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Unpacking Evidence of Gender Bias

Connie L. Fulmer

The purpose of this study was to investigate gender bias in pre-service principals using the Gender-Leader Implicit Association Test. Analyses of student-learning narratives revealed how students made sense of gender bias (biased or not-biased) and how each reacted to evidence (surprised or not-surprised). Two implications were: (1) the need for leadership programs to help students identify and unpack gender bias, and (2) to provide new leaders with strategies to confront and reduce gender bias in the organizations in which they will lead. A model for identifying, confronting, and reducing gender bias is presented as scaffolding to help educational leadership faculty and students understand the pervasive nature of gender bias in order to lead others in the difficult work of “undoing” gender bias.

While some may claim that progress has been made against the pervasive and pernicious harm of gender bias and inequity in recent decades, others argue that this very progress has created new barriers. Rhode (1997) calls this the no-problem problem and insists that it prevents both males and females from recognizing that women are significantly worse off than men on most measures of wealth, status, and power (Rhode, 1997). Similarly, Ridgeway and Correll (2004) argue that even in the face of improvements toward gender equity, the hegemonic cultural beliefs about gender have self-fulfilling outcomes that support the persistence of gender inequity in spite of current social change efforts to reduce or eliminate them. Further, they argue that the “gender system” will “only be undermined through the long-term, persistent accumulation of everyday challenges to the system” (p. 528). It is clear that what needs to be done if we are ever to undo the effect of gender bias, is to re-focus concerted efforts on this “no problem” problem.

Why in the face of the pervasive nature of gender bias, do so many fail to see the inequity? Why do some, when faced with evidence of gender bias, find a way to ignore or deny its existence? Some say it is the patriarchal perspective, some call it sexism, but others (Shakeshaft, 1995; Shakeshaft & Hanson, 1986) describe this perspective as androcentrism, or the practice of viewing the world and shaping reality exclusively through a male lens.

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One result of this singular male-focus perspective, is that much of the research in educational administration is not only devoid of issues important to women, “but also deprives men from understanding how their cultural identity as males interacts with women’s cultural identity as females and the effect this interaction has on organizational dynamics” (p. 154). Shakeshaft argues it is not sufficient to merely reorganize the knowledge base of educational leadership into different boxes, but rather what is required is to expand the knowledge base by including the experiences of women.

Hough (1988) replicated Shakeshaft and Hanson’s (1986) work and reported that while there was no evidence of explicit sexist bias in the literature that he reviewed, there were “strong indications of a lack of awareness of gender as a relevant issue in connection with many topics and a failure to pay due regard to gender when formulating a research problem or writing up the results.” Hough further argues that “if gender-related issues are to receive the attention they deserve, that a change in attitudes by researchers in this field is called for” (p. 73).

In their seminal work, *Doing Gender*, West and Zimmerman (1987, p. 126) proposed “an ethnomethodologically informed, and therefore distinctively sociological understanding of gender as a routine, methodical, and recurring accomplishment.” Additionally, they suggested that men and women achieve gender “as an accomplishment of situated conduct” (p. 126), rather than the idea that gender is an internal characteristic of a particular individual. But another researcher (Deutsch, 2007), argued that this *doing gender* perspective has actually “undermined the goal of dismantling gender inequity” (p. 107) and has actually perpetuated the status quo. Instead, Deutsch purposes that focus of this work should be on *undoing gender* and moving society toward a vision of gender equity, like Risman’s (1998) idea of *gender vertigo* or Lorbers (2005) concept of *degendering*. While Deutsch (2007) appreciates the interactional nature of West and Zimmerman’s “doing gender” concept, she argues that inquiry on those interactions should be focused on changing the status quo. She proposes that we use the phrase “doing gender” to refer to the “social interactions that reproduce gender difference and the phrase ‘undoing gender’ to refer to social interactions that reduce gender difference” (p. 122). She recommends that researchers stay focused on answering the question of how to dismantle gender systems to achieve equality between men and women.

Similarly Blackmore (1989) argues that is not enough to add a female perspective to the current state of affairs in educational leadership and ar-

gues that the task at hand requires a reconstruction of the “view of leadership which counters the emphasis on individualism, hierarchical relationships, bureaucratic rationality and abstract moral principles” (p. 94). Her view of this feminist reconstruction would include the following elements: (1) a view of power which is multidimensional and multi-directional, (2) a view of leadership being practiced in different contexts by different people and not merely equated to a formal role, and (3) that leadership looks to empower rather than have power over others (p. 94). This new reality, when achieved, would provide support for the feminine experience to be valued and nurtured as part of the everyday reality of organizational life, and not to be compared to or be judged by the androcentric experience. Without this new reality, women are left to try to deal with these cultural messages by either denying that gender bias and inequity exists (Fulmer, 2005), accepting that it does and doing nothing to counteract it, or resisting it and taking steps to reduce its harmful effects on women.

Deciding to Confront Gender Bias

I thought of my own long-term denial that gender was a significant issue that I had to contend with throughout my life. Instead, I internalized that being female in rural Pennsylvania was not as positive as being a male in that rural county. After unpacking my personal narratives of gendered experiences, I discovered that my “*dealing-with-it*” was to deny these instances of gender bias. It was only after hearing my absurd response to a colleague at a national conference that “I didn’t do gender research” that I decided to investigate what had caused both my untenable comment and the cause of my own bias. The shock of hearing those words caused me to turn my attention inward to the personal narratives of my life that contextualized how I accepted/denied my gender status in the face of cultural values and norms of growing up female in rural Pennsylvania.

Using those significant events of my life that turned on issues of gender bias, I used auto-ethnography (Ellis & Bochner, 2000) as a tool to analyze my responses to those incidents (Fulmer, 2005). That inquiry and subsequent analysis of these events resulted in an epiphany, that while I did not confront instances of gender bias in my own life, I made sure that my daughter was prepared to recognize, resist and persist through these instances of gender bias and inequity that would surely come her way. Only now do I realize that my own denial of these gender-based experiences was the way I coped with these events. However, had I been equipped with the knowledge, skills and strategies for how to deal with these situations when they occurred, it may have prevented the internalization of pain that stayed buried deep inside of me. The work involved in the auto-ethnography process helped to uncover layers of instances where I chose avoidance instead of confrontation, personal pain over positive assertion of self, lower self-esteem over higher self-esteem, and internalized frustration with my unfortunate gender status over celebrating the joy of life in being female.

These unfortunate ways of thinking had as much of a detrimental impact on my perceived sense of self, as the absence of an important food group or several key vitamins missing from daily nutritional fare would have on my physical health, development, and well being.

Since my epiphany about the reality of gender bias and the personal harm that comes from the denial of gender inequity, I now seek out opportunities where I can impact the capacity of graduate students to recognize, confront, and to reduce gender inequity or bias wherever it lives. I inquired about the experiences of graduate students as they relate to gender bias, their experiences with instances of gender inequity, and how each of them dealt with the harm done by the pervasiveness of androcentric perspective. Many female students assured me that gender bias or gender inequity was not an important part of their lives. Many male students assured me that they perceived their female colleagues as equals. In fact many pointed to the higher numbers of female principals in their schools as evidence of the end of gender bias. Gender status was not perceived as problematic for either female or male students—it was just not an issue. My own experience assured me that these students were probably not “conscious” about the level of gender bias operating in their lives. It took hearing myself say to a valued academic colleague that “I didn’t do gender research” to shock myself into consciousness about how gender bias was still impacting my professional life.

Conceptual Framework for Understanding Gender Bias

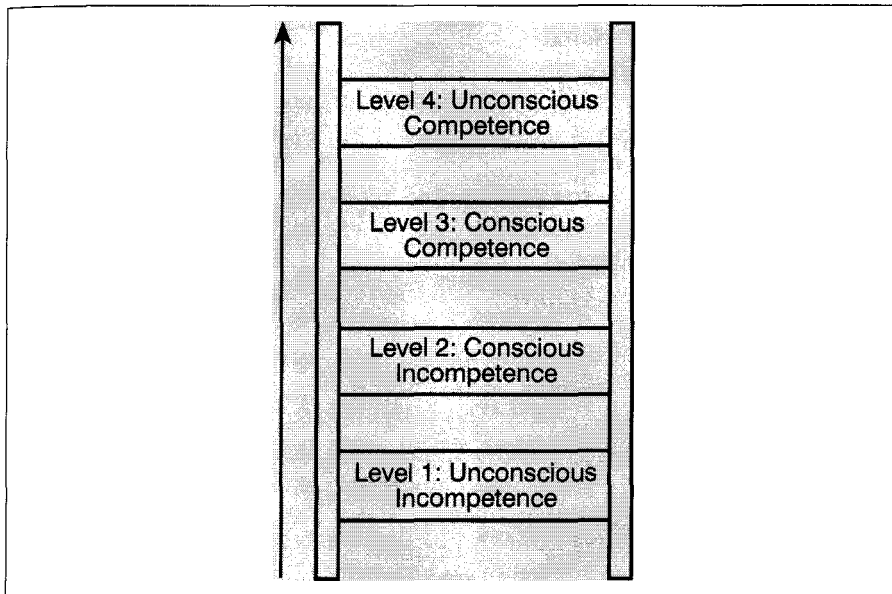
One conceptual framework that was useful in helping me to understand my journey from gender denial through awareness, acceptance, and further understanding of how I was impacted by gender bias is the Conscious Competence Ladder (see Figure 1) (Manktelow, 2009, p. 102–104). I have infused the topic of gender bias into my description of the four levels of this model.

In Level 1 of this model, you are blissfully ignorant of your lack of knowledge of gender bias (unconscious) or skills related to not only recognizing evidence of gender bias and inequity in yourself or an organization, but also how to deal with these issues (incompetence). As a result, you are unaware of your lack of capacity to be able to confront and reduce instances of gender bias and inequity.

When you enter Level 2 you will be shocked to discover that you hold gender-biased beliefs. Your confidence level drops and you are uncomfortable until you become aware of the depth of your gender-biased status and of the social-cultural processes through which that biased status was acquired. At this level, while you are now aware of what you had denied, you are still without the skills and strategies to be able to deal with future instances of these inequities. This is the stage of conscious incompetence.

In Level 3 you accept that you have gender-biased beliefs, are aware of

Figure 1
The conscious competence ladder.



how those beliefs were acquired, and are motivated to learn how to deal with internalized, inaccurate, and non-productive gendered perceptions of self and others. Your goal becomes how to acquire skills and strategies to successfully confront these and future events in a manner that protects you from future gender-bias damage and serves to reduce or eliminate instances of gender bias and inequity when and where it occurs in your world. At this level, you are still concentrating on the performance of these skills and gaining more experience in doing so. This level is best described as conscious competence.

Once these new skills and knowledge become automatic, you are in Level 4, where these acquired super-skills help you to stave off instances of gender-bias and inequity at will. You deftly deal with these instances in a manner that seems effortless. Having mastered these skills, you are now in a position to mentor others toward this level. This state is described as unconscious competence.

This conceptual framework helped me to locate my own level of growth, but also bought recognition that some of my students, preparing themselves to be future leaders, were completely unaware of their own deep-seated issues of gender bias (unconscious incompetence). For these leaders to be able to mount a focused efforts for identifying, confronting, or reducing gender bias in their leadership teams, or their school organization, that work had to begin by confronting the existence of personal gender bias

in each of these pre-service principals. I decided to investigate my hypothesis by finding and unpacking evidence of gender bias in my students.

Unpacking Gender Bias

I remembered the self-assessments my student took at the end of the chapters in a required leadership text in our principal-licensure program (Northouse, 2009), and how those assessments informed pre-service principals of their capacity for leadership from the perspective of those specific assessments. Students were asked to read each chapter, provide a practical application of the leadership perspective in the chapter, to take the inventory/assessment at the end of each chapter, and finally to write about the perceived impact of how they scored on each assessment to their capacity to lead a school to achieve its stated goals. The last part of the assignment asked how these pre-service principals would reduce or eliminate weaknesses unearthed by inventory results. Their responses illustrated how they might formulate leadership strategies and processes that they would take with them to new positions as school leaders. In spite of both female and male protestations that gender bias was not an issue for them, I hypothesized that evidence of gender bias would exist in those learning narratives.

The assessment at the end of the chapter on gender and leadership in Northouse (2009, pp. 322–326) was the Gender-Leaders Implicit Association Test. This particular instrument tests student response times between two trials of assigning twenty words to categories of Male and Leader or Female and Supporter on the first trial, and the response times for assigning the same twenty words to categories of Male and Supporter or Female and Leader on the second trial (Eagly & Carli, 2004; Eagly & Karau, 2002; Eagly, Karau & Makhijani, 1995). The assumption behind the assessment is that the longer it takes to categorize the words with counter stereotypical pairings (Male and Support or Female and Leaders) than with stereotypical pairings (Male and Leader or Female and Support), the more that person automatically associates women with supporter rather than with leader. The gender bias effect can be calculated by subtracting the response time of test A from the response time of test B. A positive score is evidence that the students might hold automatic associations related to gendered perceptions of which they may not be consciously aware. Many who take this assessment are surprised to discover that they hold a biased association of males and leadership over females and leadership.

Results from the learning narratives of students who took this inventory are evidence that my experience with gender bias incidents were not isolated events for me, but similar to the experiences of many others. In spite of the perception held by many that gender bias and inequity was a problem of the past, I was nearly certain that I could find others who were socialized by societal norms that privilege the male gender over the female gender.

Research Questions

The following research questions guided this study and my rescoring of

student work submitted for the responses to the gender and leadership chapter that included the Gender-Leader Implicit Association Test.

1. How did male and female pre-service principal candidates score on the Gender-Leader Implicit Association Test (*biased or not biased*)?
2. How did male and female students, who scored as either *biased* or *non-biased* on the inventory, react to their gender-bias status (*surprised or not surprised*)?
3. To what, if anything, did these biased or non-biased students attribute their gender-bias status?
4. To what, if anything, did these biased or non-biased students intend to do about identifying, confronting, or reducing gender bias in their future roles as school leaders?

Data were drawn from 35 student-learning narratives of pre-service principal candidates' responses to the inventory in the chapter on gender and leadership in the Northouse (2007) text from three licensure cohorts. Student narratives were identified as male or female and analyzed. Analyses of these student-learning narratives revealed evidence of gender bias or non-bias, as well as student reaction when learning of their gender-bias status (surprise or non-surprise). Findings from the analysis of student learning narratives are listed below in Tables 1 through 3.

Findings

Analyses of these student-learning narratives revealed the following about evidence of gender bias.

1. Of the 35 students in the study, 28 of them (80%) were biased. Of these 28, 20 of them (57%) were surprised about this gender bias, and 8 of them (23%) were not surprised about this gender bias (see Table 1).
2. Of the 35 students in the study, 7 of them (20%) were not biased by gender. Of these 7, 5 of them (14%) were not surprised about being not biased by gender, and 2 of them (6%) were surprised about being not biased by gender (see Table 1).

TABLE 1
Student Responses to Score on Self-Assessment by Surprise and Bias Status.

	Biased	Not-Biased	Total
Not-Surprised	8 (23%)	5 (14%)	13 (37%)
Surprised	20 (57%)	2 (6%)	22 (63%)
Total	28 (80%)	7 (20%)	35 (100%)

TABLE 2
Student Responses to Score on Self-Assessment by Bias and Gender Status.

	Biased	Not-Biased	Total
Female	15 (43%)	5 (14%)	20 (57%)
Male	13 (37%)	2 (6%)	15 (43%)
Total	28 (80%)	7 (20%)	35 (100%)

3. Of the 35 students in the study, 28 of them (80%) responded that scores evidence of gender bias. Of those 28 students, 15 of them (43%) were female and 13 of them (37%) were male (see Table 2).
4. Of the 35 students in the study, 7 of them (20%) responded that scores evidenced that they were not biased by gender. Of those 7 students, 5 of them (14%) were female and 2 of them (6%) were male (see Table 2).
5. Of the 35 students in the study, 22 of them (63%) responded that they were surprised about being biased by gender. Of those 22 students, 13 of them (37%) were female and 9 of them (26%) were male (see Table 3).
6. Of the 35 students in the study, 13 of them (37%) responded that they were not surprised about being biased by gender. Of those 13 students, 8 of them (23%) were female and 5 of them (14%) were male (see Table 3).

Evidence of Intentions from Student Learning Narratives

The excerpts below are actual student responses related to gender bias and leadership. The words indicated in italics are comments related to students' intentions as future leaders to identify, confront, and reduce gender bias and inequity. These examples are organized into the four levels of the Conscious Competence Ladder (Manktelow, 2009, p. 102–104) to show where these student comments fall on the conceptual framework (not part of the Gender-Leader Implicit Test).

TABLE 3
Student Responses to Score on Self-Assessment by Surprise and Gender Status.

	Biased	Not-Biased	Total
Female	13 (37%)	8 (23%)	21 (60%)
Male	9 (26%)	5 (14%)	14 (40%)
Total	22 (63%)	13 (37%)	35 (100%)

Unconscious Incompetence

Response 1. The test at the end of this chapter evaluated if I held stereotypical views of women as supporters and men as leaders. I unfortunately have to report that according to this assessment, I do. This was surprising to me as I aspire to live a life where I promote and value equal opportunity. *This is good information for me to personally build on however. I now realize that I need to be aware of this subtle stereotyping viewpoint, and work against it to assure I do not make gender-biased judgments. When I am principal/director I will work to promote the best candidate for positions of leadership and not promote someone because of gender.*

Response 2. This test for me resulted in a positive score. That positive score automatically marks me as making stereotypical pairings: females and supporters and males and leaders. I would have never imagined that was the case for me because I do not perceive myself to be biased, but perhaps that may not be true. At least this test says it isn't true. I am biased.

Response 3. I learned that I have an inherent gender bias and think females take on the more supportive role. When completing the second part of the test, it was hard to select some of the supportive descriptors for males and the more assertive and dynamic behaviors for women. *This tells me that I will need to be aware of any stereotypes I may have instilled in my personality through life experiences when dealing with employees of both sexes. I will need to be aware of the expectations I set for all employees and strive to treat all employees equally.*

Response 4. I took the test and was shocked by my results. It revealed that I hold a biased association with men and leadership. I did not predict this outcome while I was reading the chapter mostly due to the fact that I am a professional woman and also from the female dominated work experience I have to draw from. *When I am principal I will need to remember to break down prejudices, including my own, so that my building will be successful. I will also share this understanding and gender awareness with my staff so that we can affect equality among the genders as we educate.*

Response 5. The test was interesting and difficult. I found it interesting because of the choices presented and the combinations of characteristics. The difficulty was in acknowledging my personal biases after completing these assessments. I know that I am prejudiced in certain views, as all people are, and I constantly work to reduce the effect of these preconceptions on my decision-making strategies and interactions with others. Acknowledging your beliefs is not as powerful as seeing the proof on paper. *My goal as a human being, not just as an administrator, is to treat all people with kindness and respect, continue to be open minded and nonjudgmental, and if I am able to do so, offer opportunities to all with equity.*

Response 6. I am the role model for my school. I mentor men and women equally. I encourage female students to consider all fields and remind male students that career choices are theirs to make. I assign leadership positions to women and men. But I was surprised that it took me two seconds longer

to do the second test. It shows me that there is still a gender bias in my responses. It amazes me.

Response 7. Taking the women and leadership questionnaire, I was surprised by the results. Not only did I take longer to respond to the second trial of words, it took me a while longer to understand the categories of Male or Supporter and Female or Leader. I openly admit to the undeniable fact that I do possess gender biases.

Response 8. The self-assessment for the chapter showed that I have a bias towards men as leaders and women as supporters. I do not agree with the self-assessment at all. I have never even questioned whether any leader I have been associated with was either a male or a female. I can honestly say that the gender of a leader has never made a difference in whether or not I thought they were effective leaders. As a female, I have never felt like I wasn't given the opportunity to be a leader based on my gender. Maybe I am just naïve, but I truly believe that my competencies and self-confidence have always allowed me to obtain any leadership position I have ever worked hard to achieve.

Response 9. Upon completing the test, I learned that I exhibit a bias when it comes to men versus women in leadership. This surprises me as an aspiring leader, because I value the contributions individuals bring to the group and find that women are just as suitable for any leadership position as men. *As a teacher and future administrator, it becomes important that I am aware of the stereotypes and biases that surround women in leadership roles. I certainly do not want to perpetuate the glass ceiling aspect of women and minorities in leadership. Despite my score, I will work to encourage women to take on leadership positions and if I ever have the opportunity, I will push to maintain a balance of men and women administrators in my building. Furthermore, I will work to recognize such biases in my building and my district and focus on eradicating them.*

Response 10. I definitely don't consider myself to be a person of bias, but the time difference between the assessments showed that it was harder for me to classify leadership characteristics when the male is the supporter and the woman is the leader. *As a leader, it is important that I understand the cultural biases of our society. This understanding will help me to make choices that are respectful of gender issues.*

Response 11. The test showed that I am biased in favoring males in leadership roles. This surprises me especially when my leaders in the past eight years have been female and most have been good principals. Do I view their leadership as less effective? I don't think I do. Perhaps I'm reflecting society's larger view that men are better leaders than women because that is the way it has been viewed for many years. *As a principal I won't ignore the fact that I'm a man in woman-dominated profession. I will remember that my leadership approach may need to adapt to fit my situation if I'm to be an effective school leader.*

Response 12. I learned a great deal from this test. I was extremely surprised to discover that I was biased. Although I try not to be biased, I often

associated more males with leadership. In my career as a teacher, I have had only one female principal and she was not very successful. *This test made me face my own bias and come to the conclusion that I must see females equally in these roles if I want to be a successful leader.*

Conscious Incompetence

Response 13. The test took me longer the second time around. It was hard for me to see a male in a supportive role rather than a female. I knew I had a bias favoring male and leadership because I was a military brat in the 1960s and 1970s. *When I become principal it will be essential for me to be aware of my biases, and treat both male and female with equality. I would like my staff to take the survey in small teams, and discuss the outcomes in both small and whole groups.*

Response 14. At first I was surprised when the test showed that I was biased towards males as leaders, but only because I thought that it would take less time on the second go round. Those who know me would say that I am biased because I have very strong feelings that men and women are different and because of that have different gender roles. I know that in some fields women make less than men for doing the same job. In the jobs I have held I have not seen pay differences, but I have seen many women stop their careers or put them on hold to have children.

Response 15. The test gave me an awareness of the gender bias I have about women in leadership as the time to complete the Test Trial B took thirteen seconds longer. However, I was not surprised. *It's important for me working with others to realize that the bias I have may be exhibited in my actions. My effectiveness as a leader must transform the stereotypes and contribute to experiences, approaches, and authentic behaviors under the umbrella of leadership.*

Conscious Competence

Response 16. Upon completing the test, I discovered that I do not have a biased association of females/males in roles of support or leadership. I received a negative score between taking the two trial tests, so I do not hold automatic associations with females being in supportive roles and males being in roles of leadership. I was not surprised by these findings, as I am aware that my beliefs are that women and men can perform equally in any work place. *I think that this will only benefit me as a future educator and leader. My beliefs will allow me to be a positive role model for my school community by showing that with the proper training and education one can do anything.*

Response 17. After taking the gender-leader test, it was clear to me and I was not surprised that my time in an elementary education setting has helped me to become less assumptive when it comes to gender. I attribute many important leadership qualities, such as “supporter,” “caring,” “understanding,” but also “ambitious” to the female gender. I do still hold “assertive” to be a male quality, but I believe that this is the result of a difference in

male and female communication styles. Interestingly, the leadership style that I prefer in my own leaders involves many of the supportive qualities, such as “caring” and “empathetic”.

Unconscious Competence

It was not surprising that there were no examples in any of these learning narratives of unconscious competence. However, the lack of examples in student narratives for identify, confronting, and reducing instances of gender bias is important evidence for the importance of developing and implementing strategies capable of helping future leaders achieve those skills.

Discussion of Findings

While these learning narratives of student reactions to gender and leadership inventory scores were troubling, these experiences very much mirrored my own long-standing levels of consciousness (or unconsciousness) and acceptance (or denial) of how gender bias and inequity impacted my own journey through life. Two implications are outlined below for preparing future administrators to move beyond *doing gender* (West & Zimmerman, 1987) and toward more productive strategies and procedures to help future leaders be more successful leading efforts for *undoing gender* (Deutsch, 2007) and the *reconstruction of a view of leadership* that is multidimensional, multidirectional, contextually variable, and empowering (Blackmore, 1989). Educational leadership programs should be keen on designing learning activities that help future leaders not only unpack the layers of gender bias accumulated during their lifetimes, but also to move toward Blackmore’s (1989) idea of constructing personal leadership strategies to confront gender bias when it occurs.

The first major finding points to the importance of helping future leaders to unpack gender bias and inequity events in their storied lives. Many of these students professed at the beginning of the cohort experience that gender bias was not a factor in their lives. They claimed they were neither victims of gender bias nor perpetrators of gender bias or inequity. However, data from this study provides contradictory evidence.

The second major finding focuses on the importance of helping pre-service principals to transcend existing levels of gender bias and inequity. This process should include developing strategies to identify instances of gender bias. Next, future leaders need to experience and learn strategies to confront occurrences of gender bias, all with the important aim of reducing gender bias where and when it happens. With so many of these pre-service principals being in the unconscious incompetence level when it comes to gender bias, it becomes even more critical for them to achieve the tools and strategies to “deal with” instances of gender bias and inequity they will surely face as future school leaders.

Gender-Bias Status and Surprise

Many of these student responses to evidence of their gender-bias status provide further examples of how culture reinforces *doing gender* as reported in the literature (Rhode, 1997; Shakeshaft, 1995; Shakeshaft & Hanson, 1986; West and Zimmerman, 1987). These responses also underscore how important it becomes to find ways to undo gender (Deutsch, 2007; Lorbers, 2005; Ridgeway & Correll, 2004; Risman, 1998). Their responses also speak to their complete unawareness that they hold gender-biased beliefs, up until the time they scored a positive rating on the Gender-Leader Implicit Association Test and learned of their person gender biased status.

Once gender bias was exposed, students spoke of how they intend to guard against these beliefs or behaviors when they become leaders. However, it is hard to believe that adults, who were heretofore unaware of their gender-bias status (biased or not biased) prior to taking the Gender-Leader Implicit Association Test, will be able to overcome the pervasive cultural reinforcement of that bias on their own without some kind of leadership intervention or introspective unpacking of that accumulated gender-biased life perspective.

While 28 (80%) of the 35 students were gender-biased, only 8 (23%) of them were not-surprised. This means that they were already aware of their gender-biased status. The remaining 20 (57%) students were totally surprised and shocked when learning of their gender-bias status. They were living under a false impression that they were free from gender-bias, when in fact, their scores indicated otherwise. These data show that we need to do more to help future leaders unpack their own gender bias status, or there is no possible chance to undo patriarchal, sexist, or androcentric perspectives (Rhode, 1977, Shakeshaft, 1995, Shakeshaft & Handon, 1986).

Transcending Gender Bias

Data from this study provide little confidence, that if these students were unaware of their gender-bias status prior to taking the self-assessment in the Northouse (2009) chapter on gender and leadership, that merely learning of that bias status is a sufficient stimulus to help students understand how that gender bias was deposited into their world view over time or how to acquire strategies to confront or overcome these pervasive and inequitable gender-based world views. Student plans to guard against the negative impact of these beliefs and to construct a gender neutral or enhancing working environment were at best vague and mere lip-service at the worst.

Instead, I argue that students need to undergo a personal intervention, an investigation of their own narratives or gender-related critical incidents (Fulmer, 2005) in their lives when they learned gender roles, or resisted gender roles, or denied gender-biased instances by accepting them or by denying that in fact they even happened. By identifying instances of gender

bias in personal narratives from the past, students will be able to track the development of their gendered world view.

By unpacking prior gender related incidents, students would be able to use first hand knowledge of the negative impact of gender bias on one's world view and therefore, develop the capacity to best use the framework proposed by Blackmore (1989) to construct leadership strategies that "counter the emphasis on individualism, hierarchical relationships, bureaucratic rationality and abstract moral principles" (p. 94). By uncovering prior gender learning experiences, students would be able to identify key points in the past where they denied, accepted, confronted, or resisted instances of gender bias.

Students could also investigate their personal learning narratives for instances of gender bias experienced in different contexts with different people and how those experiences were the same or different and if different, why they were different. Hopefully, these investigations of personal narratives will unearth instances of where students were able to transcend "the power over" paradigm and move themselves into "an empowerment" mode where they could value and nurture their own gendered perspective of reality.

Implications

The levels of the Consciousness Competence Ladder (Manktelow, 2009) in Figure 1 have been modified to construct the matrix titled Model for Identifying, Confronting and Reducing Gender Bias and Inequity (see Table 4). This model includes two foci for learning that are central to the important implications of this work: (1) unpacking gender bias and inequity, and (2) developing strategies to reduce gender bias and inequity.

TABLE 4

Model for Identifying, Confronting and Reducing Gender Bias and Inequity.

	Incompetent about Knowing How to Identify, Confront and Reduce Gender Bias & Inequity	Competent about Knowing How to Identify, Confront and Reduce Gender Bias & Inequity
Conscious about Gender Bias & Inequity	Level 2 Conscious Incompetence (You Know that You Don't: Ignorance Is Bliss)	Level 3 Conscious Competence (You Know that You Know)
Unconscious about Gender Bias & Inequity	Level 1 Unconscious Incompetence (You Don't Know that You Don't Know)	Level 4 Unconscious Competence (You Don't Know that You Know: It Just Seems Easy)

The model is intended to be used by educational leadership faculty for developing, implementing, and assessing learning activities designed to help students to not only unpack the damage done by gender bias and inequity but also to help them develop the knowledge, skills, and courage required to be able to identify, confront, and reduce or eliminate gender bias wherever it is found.

The rationale for the development of this model, aimed at efforts toward these goals, can be found not only in the literature (Blackmore, 1989; Deutsch, 2007; Fulmer, 2005; Lorbers, 2005; Rhode, 1997; Ridgeway & Correll, 2004, Reisman, 1998; Shakeshaft, 1995; Shakeshaft & Hanson, 1986; West & Zimmerman, 1987) but also in the lived experiences of the authors of the learning narratives included in this article.

West & Zimmerman, 1987) and my own research (Fulmer, 2005), but also in the lived lives of the authors of the learning narratives included in this article.

Questions for Unpacking Gender Bias

The sample questions below provide a starting place.

1. Identify key incidents of your past when you were aware that gender positively or negatively impacted your sense of self or capacity to be successful in goals that were important to you.
2. Reflect on those incidents and recall how you responded or failed to respond at that time to those experiences both internally and externally.
3. In hindsight, how did this process of unpacking these key gender incidents help you to think differently about the impact of gender bias and inequity on your life.

Developing Strategies for Identifying, Confronting, and Reducing Gender Bias

The questions below are offered as starter questions to be used for developing strategies for identifying, confronting, and reducing gender bias.

1. Summarize what you learned about yourself and your ability to transcend prior incidents of gender bias or inequity in life.
2. Analyze what worked or did not work in the past and why or why not. What else could you have tried but did not try for whatever reason that might have helped?
3. As you think about what you have learned during this personal narrative investigation, what are the key learning experiences that you will take with you when you experience future incidents of gender bias or inequity.
4. From these good ideas, which of them will be useful for you to use as a future leader with a goal to identify and reduce instances of gender bias or inequity in the school environment.

Summary

I have made progress in my own struggle against this no problem problem (Rhode, 1997), against androcentrism (Shakeshaft, 1995; Shakeshaft & Hanson, 1986), sexism, and the patriarchal perspective. I am not only doing gender research, but also reading gender research. I have been informed by the work of West and Zimmerman (1987) *doing gender*, and Deutsch' (2007) concept of *undoing gender*. When I think of how unaware our future leaders are about gender bias and inequity, I have little hope of seeing how we will be able to reduce or eliminate this plague. I believe the job belongs to leadership preparation programs to take stock of any program gender bias and to scrutinize all program curricula to see where policies and pedagogical practices might be contributing to this problem. Programs would be well served to take guidance from Blackmore (1989) and work on instilling forms of leadership capable of countering all things that reproduce gender differences in our organizations. Let us start by unpacking our own gender biases and inequity perspectives and find out just how far we can go toward producing gender-bias free future school leaders.

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