

## **Gender and Student Evaluations: An Annotated Bibliography**

**Developed at the Center for Research on Learning and Teaching  
at the University of Michigan**

Andersen, K., & Miller, E. D. (1997). Gender and student evaluations of teaching. Political Science & Politics, 30, 216-219.

Explores the potentially damaging effects of gender bias in student evaluations of teaching, specifically with regard to student expectations. Reviews a number of laboratory and "real life" studies and summarizes their conclusions. Notes the different and conflicting expectations of students and recommends a broader approach to teacher evaluations.

Bachen, C. M., McLoughlin, M. M., & Garcia, S. S. (1999). Assessing the role of gender in college students' evaluations of faculty. Communication Education, 448(3), 193-210.

Finds that female students rated female faculty especially high across five teaching dimensions and male faculty comparatively lower, whereas male students did not evaluate male and female professors as significantly different. Finds that assessments of faculty were further influenced by the strength of students' gender schema and that gender schema may also lead to differential preference for particular teaching styles.

Basow, S. A. (1995). Student evaluations of college professors: When gender matters. Journal of Educational Psychology, 87(4), 656-665.

Student evaluations completed over a period at a private liberal arts college were analyzed for the effects of teacher gender, student gender, and divisional affiliation. A significant multivariate interaction between teacher gender and student gender was found for each of the 4 semesters examined. Overall, the ratings of male professors appeared to be unaffected by student gender. In contrast, female professors tended to receive their highest ratings from female students and their lowest ratings from male students. This interaction generally remained when possible confounding factors (such as teacher rank) were partialled out. The mean ratings received by female professors also varied as a function of the divisional affiliation of the course. Implications of these findings are discussed.

Basow, S. A. (1998). Student evaluations: Gender bias and teaching styles. In L. H. Collins, Chrisler, J.C., & Quina, K. (Eds.), Career strategies for women in academe: Arming Athena. (pp. 135-156). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Using a quantitative approach, Basow argues that the overall effect of gender on student evaluations is small, accounting for about 3% of variance. However, there may be significant interaction effects between gender and other context variables that may cumulatively disadvantage female faculty.

Basow, S. A., & Silberg, N. T. (1987). Student evaluations of college professors: Are female and male professors rated differently? Journal of Educational Psychology, 79(3), 308-14.

Over 1,000 undergraduates evaluated 16 male and female professors in terms of teaching effectiveness and sex-typed characteristics. Male students gave female professors significantly

poorer ratings than male professors on the six teaching evaluation measures. Female students evaluated female professors less favorably than male professors on three measures.

Bennett, S. K. (1982). Student perceptions of and expectations for male and female instructors: Evidence relating to the question of gender bias in teaching evaluation. Journal of Educational Psychology, 74(2), 170-179.

Survey of 253 students in nonscience introductory courses at a liberal arts college. Bennett finds that students do not have different standards of reference for male and female instructors, but women are perceived to be less authoritarian and more charismatic. Female instructors in departments with fewer than 20% ft women were rated even higher on these standards. She finds that ratings that are consequential for performance ratings of men have an equal impact on women except for the following, which have more effect for women: (1) professionalism (seen by students as a highly structured instructional approach), instructional presentation (specifically, being compelling and self-assured and presenting a balanced interpretation of viewpoints), and (3) accessibility.

Benokraitis, N. V. (1998). Working in the ivory basement: Subtle sex discrimination in higher education. In L. H. Collins, J.C. Chrisler, & K. Quina (Eds.), Career strategies for women in academe: Arming Athena (pp. 3-43). Thousand Oaks: Sage.

Female professors often experience "professional dimunition" through terms of address, comments about personal appearance on course evaluations, and direct questions about credentials.

Burns-Glover, A. L., & Veith, D. J. (1995). Revisiting gender and teaching evaluations: Sex still makes a difference. Journal of Social Behavior & Personality: Special Issue: Gender in the workplace, 10(6), 69-80.

Explores sex biases in college students, through their rating of desirability of traits and behaviors in 3 supposed applicants for a university teaching position. Subjects, after being presented with a brief scenario regarding the fictitious applicants, were required to review the sex-stereotyped list and then rate desirable traits, using a standardized list of 52 traits and a student-generated list of 25 preferred behaviors of a "great professor." Results show that masculine traits were preferred over feminine, and trait preferences were affected by the sex of the professor. Subjects had different preferences based on the sex of the professor, and the pattern of such evaluations was significantly predicted by the sex of the rater. The sex-biased pattern was clearer for male, than for female, raters.

Centra, J. A., & Gaubatz, N. B. (2000). Is there gender bias in student evaluations of teaching? Journal of Higher Education, 71(1), 17-33.

This study examined gender differences in student evaluation of teaching through two analyses. In the first, female and male student ratings in the same classes were compared for female and male instructors. In the second analysis, ratings by all male students are examined for how they differed for male and female instructors. Data came from 741 college classes, each of which had an enrollment of at least 10 female students and 10 male students from 21 colleges and universities. The student evaluation from was the Student Instructional Report II from the Educational Testing Service. Multivariate analysis of variance was used to investigate the mean differences of the dependent variables. In this study, in contrast to past studies, female

students gave higher ratings to female instructors on three of eight scales for all disciplines combined, while male students gave male instructors higher ratings on only one scale, course organization and planning. Male and female students did not differ in their rankings of male teachers. For the total sample of classes, when more favorable ratings were given, they were largely by female students to female instructors. Overall, results support the conclusion that gender differences among instructors are related more to their gender-related approaches to teaching than to their overall effectiveness.

Fandt, P. M., & Stevens, G. E. (1991). Evaluation bias in the business classroom: Evidence relating to the effects of previous experiences. Journal of Psychology, Interdisciplinary & Applied, 125(4), 469-78.

A study of teaching evaluations in colleges of business administration found that male instructors were rated higher than female instructors. When previous experiences with female instructors existed, the female instructors were rated higher.

Feldman, K. A. (1992). College students' views of male and female college teachers: Part I--Evidence from the social laboratory and experiments. Research in Higher Education, 33(3), 317-75.

Among findings of a review of research on college students' preconceptions of male and female college teachers were that, in the majority of studies, students' global evaluations of male and female teachers as professionals were not different, though in a minority of studies, male teachers received higher overall evaluations than did female teachers.

Feldman, K. A. (1993). College students' views of male and female college teachers: Part II--Evidence from students' evaluations of their classroom teachers. Research in Higher Education, 34(2), 151-211.

Research on college students' evaluations of their male and female teachers is synthesized and compared with results of research on student evaluation of hypothetical male and female teachers. Results suggest the interaction of gender, teacher characteristics/behaviors, and student perceptions and expectations is complex. Although a majority of studies have found that male and female college teachers do not differ in the global ratings they receive from their students, when statistically significant differences are found, more of them favor women than men. Across studies, the average association between gender and overall evaluation, while favoring women, is so small as to be insignificant in practical terms.

Goldberg, G., & Callahan, J. (1991). Objectivity of student evaluations of instructors. Journal of Education for Business, 66(6), 377-8.

Over 60 undergraduate business courses in 3 quarters were evaluated by more than 4,000 students. Student ratings of business course instructors were influenced by expected grades, course level, and instructor gender, and status.

Haemmerlie, F. M., & Highfill, L. A. (1991). Bias by male engineering undergraduates in their evaluation of teaching. Psychological Reports, 68, 151-60.

This study assessed the gender biases of male engineering undergraduates when evaluating a college teacher of a technical course. Students (n=126) rated a hypothetical calculus teacher on

a variety of personal, interpersonal, and professional dimensions. Evidence of a pro-male bias was found with regard to what subjects thought the teacher's personal attitudes and interpersonal behavior would be toward students.

Hancock, G. R., Shannon, D., & Trentham, L. (1993). Student and teacher gender in ratings of university faculty: Results from five colleges of study. Journal of Personnel Evaluation in Education, 6(3), 235-48.

Potential instructor and student gender interaction in student ratings of faculty across different university colleges of study were studied through 29,519 completed student questionnaires. The relationship of gender differences in ratings to the particular college shows no predictable pattern. The impact of gender differences at other levels is discussed.

Kierstead, D., D'Agostino, P., & Dill, H. (1988). Sex role stereotyping of college professors: Bias in students' ratings of instructors. Journal of Educational Psychology, 80(3), 342-4.

The impact of three variables on students' ratings of instruction was assessed: (1) social contact between instructor and students; (2) instructor's facial expression; and (3) instructor's gender. Findings with 40 male and 40 female college students indicate that students expect female instructors to excel in both stereotypically masculine and feminine domains.

Lueck, T. L., Endres, K. L., & Caplan, R. E. (1993). The interaction effects of gender on teaching evaluations. Journalism Educator, 48(3), 46-54.

Finds an interaction between student gender and instructor gender on teaching evaluations in mass communication. Shows that male students rated male instructors higher and that female students rated female instructors higher.

Miller, J., & Chamberlin, M. (2000). Women are teachers, men are professors: A study of student perceptions. Teaching Sociology, 28(4), 283-298.

Sociology students' perceptions of their instructors' educational attainment levels are examined empirically. The authors find gender disparities: students misattribute in an upward direction the level of education actually attained by male graduate student instructors, while they misattribute in a downward direction the level of formal education attained by women, even when the female faculty member is a full professor. The misattributions are linked to the imputed statuses "teacher" for women and "professor" for men, regardless of the actual positions held or the credentials earned by faculty members and graduate student instructors. The authors suggest that a process of marginalization explains the empirical findings - a process that is attributed by others, but chosen by the self, regardless of the social and economic costs incurred.

Rowden, G. V., & Carlson, R. E. (1996). Gender issues and students' perceptions of instructors' immediacy and evaluation of teaching and course. Psychological Report, 78, 835-9.

This study reports on relationships between teachers' immediacy and students' evaluations of the course and teacher, and differences among these variables based on teachers' and students' gender. Analysis showed that for 197 undergraduate students (105 women and 92 men) immediacy, course evaluations, and evaluations of their teachers (104 men and 92 women) were positively correlated. There were no differences by gender for immediacy, but three gender differences were found: female instructors received higher teacher and course ratings than their male peers, and female students with male instructors rated the course lower than any other gender grouping.

Seldin, P. (July 21, 1993). The use and abuse of student ratings of professors. The Chronicle of Higher Education, A40.

Student ratings have become the most widely used source of information on teaching effectiveness in higher education. Such evaluations are easy to abuse, however, and do not always lead to improvements in teaching. Student evaluations should never be the sole source of information on a teacher's effectiveness in class. The best way to get at the complexity and individuality of teaching is to compile a teaching portfolio that includes not only student ratings but such things as other teachers' observations, reviews of the instructional materials used, and an essay by the faculty member on why the teaching was done in a particular way. The reliability of student ratings is discussed, and guidelines for using them are provided.

Sidanius, J., & Crane, M. (1989). Job evaluation and gender: The case of university faculty. Journal of Applied Social Psychology, 19(2), 174-97.

Assessed the effect of sex on performance evaluations in data drawn from a course instructor survey completed by 4,662 female students and 4,241 male students and by 102 students not indicating their sex. 254 male university instructors and 147 female university instructors participated. Male faculty were given significantly higher evaluations on global teacher effectiveness and academic competence than female faculty. Female faculty were not found to be rated as more sensitive to student needs than male faculty. When making overall, global judgments of faculty performance, students seemed to place more weight on academic competence for male faculty than for female faculty.

Simpson, R. D. (1995). Uses and misuses of student evaluations of teaching effectiveness. Innovative Higher Education, 20(1), 3-5.

While student evaluations of teaching performance can provide useful feedback on faculty, particularly on dimensions of course delivery, there are serious limitations. Bias and distrust are often overlooked in interpreting student ratings. An inappropriate use is in rank-ordering faculty in a department. Student evaluation data must be integrated with other sources of information on teaching quality.

Siskind, T. G., & Kearns, S. P. (1997). Gender bias in the evaluation of female faculty at the citadel: A qualitative analysis. Sex Roles, 37(7-8), 495-525.

Investigates the possibility of gender bias in student ratings of female faculty at The Citadel. Four (Caucasian) female faculty members, one at each level of academic rank, and four (Caucasian) male cadets were interviewed to determine their views on bias in the instructional process, especially with regard to ratings of faculty by students. From the data the authors

concluded that there is a contradiction between beliefs about gender bias and the actual presence of bias for both faculty and students. Women are subjected to a double standard, and in the military setting of The Citadel, non-tenure track female faculty are doubly penalized. Faculty women believe gender bias is part of the institutional culture, and contrapower harassment in ratings of female faculty by male students is likely.

Tatro, C. N. (1995). Gender effects on student evaluations of faculty. Journal of Research and Development in Education, 28(3), 169-73.

To identify gender differences in student ratings of their instructors, college students completed a questionnaire concerning their instructor's attitudes and effectiveness. Data analysis indicated that female instructors received higher ratings than male instructors, and female students gave higher ratings than male students. Expected grade significantly affected students' ratings.