

Shattering Stereotypes is a project that tackles and raises awareness of gender stereotyping in schools.

A set of three workshops for Year 8 students which aim to raise awareness of what gender stereotypes are, in particular:
Gender Stereotypes (GS) in the context of a student's everyday life.
GS and a student's possible career path.
The project also aims to empower students so they can identify and challenge situations where they are presented with these stereotypes.

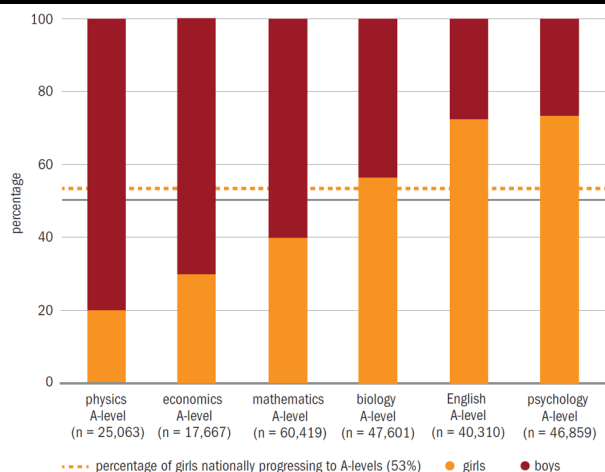


Fig 1: National ratios of male and female entries to the six selected A-level subjects averaged over the years 2010 to 2012 in England (JCQ) (source: IoP Closing Doors)

Background

Research by the Institute of Physics (IOP) shows that the lack of girls taking physics at A-Level is part of a wider problem; GS in schools.

IOP – Closing Doors (2013) Part of a wider problem: GS

- 81% of state-funded mixed schools are maintaining or worsening already poor gender bias of progression in six subjects. (English, maths, biology, physics, economics, psychology.)

- Improve diversity in physics, we need to address wider issues and gender imbalance across all subjects.

•School culture is important.

IOP – Opening Doors (2015) Recommendations & Good Practice:

- Appoint senior gender champion.
- Training on gender awareness & unconscious bias.
- Watch out sexist language.
- Track progression data.
- Run local initiatives.
- Promote subject equity.
- Provide careers guidance.
- Give students ownership.
- Embed in PSHE lessons.

Pilot Year 1 & 2:

Year 1: 263 year 8 students, **Year 2:** 110 year 8 students

External Evaluation underpinning all project for pilot year 1

Overall the project delivered a programme which led to positive experiences across all stakeholders:

Year 8 Students – following their involvement in *Shattering Stereotypes*, they now view future opportunities as not being **constrained by stereotypical perceptions of gender**.

Year 12 Students – developed transferable **leadership and communication skills** through their participation in the communications challenge.

Teachers – valued external visits and having resources from universities.

Schools – In some schools, the pilot project **raised awareness of GS across their entire schools**

Outreach Officers – welcomed the opportunity provided by the project to work as part of a team and to be involved in **building up a relationship with schools**, as opposed to one-off activities.

'I think I now know that boys might like girl things and girls might like boy things and you should just choose like whatever subjects or other stuff you like doing because you like it.' (Yr8 student). This gives the project a **fantastic base** to evolve and grow from in future years. *The year 1 pilot evaluation was carried out by Elizabeth Jeavans and Sarah Jenkins.*

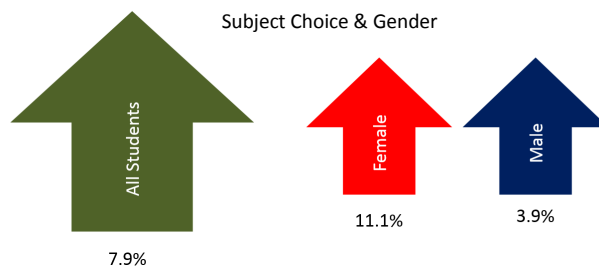


Fig 2: Percentage increase of student in year 1 pilot who 'I feel I could decide to pursue any subject at school without gender being a factor' from before the workshops to afterwards

Workshop 1: GS & You

Introduces GS and how it can have an effect on their lives at home or at school.

This workshop starts by introducing gendered toys, a common starting point for everyone. Based on the learning from the pilot project students recognised and understood the concept quickly and focussed instead on discussing it in terms of their lives.



Workshop 2: GS & Your Career

Explore how GS can have an effect on a student's chosen career path. In particular, the workshop will look at how varied careers that lead from physics (and STEM) aren't dependent on gender but character types.



Workshop 03: Communications Challenge

Empowers students in challenging GS and help them develop their communication skills. The students work in groups and come up with different methods of communicating issues around GS. In the past we have had amazing posters, comic books, poems that showcase how gender plays a part in the life of the students. At the end of the workshop students feel ready to challenge those who push stereotypes on them.

