# Gender Issues In Mathematics Pedagogy

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## Abstract

Gender is a complex, dynamic force that affects every social interaction, including interactions in educational settings. Its effects are woven into educational outcomes, and at times contribute to complicated disparities, specifically in the field of mathematics education. Three examples illustrate this point. First, in the United States, females earn better mathematics grades in high school than males do (p. 211), yet both domestically and abroad, females are more likely than males to have lower self-confidence, lower interest, higher anxiety, and more negative attitudes towards mathematics (pp. 56, 293). Second, females grow up getting less support and encouragement in mathematics from parents and teachers, yet they don't seem to notice this lack of attention (pp. 162, 279). Third, women choose careers in mathematics-related fields in lower proportions than do males, even if they are equally qualified (pp. 89, 150). Much research has been done on the possible sources of these intriguing gender issues. The book *International Perspectives on Gender Issues in Mathematics Education* (Forgasz, Becker, Lee, & Steinthorsdottir, 2010) is a compilation of such research. The goal of this paper is to highlight several recurring and overarching themes across the chapters in this book. Themes of focus are those that have practical implications for students, parents, teachers, administrators, and policy makers.

**Keywords**: Gender Issues, Mathematics

## Introduction

*The Gender Gap in Math Achievement and Attitudes*

Most current research is in agreement about the existence of a gap between males and females in the areas of math achievement and attitudes towards mathematics. Early research cited biological differences as the reason for the gender gap, but since the 1970s, the research