



**WHITWORTH**  
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# **EQUALIZING GENDER DIFFERENCES IN IB COURSEWORK: AN INSTITUTIONAL PERSPECTIVE**

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## Research Question

- How can using an inclusive pedagogy in an International Business course help close the gender gap in the university classroom?

# Commonly Reinforced Gender Classroom Dynamics

- Female students perform worse than male students on high stakes exams
- Teachers call on male students more, wait longer for them to respond, remember and use their names more
- Female students are less likely to raise their hands, more likely to be interrupted
- Female students are less likely to call out & demand attention, and if they do are less likely to receive peer approval for it
- ...
- These patterns have continued to be found in research over time and are evident in childhood through university into workplace dynamics
  - *Diminished self-confidence*

# Some General Best Practices for Addressing the Gender Gap in Learning

- Establish ground rules for class discussions
- Call all students by name, always attributing comments by name
- Use examples that include men & women
- Make explicit eye contact with male & female students
- Increase wait time for response
- Focus on quality of content of response, not necessarily how confidently the comment was made
- Set up a system for yourself as teacher so you track specific participation patterns, so you can adjust as class progresses
- Return to remarks of students who are interrupted or who drop their point before finishing

# What about the International Business Classroom?

- IB courses may constitute a particularly promising opportunity to close the gender learning gap:
  - **Philosophically**
    - Whether part of a specific IB program or part of a more general business education
    - IB education promotes an understanding of and appreciation for diversity, of learning about and supporting cultural and institutional differences
  - **Content**
    - While IB coursework varies greatly, many IB Principles courses utilize some kind of international expansion project experience
      - e.g. X-Culture, GMMSO, pseudo-consulting

# Institutional Theory

- Institutional theory recognizes the importance of both *formal* and *informal* aspects of environments (North 1990)
  - Formal (*explicit laws, regulations, codified societal constraints*)
  - Informal (*behavioral norms, cultural standards, codes of conduct*)
- Herein we wonder whether we can apply an institutional theoretical lens to examine how our choice of IB classroom pedagogy can maximize both Formal & Informal elements as a specific technique to “level the playing field” and maximize the self-confidence of female students

# Applying an Institutional Framework to Ensure Inclusive Pedagogy

- Consider a typical IB course project: Complete analysis and make a recommendation for company international expansion

	<b>FORMAL</b>	<b>INFORMAL</b>	
<b>Skills</b>	Research skills Data skills Library skills	Networking Cold calling Navigating gatekeepers Persistence: Not taking “No” as an answer Patience, Tenacity Soft skills, Cultural nuances	<p><b>This quadrant often overlooked or underemphasized!</b></p> <p><b>Could this be a key toward expanding female students' expertise &amp; confidence?</b></p>
<b>Sources</b>	Country data (e.g. gov, World Bank, embassy)  Company data (e.g. 10ks, annual reports, PR, HR)	Personal/family Social media Alumni affairs Community orgs	<p><b>This column typically emphasized</b></p>

## Possible Way Forward?

- Pre-test: Measure male & female student self-efficacy, self-confidence, participation...? at the beginning of IB class
- Use gender equalizing techniques via specific emphasis on INFORMAL skill development in one section vs. FORMAL skills/source emphasis in another
- Post-test: Take end of class measures
- *So many questions!*
  - Ideas for operationalizing this concept?
  - Do you think the concept could have merit?

# Gender Issues in International Business Research, Teaching, Faculty Development...



**Thank You!**

**Nila**

**Tanvi**

**Dawn**

**& the WAIB**