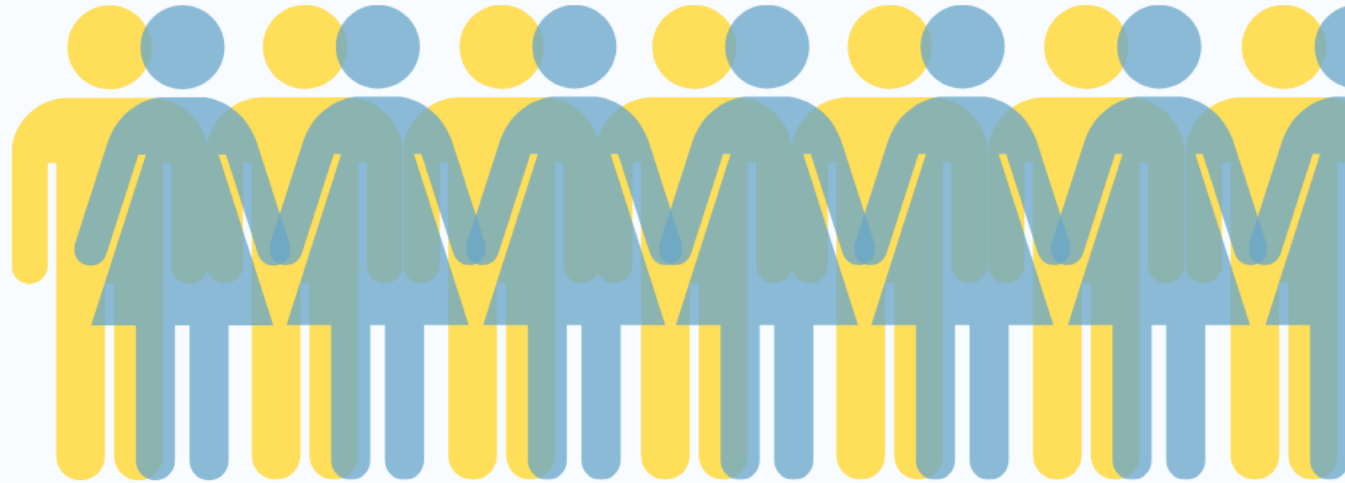


A GUIDE TO THE GENDER-NEUTRAL CLASSROOM

# Good Morning, Students

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# Today's Discussion



## OUTLINE OF TOPICS

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Introductions

Discussion: Poster Responses

Our Research & Findings

Mitigation Strategies

Discussion: Implementation

Reflection & Key Takeaways

Closing



## INTRODUCTIONS

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### Who are we? - Who are you? - Why are we here?

Olivia Giorlandino & Jenie Michael  
Northeastern University

Capstone research project  
Studied academic research on classroom  
gender bias, compared to educational  
trainings on gender bias.

Name  
Pronouns  
Role  
TFA region

- To illuminate how assumed gender dichotomies impact student treatment and understanding of gender in the classroom
- To equip you with tools to mitigate the presentation of gender dichotomies and stereotypes to create a gender neutral classroom

To start us off :

Standardized Language

Classroom/School = any educational setting

Teacher = any educator

Boy = male presenting at a young age

Girl = female presenting at a young age

**BOYS IN  
SCHOOL**

**GIRLS IN  
SCHOOL**

**ALREADY  
KNOW**





# Main Findings

## Research Methods:

- Analyzed 14 academic publications from the last 10 years regarding gender biases in the classroom
- Looking for most prominent themes in each
- Compared to find the most prevalent issues among all research

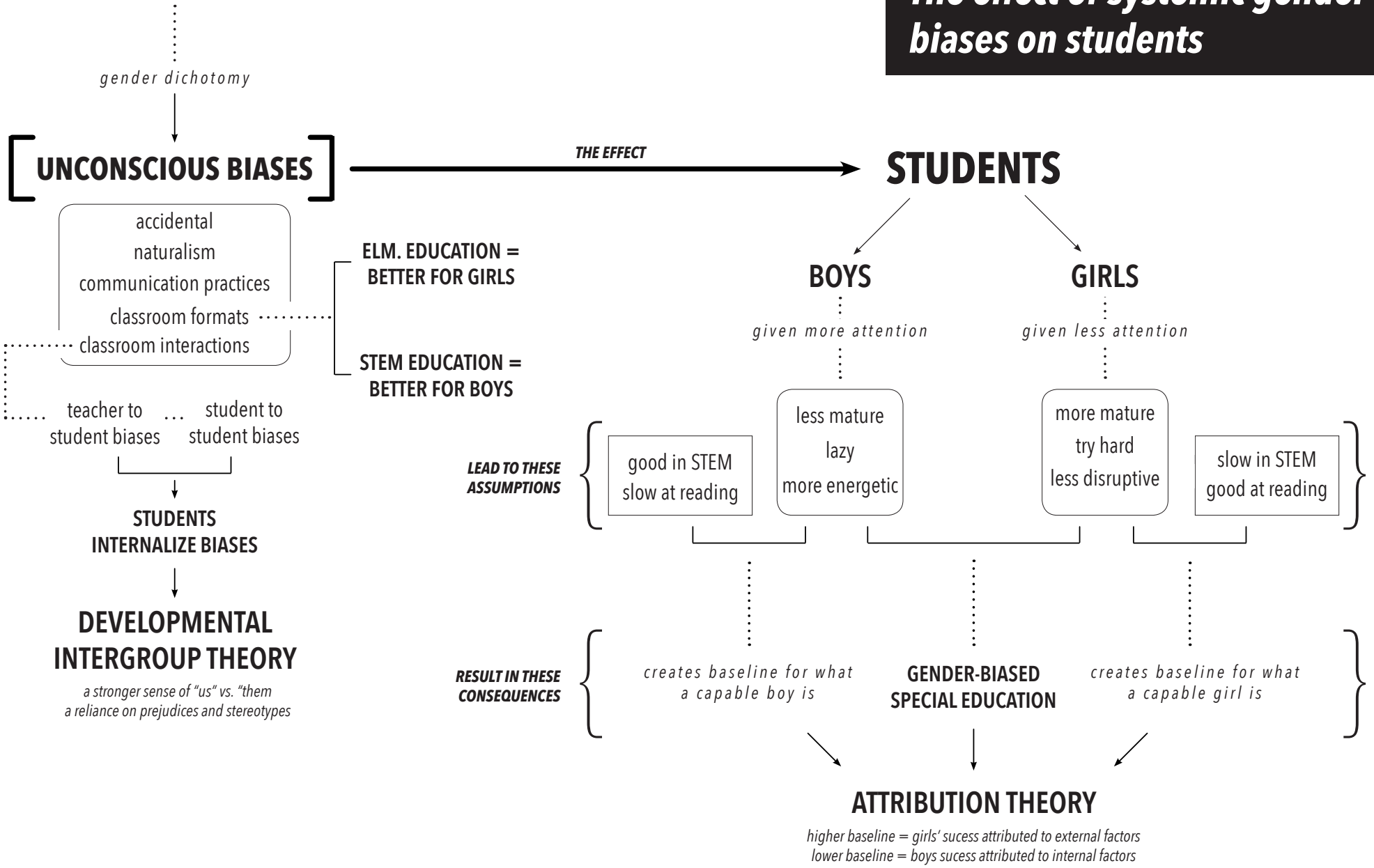




# Main Findings

## SCHOOLS / TEACHERS

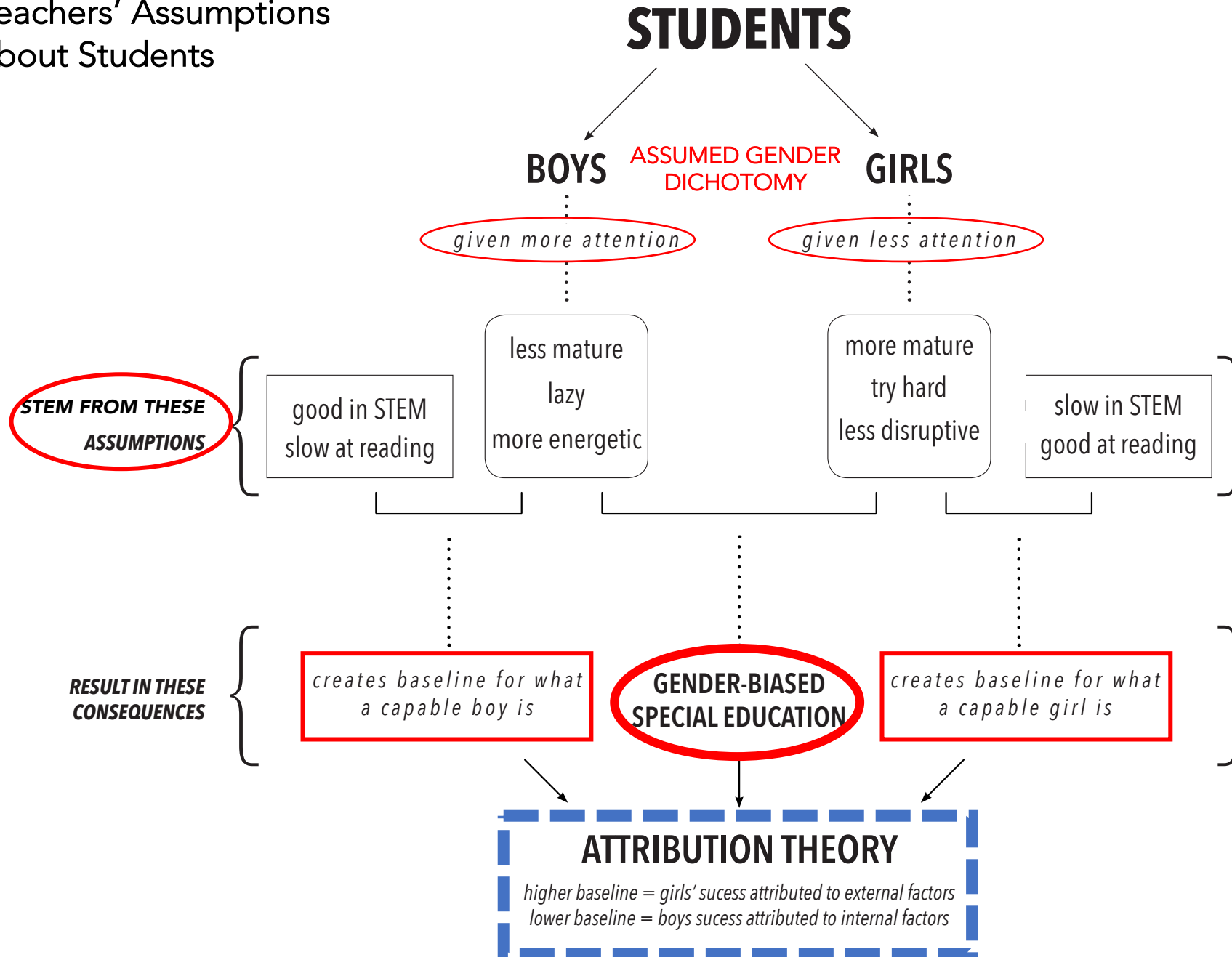
**The effect of systemic gender biases on students**





# Main Findings

## Teachers' Assumptions about Students

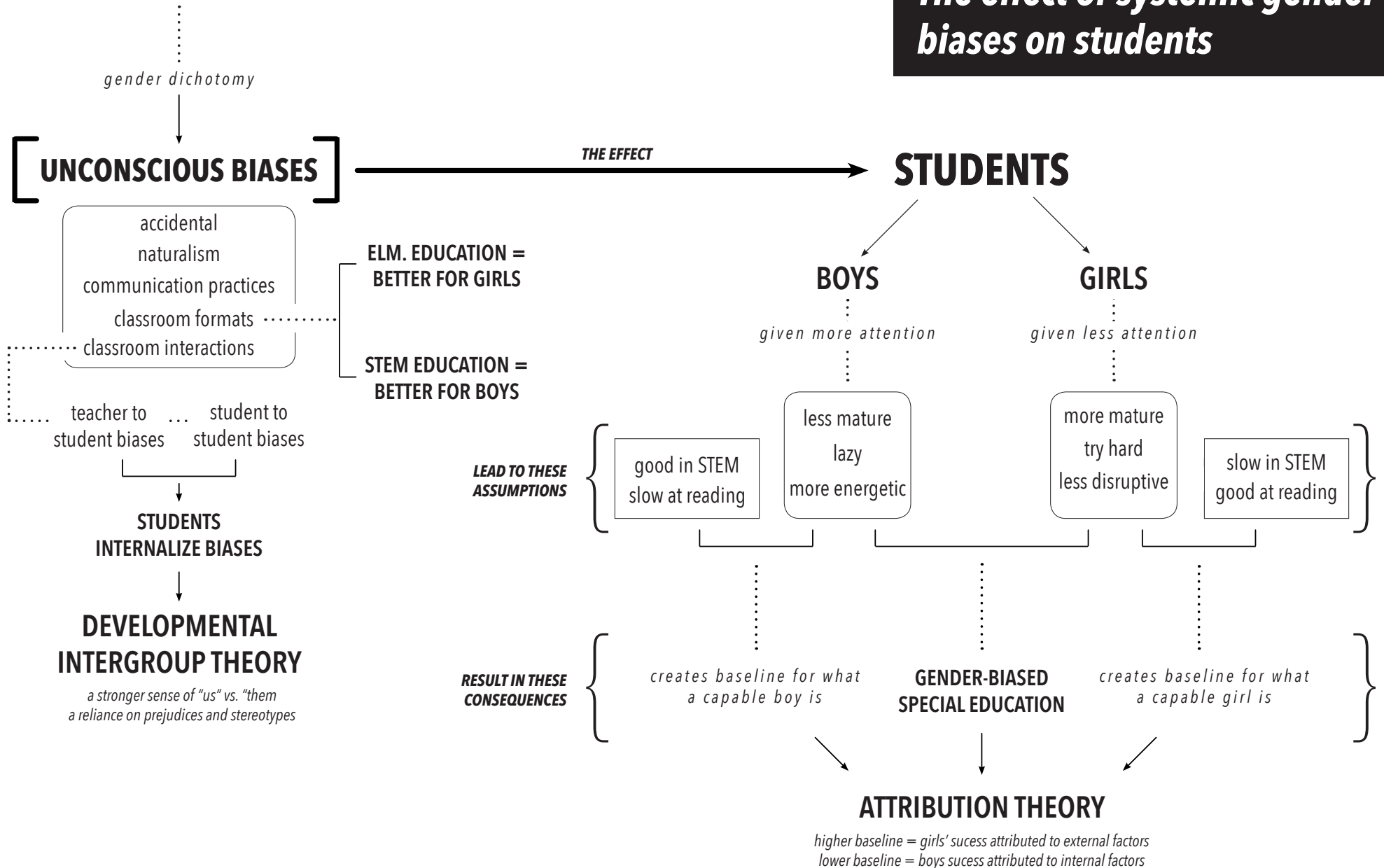




# Main Findings

## SCHOOLS / TEACHERS

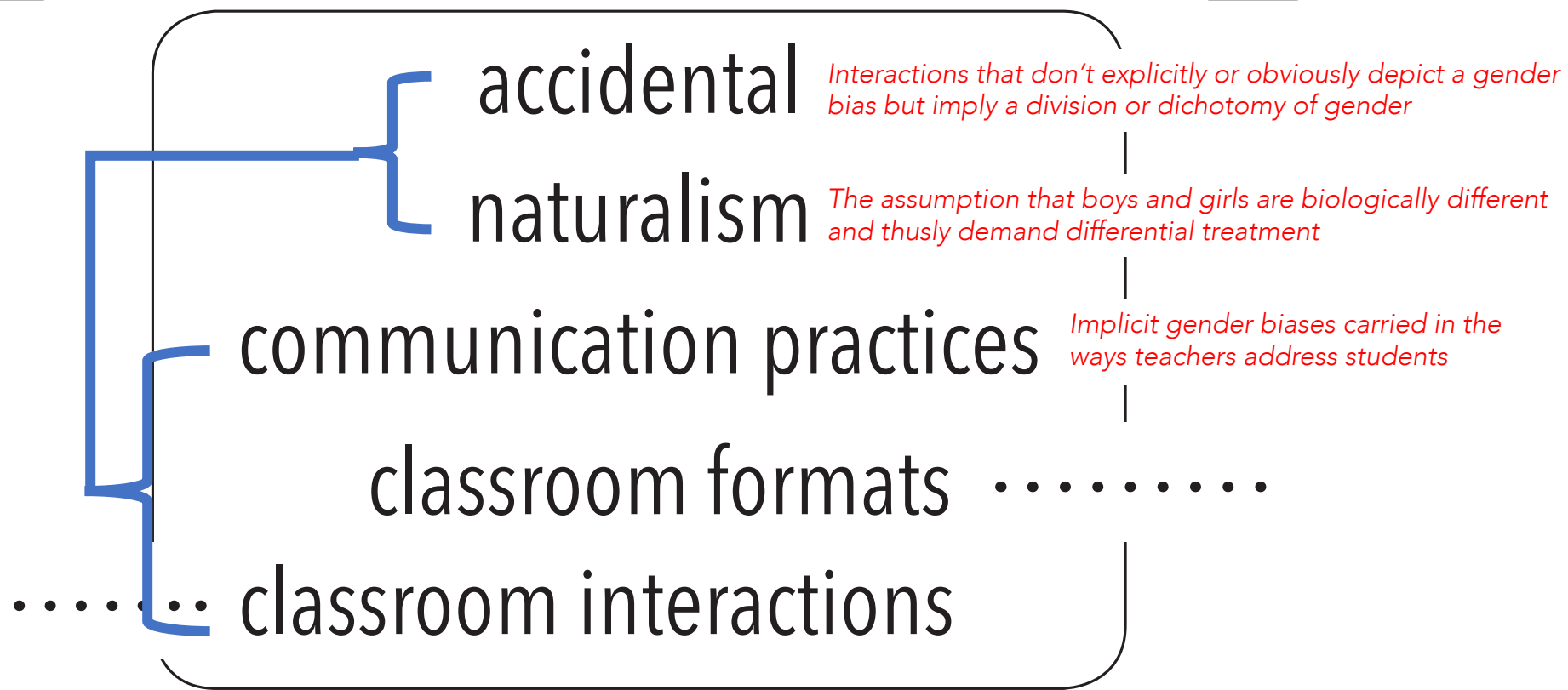
**The effect of systemic gender biases on students**





# UNCONSCIOUS BIASES

*unintentional ways educators treat students differently based on assumed gender identity*





# Main Findings

classroom formats ....

*boys and girls are socialized differently, classrooms set up for particular types of socialization*

**ELM. EDUCATION =  
BETTER FOR GIRLS**

*Emphasize rule following, social emotional knowledge*

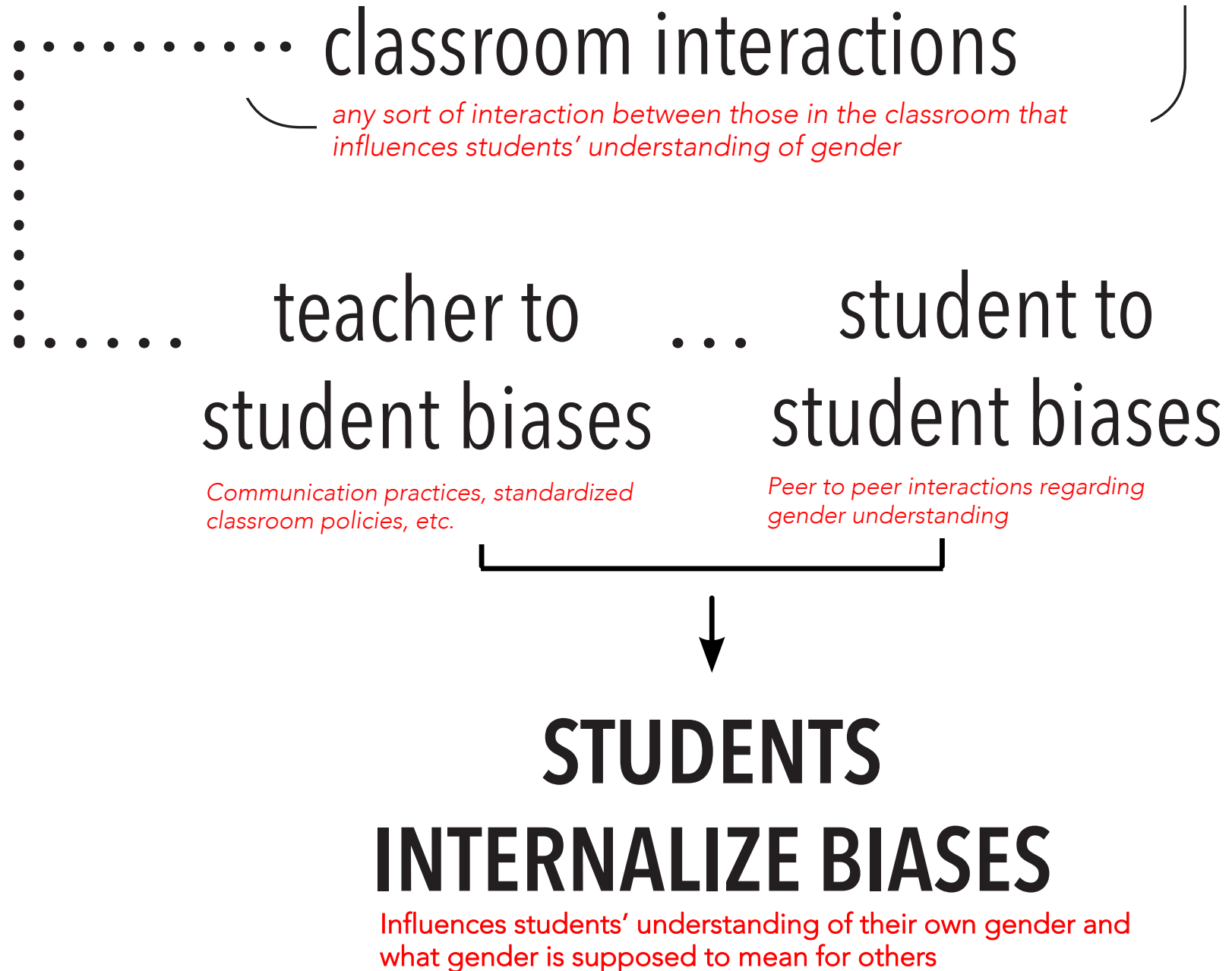
*Stereotypes &  
difference in  
achievement*

**STEM EDUCATION =  
BETTER FOR BOYS**

*Emphasize definitive answers, goals, calculated risk taking*



# Main Findings





## Main Findings

**STUDENTS  
INTERNALIZE BIASES**



**DEVELOPMENTAL  
INTERGROUP THEORY**

*a stronger sense of "us" vs. "them"  
a reliance on prejudices and stereotypes*





# Main Findings

**SCHOOLS / TEACHERS**

gender dichotomy

**[ UNCONSCIOUS BIASES ]**

accidental  
naturalism  
communication practices  
classroom formats  
classroom interactions

ELM. EDUCATION =  
BETTER FOR GIRLS

STEM EDUCATION =  
BETTER FOR BOYS

teacher to student biases ... student to student biases

**STUDENTS  
INTERNALIZE BIASES**

**DEVELOPMENTAL  
INTERGROUP THEORY**

*a stronger sense of "us" vs. "them"  
a reliance on prejudices and stereotypes*

THE EFFECT

**The effect of systemic gender biases on students**

**STUDENTS**

**BOYS**

**GIRLS**

*given more attention*

*given less attention*

LEAD TO THESE ASSUMPTIONS

good in STEM  
slow at reading

less mature  
lazy  
more energetic

more mature  
try hard  
less disruptive

slow in STEM  
good at reading

RESULT IN THESE CONSEQUENCES

*creates baseline for what  
a capable boy is*

**GENDER-BIASED  
SPECIAL EDUCATION**

*creates baseline for what  
a capable girl is*

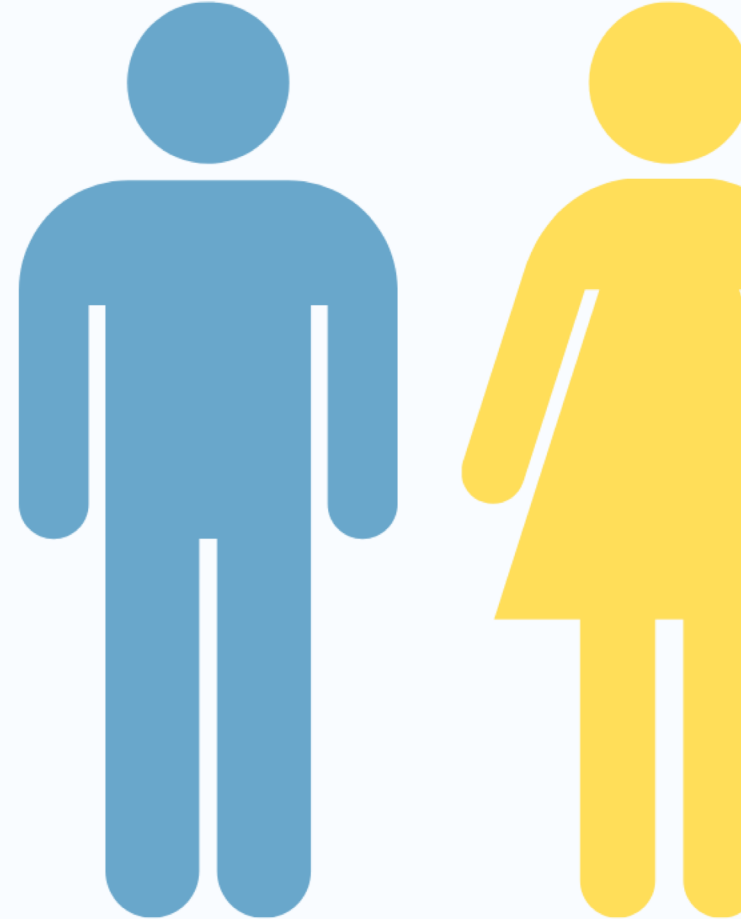
**ATTRIBUTION THEORY**

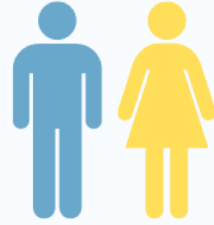
*higher baseline = girls' success attributed to external factors  
lower baseline = boys success attributed to internal factors*

# Why does this matter?

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Treatment of gender in academic settings has an intense effect on the individual and social understandings of students, thus shaping the way they see themselves and the world.

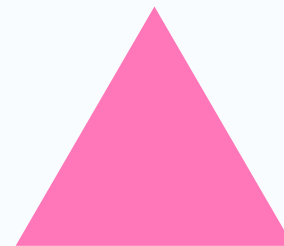
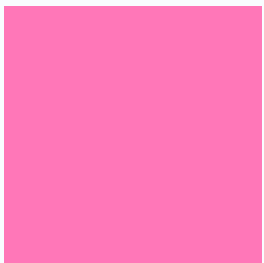


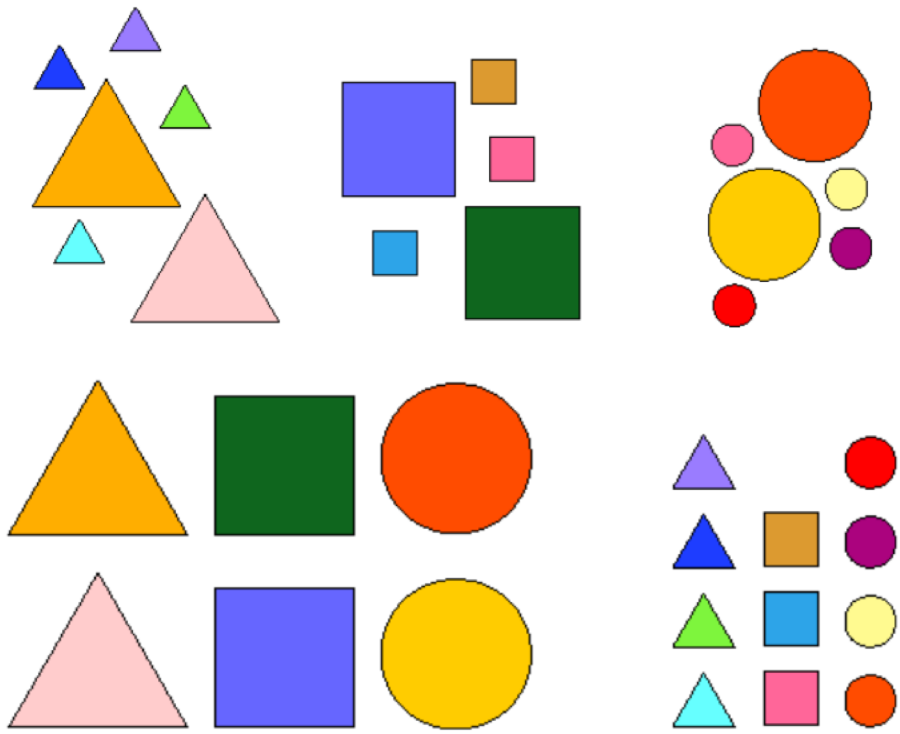


## TO DEMONSTRATE

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- Instructed participants to take a name badge, each of which had a shape on it
- Then asked to form groups of three without talking

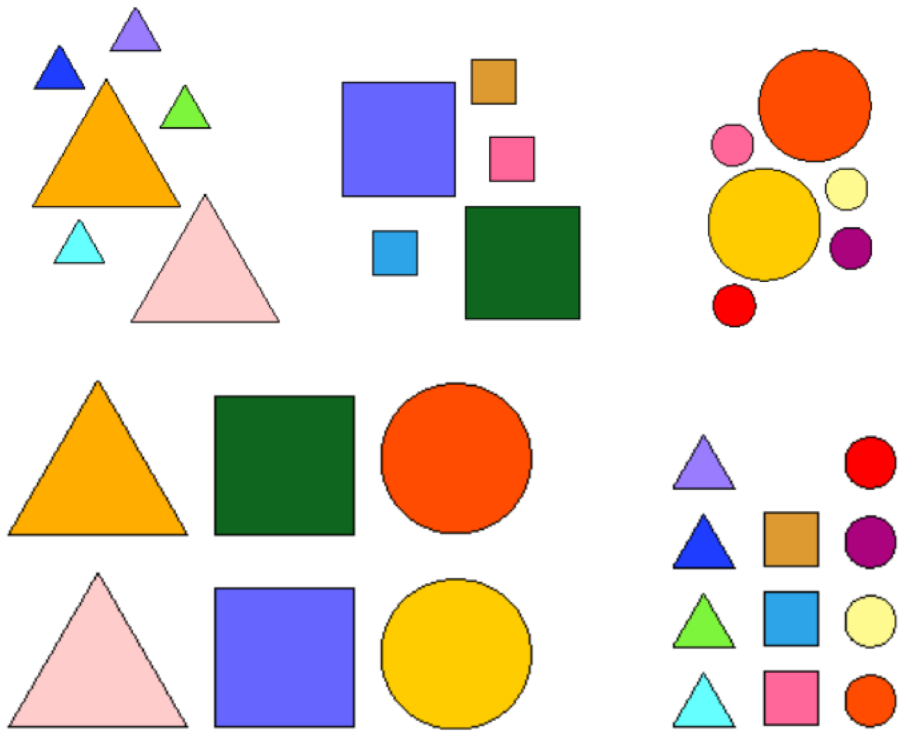




- Normally form groups based on shapes or colors.
- Rarely do the participants look beyond the badges, and even less rarely do they intentionally form diverse groups in which many shapes and colors are represented.
- Demonstrates social categorization processes, the automaticity of “us” vs “them” categorizations, and in group bias.

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## What happened?



- Salient gendered environments yield highly gendered individuals
- Highly gendered individuals more actively categorize others into social groups, developing a rigid understanding of in-groups and out-groups.
- Leads to a dependence on stereotypes and prejudices as tools to understand social spheres, and it also fosters an “us vs. them” mindset

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## Developmental Intergroup Theory

# Mitigation Strategies

Based on our research, mitigating classroom bias should:

1. Challenge the gender binary
2. Alter biased course material
3. Enact standardized punishment/praise procedures
4. Monitor hand raising of male vs. female students
5. Use gender-neutral language/words of capability
6. Emphasize awareness of unconscious biases

# Mitigation Strategies

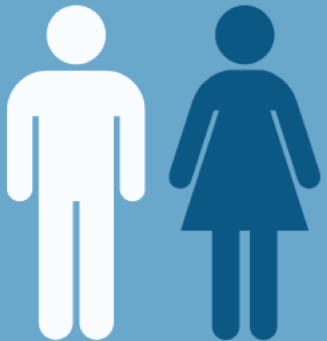
Three main arenas for these strategies:

Classroom Structure

Teacher/Student Interaction

Student/Student Interaction

# Classroom Structure



- Hand Raising policies
- Explicit and standardized disciplinary rules
- Teaching materials
- Testing materials
  - Using materials that cater to different types of learners across curricula
  - Having essay in STEM, having multiple in ELA, etc.

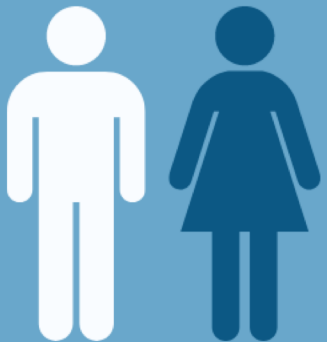


# Educator / Student Interaction

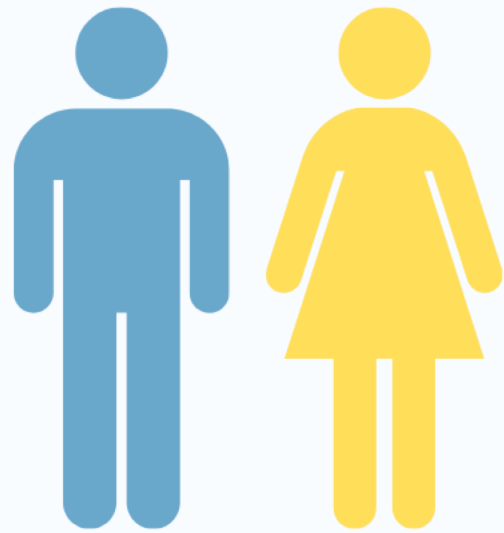


- Feedback awareness - emphasize competency
- Use of gender-neutral language (Good Morning, Students)

# Student / Student Interaction



- Your affect on students' understanding of themselves and others
- Monitor and correct language
- Explain corrections - why this matters etc.



## Pair & Share!

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Acknowledge the resource strain in educational settings

How can you implement the above strategies in your classrooms?

# KEY TAKEAWAYS



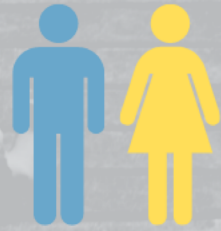
Your communication choices have tangible effects on student gender development and thusly their educational and professional outcomes



While there is not one perfect way to create a gender-neutral classroom, awareness is always the first step toward progress



Implementing gender-neutral classroom practices can ensure equal opportunity for success among all students



## CLOSING & QUESTIONS

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