which of these problems are specific to female students? Do male students face some of these problems as well? For any problems that your group decides only female students face, please explain why you think that only female students face these problems.
6. In your opinion, what do you think will happen with Beatrice? Is she likely to drop out of school? Why or why not?
7. Please think about ways that teachers and other school staff can help Beatrice to perform better in her classes? Are there other people at the school who could do something to help Beatrice? If so, which people and what can they do?
8. On your flipchart, please make a list of specific action that teachers and other school staff can do to help Beatrice. Next to each action that you list, please write down which school staff can take the action (teacher, administrator, other staff), keeping in mind that several types of staff can participate in each action.
9. What kinds of changes at the school do you think could help Beatrice – is there a need for more or new staff? Any other changes? On your flipchart please list any changes that you think would be helpful for Beatrice.

Data Collection Sheet for Beatrice Case Study

The note taker should use this sheet to report on the small group's presentation to the full group, and the discussion following the presentation

Beatrice Case Study: Exploring the Impact of Gender on Female Students' Academic Performance – Family, Classroom Set-up, Poverty, Teacher Attitudes	
Name of Note Taker: Name of Facilitator: Name and location of School: Date:	
Key Issues	Summarize the key challenges that students report Beatrice is facing.
	Summarize the key actions that students recommend be taken to help Beatrice, noting who at the school students feel should take those actions.
Family Issues	Summarize student attitudes on family support for female students. Do students feel that family support/lack of support is an issue that impacts female students' academic performance? Do students agree or disagree that families should support female students? If students feel that lack of family support is a problem for female students, what do students think can be done about it?
Classroom Issues	Summarize the reasons that students think it may be difficult for female students to participate in the classroom setting. What explanations do students give for a female student sitting at the back of the class and not speaking? What explanations do students give for the teacher not calling on a female student?
Solutions	Summarize the solutions that students suggest to address the family and classroom problems that female students may be facing.
Key Findings	Summarize the main findings from the discussion on (1) the impact of family opposition to female students' studies on academic performance, (2) the impact of teacher engagement and support in the classroom on academic performance, (3) solutions.
Attachments	Please type up the lists that students provided on their flipchart, including the list of challenges that Beatrice faces, the list of actions that school staff can take, and any changes that students recommended at the school in order to help Beatrice.

Case Study 2: Mary

Mary (*context appropriate names to be substituted as needed*) is a second year student in Midwifery/Medical Lab Technician School. She performed well in her classes during her first year, but is struggling academically in her second year and is becoming depressed. The problems started at the end of her first year. One of the male students/male staff/male teacher (*to be adjusted according to the school and female/male ratio in student body and teachers*) started following Mary around. He told her she was beautiful and kept asking her to go to parties with him. Mary was not interested and told him to please leave her alone. But he would not stop. Mary started to see him everywhere – when she went to the library to study, eating her lunch in the cafeteria, walking to her dormitory. Mary stopped going to the library and eating in the cafeteria in order to avoid seeing the man. Then he became angry, following her and shouting bad names at her, and bringing some of his friends with him who also shouted at her. Mary became afraid. She spent her vacation at home trying to forget about him and didn't tell anyone about what was happening. She felt ashamed, thinking that it might be her fault that the man and his friends were acting this way. She hoped that by the beginning of the second year, he would forget about her and leave her alone. But he did not forget, and things in her second year have been not better. Mary started having trouble concentrating on her studies and her grades are slipping.

Discussion Questions:

1. In your opinion, is the way that the man is acting understandable? If a man is rejected when he likes a woman, is it natural for him to act this way? If not, how should he act in your opinion?
2. In your opinion, when a man acts this way, does the woman bear any fault? Should Mary have acted differently? If so, what should she have done differently?
3. In this case study, the situation has resulted in Mary having trouble performing well in her studies. In your opinion, is this a normal result of the man's actions? Do you think that this kind of behavior by men can have an impact on women's ability to do well in school? Why or why not?
4. In your opinion, what are the reasons the man is acting this way? Please think about the assumptions and ideas the man has about women and about Mary. Why does he think that it is acceptable to act in this manner? On your flipchart, make a list of the assumptions that both the man and Mary have about the way that men and women should behave.
5. In your opinion, what can Mary do to address the situation? Whom can she talk to? Are there staff or school offices that she can go to where she can get help? On your flipchart, please make a list of the actions that Mary can take.
6. In your opinion, what should the school do to help Mary? On your flipchart, please make a list of actions that the school should take to address this problem. Please indicate which staff or office at the school should take these actions.

Data Collection Sheet for Mary Case Study

The note taker should use this sheet to report on the small group's presentation to the full group, and the discussion following the presentation

Mary Case Study: Exploring the Impact of Gender on Female Students' Academic Performance – Sexual Harassment and School Support Systems	
Name of Note Taker: Name of Facilitator: Name and location of School: Date:	
Key Issues	Summarize the students' attitudes on the man's behavior. Do student attitudes reflect traditional gender norms? Are students challenging gender norms?
	Summarize the students' attitudes on the Mary's behavior. Do student attitudes reflect traditional gender norms? Are students challenging gender norms?
	Summarize the students' ideas on Mary's academic problems. Do the students think the problems are understandable? Do they blame Mary for the problems she is facing?
Gender Roles and Sexual Harassment	Elaborate on student attitudes towards sexual harassment. Do they see the case study as an example of sexual harassment? Do they see sexual harassment as a problem that impacts female students' academic performance?
Impact of Sexual Harassment on Academic Performance	Explain how students view the impact of sexual harassment on female students' studies. Do students feel this is a problem?
Support Systems	Summarize the ways in which students report the situation should be addressed. What do students feel Mary can do? What do students think the school should do?
Key Findings	Summarize the main findings from the discussion on (1) gender roles (2) sexual harassment, (3) impact of sexual harassment on female students' academic performance, (4) needed support systems at the school.
Attachments	Please type up the lists that students provided on their flipchart, including the list of the assumptions that both the man and Mary have about the way that men and women should behave, the list of the actions that Mary can take, and the list of actions that the school should take to address this problem.

Case Study 3: Susan

Susan (*context appropriate names to be substituted as needed*) is a student at a Midwifery/Medical Lab Technician School. For the past 3 months she has been dating a young man. They use contraceptives, but not all the time. Last month, Susan missed her period and she started to feel sick in the mornings. Some days she felt too sick to go to classes in the morning, and she started to miss classes and was not able to get her homework done. Susan was worried that she might be pregnant, but she decided to wait a few weeks to see if it might be a false alarm. She hoped that her period would come soon. When her period did not come for a second month, Susan felt sure she was pregnant. She has not told her boyfriend about it yet. Susan wants to continue her studies.

Discussion Questions:

1. In your opinion, what will Susan likely do in this scenario?
2. In your opinion, how will other people react if they find out that Susan is pregnant? How will the other students react? How will the school administration react? How will teachers react? How will her family react?
3. In your opinion, should Susan talk to her boyfriend about her pregnancy? How do you think Susan's boyfriend will react to if/when Susan tells him?
4. In your opinion, how will the staff at the school health clinic react if Susan goes there to ask for help and advice? What advice do you think they will give Susan?
5. On your flipchart, make a list of all the types people listed in the questions above. Next to each type of person, write down how you think they would react if they learned that Susan is pregnant.
6. Please consider the reasons that Susan her boyfriend did not use contraception all the time. What are the main reasons this happened in your opinion? What do you think the school can do to help students like Susan and her boyfriend be sure to use contraception regularly?
7. On your flipchart, write down a list of actions that the school can take to help Susan.
8. In your opinion, what should Susan do now?

Data Collection Sheet for Susan Case Study

The note taker should use this sheet to report on the small group's presentation to the full group, and the discussion following the presentation

Susan Case Study: Exploring the Impact of Gender on Female Students' Academic Performance – Pregnancy	
Name of Note Taker: Name of Facilitator: Name and location of School: Date:	
Key Issues	Summarize the main reactions that students feel other people would have if they learned that Susan is pregnant.
	Summarize the steps that students feel Susan should take now.
	Summarize the steps that students feel the school should take to help Susan.
Pregnancy and Studies	Elaborate on how students report that pregnancy can impact female students' studies and career.
Supportive Environment	Elaborate on the ways in which different types of people would react to Susan's pregnancy – peers, teachers, school administrators, school health clinic, family, boyfriend.
Reproductive Health Services and Contraception	Summarize student views on availability of contraception and education on family planning methods at for students.
Support Systems	Summarize the ways in which students think the school should support Susan.
Key Findings	Summarize the main findings from the discussion on (1) access to contraception and family planning information (2) attitudes towards pregnancy among students (3) supportive environment for pregnant students (4) needed support systems at the school.
Attachments	Please type up the lists that students provided on their flipchart, including (1) the list of the types people and how you think they would react if they learned that Susan is pregnant, (2) the list of actions that the school can take to help Susan.

Case Study 4: Grace

When Grace (*context appropriate names to be substituted as needed*) started the Midwifery/Medical Laboratory Technician School, she had never had a boyfriend before. In the second semester of her first year of school, Grace met a really nice man. He was quite a bit older than Grace, but Grace did not care about that. He was kind and thoughtful, liked to buy her presents and always wanted to spend time with her. Grace liked him very much. They started spending all their time together and things were going great. Grace was very happy. At the same time, she noticed that her studies were not going as well as they used to. Her grades were down a bit, and sometimes she had trouble concentrating on her homework. She really just wanted to spend time with her boyfriend. She was also very busy doing things for him – she cooked for him and she washed his clothes for him – so she had less time to study. Grace was happy to do this. It was just like home – her mother always did all the family cooking and cleaning, so when she did these things for her boyfriend, it felt right, like she was on her way to starting a family herself. Also, her boyfriend really liked her cooking, and this made Grace happy. And her boyfriend was not very good at cleaning up, and Grace was great at that, so she thought – what could be the harm in cleaning up after him?

Discussion Questions:

1. Grace has noticed that her grades are slipping and she is having difficulty concentrating on her studies. In your opinion, what are the main reasons this is happening?
2. Grace and her boyfriend have different roles in their relationship. Please make a list of the types of things you think that Grace does for the relationship. Please make a list of the types of things that her boyfriend does for the relationship. Do you think this is a good arrangement? If so, why? If not, why not and what do you think could change to improve things?
3. Do you think that this relationship is good for Grace and for her studies and future career? Why or why not?
4. What advice would you give Grace on how to improve her grades and her concentration? On your flipchart, make a list of the things you would advise Grace to do.
5. In your opinion, how can the school support Grace to improve her academic performance. On your flipchart, make a list of the actions the school can take to support Grace to perform better in school.

Data Collection Sheet for Grace Case Study

The note taker should use this sheet to report on the small group's presentation to the full group, and the discussion following the presentation

Grace Case Study: Exploring the Impact of Gender on Female Students' Academic Performance – Gender Norms and Dating	
Name of Note Taker: Name of Facilitator: Name and location of School: Date:	
Key Issues	Summarize student views on gender roles and dating
	Summarize any points students make on inter-generational dating
	Summarize student views on the impact of gender roles in dating on female students' academic performance
Gender Roles	Elaborate on how students view gender roles in the context of dating
Gender Roles, Dating and Academic Performance	Elaborate on the ways in which students report that dating impacts female student academic performance. Note whether students assign blame for poor academic performance, and if so, on whom?
Solutions	Elaborate on the advice that students would give Grace.
Support Systems	Summarize the ways in which students think the school should support Grace.
Key Findings	Summarize the main findings from the discussion on (1) gender roles in the context of a relationship, (2) inter-generational dating, (3) impact of gender roles and dating on female academic performance, (4) ways in which the school can support Grace.
Attachments	Please type up the lists that students provided on their flipchart, including (1) list of the types of things they think that Grace does for the relationship, and the list of the types of things they think her boyfriend does for the relationship, (2) the list of the things they would advise Grace to do, and (3) list of the actions the school can take to support Grace to perform better in school.

Case Study 5: Moses

Moses, a second year midwifery student, performed well in his classes during his first year actively participating with the other students. However, during the second semester he is struggling. Moses does not feel comfortable participating in class because this semester for his courses he has to do describe the reproductive system and the instructor does not call on him. Back home, it is forbidden for men to openly speak about the body parts of women, especially when females are present, and it is not allowed for men to see or touch a woman other than his wife, even if she is his sister. If he has to engage in such activities, he has to provide significant reasons and perform ritual cleansing. This second school year, Moses has to complete a course, Fundamentals of Midwifery I, which requires him to describe the female organs/reproductive system and complete a practicum at the health facility (examine pregnant women during antenatal care visits and observe the delivery process/perform deliveries). Academically he is underperforming and is becoming depressed. Moses wants to do well in school, but now he is worried about whether he will be able to complete the course and what will happen if he refuses to participate in the class, examine pregnant women or assist at deliveries. He is starting to think that because of the problems he is facing in school, he should drop out of school since his community thinks Midwifery is a course for women.

Discussion Questions:

1. In your opinion, is this a common situation experience by male Midwifery students?
2. In your opinion, why has the teacher not called on Moses to answer questions in class?
3. Gender norms and values have posed a barrier to Moses' performance. In your opinion, what are the main reasons for norms and value? Do you agree with these gender norm/values, or disagree? Why?
4. Besides the reasons described in this case study, can you think of other reasons why Moses may be having problems in his classes? What are those reasons?
5. On your flipchart, please make a list of the problems that your group thinks Moses is facing. In your opinion, which of these problems are specific to male students? Do female students face similar problems as well? For any problems that your group decides only male students face, please explain why you think that only male students face these problems.
6. In your opinion, what do you think will happen with Moses? Is he likely to drop out of school? Why or why not?
7. Please think about ways that teachers and other school staff can help Moses to perform better in her classes? Are there other people at the school who could do something to help Moses? If so, which people and what can they do?
8. On your flipchart, please make a list of specific action that teachers and other school staff can do to help Moses. Next to each action that you list, please write down which school staff can take the action (teacher, administrator, other staff), keeping in mind that several types of staff can participate in each action.
9. What kinds of changes at the school do you think could help Moses – is there a need for more or new staff? Any other changes? On your flipchart please list any changes that you think would be helpful for Moses.

Data Collection Sheet for Moses Case Study

The note taker should use this sheet to report on the small group's presentation to the full group, and the discussion following the presentation

Moses Case Study: Exploring the Impact of Gender on Female Students' Academic Performance – Gender Norms and Dating	
Name of Note Taker: Name of Facilitator: Name and location of School: Date:	
Key Issues	Summarize the key challenges that students report Moses is facing
	Summarize the key actions that students recommend be taken to help Moses, noting community gender norm.
Gender Norms and Values	Summarize students' attitudes about gender norms and values. Do students feel that Gender norms are issues that impact male students' academic performance?
	Do students agree or disagree that the community should support men to take on any career they want?
	If students feel that Gender norms and values are a problem for male students, what do students think can be done about it?
Classroom Issues	Summarize the reasons that students think it may be difficult for male students to participate in the classroom setting when certain topics are been discussed? What explanations do students give for the teacher not calling on a male student?
Solutions	Summarize the solutions that students suggest to address the gender norms and classroom problems that male students may be facing.
Key Findings	Summarize the main findings from the discussion on (1) the impact of gender norms to male students' studies on academic performance, (2) the impact of teacher engagement and support in the classroom on academic performance, (3) needed support system at the school.
Attachments	Please type up the lists that students provided on their flipchart, including the list of challenges that Moses faces, the list of actions that school staff can take, and any changes that students recommended at the school in order to help Moses.

Case Study 6: Samson

Samson is a third year student and is doing very well in school. He is expecting to have a very successful career after he graduates. When he gets a job, he plans to marry a girl from his home village. Samson's family are all very happy and proud of him. His father regularly sends him money and whenever Samson comes home, his mother and sisters all cook a big meal for him and wash his clothes. Samson does not know how to cook himself and he never does his own laundry. Some of Samson's friends tell stories about their girlfriends and shout out comments about women's bodies at school when women are walking to class. Samson thinks this is harmless fun and joins in with his friends. Samson has heard some stories about women at his school being harassed or assaulted by men, but he always thought those stories were not true or at least exaggerated. Once he saw a woman at school who had bruises and cuts on her face and was crying as she was walking one evening. He felt like maybe he should do something to help her, but then thought it was really none of his business anyway, so did not do anything. If something bad did happen to a woman, he figured it was probably her fault, at least partly. If women did not do well in their studies, Samson thought they were either lazy or else more interested in getting married than in studying. In any case, Samson felt proud of his own success in school and was sure it was entirely due to his own hard work.

Discussion Questions

1. In your opinion, does Samson have some advantages over female students, that help him to perform well in school? If so, what advantages? On your flipchart, please write down a list of any advantages you think Samson may have over female students.
2. From this story, do you think that Samson himself harasses women? Please explain why or why not.
3. Do you think that Samson's opinion about female students who perform poorly in school is correct? Could there be other reasons that female students may struggle in their studies more than male students? On your flipchart make a list of those possible reasons.
4. When Samson saw a woman who was hurt and crying by herself, he did not do anything to help her because he thought it was none of his business. Do you think that Samson was correct about this? What do you think men can do to help women who have been beaten? Please make a list of possible actions on your Flipchart.
5. What do you think the school can do to improve men's involvement in supporting female students and reducing harassment of female students? Please make a list of recommendations to the school.

Data Collection Sheet for Samson Case Study

The note taker should use this sheet to report on the small group's presentation to the full group, and the discussion following the presentation

Samson Case Study: Exploring the Impact of Gender on Female Students' Academic Performance – Gender Norms and Dating	
Name of Note Taker: Name of Facilitator: Name and location of School: Date:	
Key Issues	Summarize students' views on harassment of female students.
	Summarize student views on male privilege and its impact on student performance.
	Summarize students' views on male involvement in reducing harassment or assault on women.
Gender Norms and Values	Are students aware of gender norms in the school context?
	Do some students agree that poor performance in school among female students is their own fault? Summarize these arguments.
	Do some students agree that if women are harassed or assaulted it is, at least in part, their own fault? Summarize these arguments.
Individual solutions	Summarize the actions students think that male students can take to support female students.
School Solutions	Summarize the actions students think that schools can take to support female students and improve male involvement in supporting female students
Key Findings	Summarize the main findings from the discussion on (1) the impact of gender norms on academic performance, (2) harassment of female students, (3) male involvement, and (4) school actions.
Attachments	Please type up the lists that students provided on their flipchart, including the list of advantages Samson has, the list of possible reasons female students may perform poorly in school, the list of what men can do to support women, and the list of recommendations for the school.