

Phase IV: Action

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In the 1970s, complying with the law often was the sole motivating factor for conducting an equity activity. These activities mainly focused on staff development and usually consisted only of informational materials. Little or no follow-up or training was provided.

This approach assumed that when educators understood the sex-equity concept, they would implement change to bring about an equitable environment in their schools. However, little change occurred because awareness alone failed to provide adequate instruction, guidance, and the skills that educators needed to implement equity programs in their schools. In addition, teacher-training programs continue to offer inadequate instruction on equity-related topics. So, even if educators supported equity, few possessed the knowledge and skill to incorporate it into the curriculum and learning process.

This section outlines the student competencies on which the Wisconsin Model focuses as well as the school actions needed to fulfill the competencies. It also offers seven major strategies—with activities, tips, and cautions, and examples for each—to help the local planning team develop an effective vocational equity plan. The information in this section is intended to give an overview of what can be done and to provide structure to the local plan while offering the flexibility to accommodate the district's needs and concerns. Chapters 6 through 12 detail the seven strategies and their corresponding activities.

Levels of Equity Activities

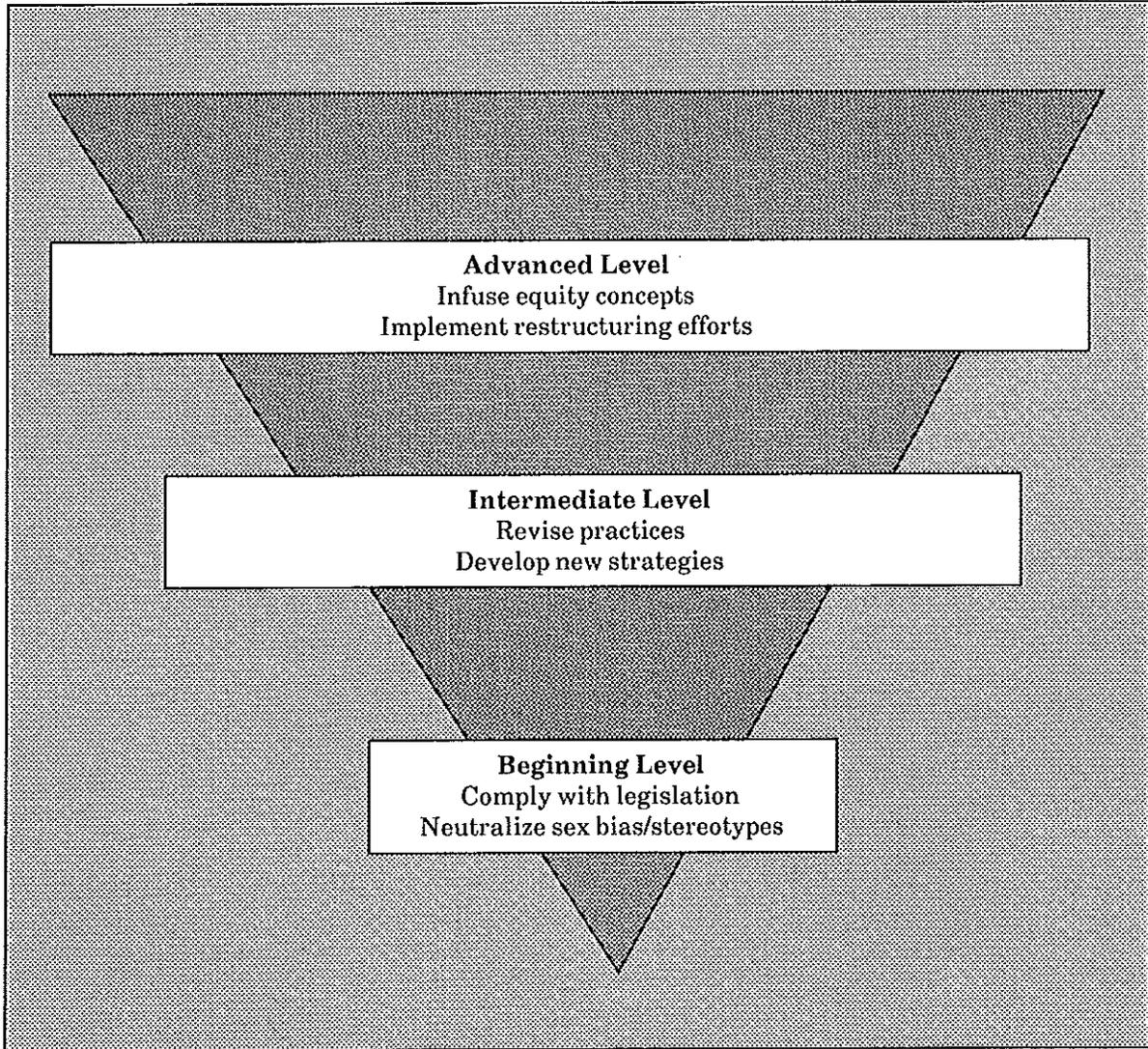
As with any new program, it is often difficult to know how to begin or which activities to implement first. And, like many successful programs, it is best to build the program upon a solid foundation.

The local sex-equity program should begin by implementing activities that bring about both compliance with federal and state nondiscrimination legislation and the elimination of sex biases and sex stereotypes. Upon that base, the program can build activities that reflect a proactive approach to achieving equity for each student. Finally, the program can employ activities that will support the school district's efforts and actions to infuse sex equity throughout the district (see Figure 14).

Experience gained in the past 15 years shows that employing only one sex-equity strategy rarely is sufficient to achieve the desired changes. Therefore, it is important to use multiple strategies that influence the entire district. Work toward equity goals can be organized around seven major strategy areas: promotional, staff development, affirmative guidance, curricular, administrative, classroom/school environment, and parent/community involvement. These strategies provide a way of organizing activities that can be used in the equity plan. Select activities from these strategy areas based on local needs.

■ Figure 14

Levels of Equity Activities



Beginning-Level Activities

These activities focus on compliance with non-discrimination laws and neutralizing stereotypes and bias. At this level, knowledge and understanding about sex equity are developed. Policies and practices of the school district, as well as each staff member, are reviewed for compliance with federal and state laws prohibiting discrimination. Course descriptions, guidance practices, the effect of prerequisites on enrollments, how the master schedule stifles or encourages nontraditional exploration, and other compliance issues are investigated, analyzed, and corrected.

Beginning-level activities neutralize existing stereotypes and bias by helping staff members become aware of and examine language usage, materials for students and staff, and student learning experiences and activities for sex bias and stereotyping. Activities such as assessments and staff inservices may be conducted. Problems of inequity, as well as the complexity of and interrelationship among equity issues, are identified. Administrative policy and structure that can support sex equity are developed. In addition, change agents are identified and support networks are formed.

Intermediate-Level Activities

At this level, positive and ongoing steps are taken to revise current practices and develop new strategies. Knowledge gained at the beginning level is applied to specific problems and issues. Intermediate-level activities include the

- creation of recruitment strategies aimed at nontraditional students to increase their knowledge of occupations, opportunities, and skills that previously were considered appropriate only for "traditional students."
- provision of role models in a variety of nontraditional occupations, including entry-level and advanced jobs.
- desegregation of the classroom environment to eliminate "one sex only" images and promote messages that encourage participation by nontraditional students.
- supplementation of the curriculum concerning the changing roles of females and males.

- examination and neutralization of forms of sex bias, especially communication/linguistic bias, by both teachers and students.

At the intermediate level, changes in thinking and awareness of the issues cause revision and supplementation. However, a pitfall could be encountered at this point. That is, failing to address equity in an all-encompassing manner can undermine even the best efforts to promote it. For example, a brochure developed to promote nontraditional classes to both males and females contains artwork that is stereotyped. This oversight reinforces and perpetuates the very bias the program is trying to neutralize.

In another example, an open house is held to provide students with an opportunity to preview courses and visit the classroom. When the students arrive, they see bulletin board displays that are biased and student projects that are traditional (for example, making only women's garments in a clothing class). Be aware of such potential problems and work to eliminate them.

Advanced-Level Activities

These equity activities focus on reconstructing efforts and actions to infuse new knowledge and skills for students based on changing roles, responsibilities, and conditions. This involves a conceptual shift or redefinition in school actions to embrace equity efforts through infusion. The entire educational program supports and ensures continuing attention to sex-equity efforts through infusion in programs, curriculum, and staffing. There is increased individual and organizational capability for problem identification and solution. This builds on the work done at the intermediate level. Some of the organizing questions to be concerned with include the following:

- Has the new body of knowledge on changing roles and sex-role stereotyping been incorporated into the educational program?
- Will the educational program give students skills for the future, or will it establish expectations for the sex and occupational roles and responsibilities of a bygone era?
- Do instructional objectives facilitate critical thinking about the impact of major social and economic changes on the individual, the family, and on work?

- Will students truly be prepared for the dual roles of work of the family and work in the paid labor force?
- Will both female and male students be prepared for the work partnerships of the future business world?
- Can trust be built between the sexes, leading to greater teamwork and productivity for business and industry?
- Will the reconstructed educational program lead to greater understanding and appreciation of both women's and men's experiences, needs, perspectives, values, and futures in the rapidly changing world of work?
- Will students feel free to enroll in courses previously considered nontraditional for their sex, and will they be prepared to accept and be supportive of nontraditional coworkers in the future?

Considerations Prior to Implementation

Before starting the implementation phase, consider the following advice from Amanda Smith in her book *New Pioneers: A Program to Expand Sex-Role Expectations in Elementary and Secondary Education*. The original text has been changed or expanded upon to accommodate the issues, concepts, and language used in this publication.

1. Equity is not simple and not concrete. Some people may believe it is and will approach actions from that perspective. There must be time for people to process the change that equity issues may present to them.
2. Start with problems people know they have. Begin by identifying equity problems people may not have identified, asking whether they, or others in their school, might welcome a new approach to
 - student achievement.
 - math avoidance for girls.
 - loss of talent where students of either sex avoid or are channeled away from inherent abilities.
 - work poorly done where either boys or girls are pressed into work for which they are unsuited.
3. Build on existing work, such as staff development, and infuse equity concepts

throughout existing work. Try to avoid approaching equity as a new task or initiative.

4. Look for opportunities. As you work with people, try to identify their concerns and then discover whether there are any opportunities in their interest area and professional specialty for helping people build equity-related competencies (for example, leadership development for principals or effective teaching techniques for educators). Seeking such opportunities is a positive approach with wider application than simply trying to eliminate bias.
5. Consider that people approach equity with differing views. Welcome and use controversy and sex-biased comments to get ideas out in the open, allowing them to process issues, feelings, and perspectives. As people express differing views, including anger, validate their feelings. Avoid taking their feelings personally. Involve the group whenever possible to allow them to process change and see another point of view.
6. Distinguish between sex discrimination and sex bias (see Figure 15). Discrimination is defined as that which is against the law. Anything illegal must be obvious, because you have to be able to prove it happened. Discussion of the law should be limited in duration but sufficient to make clear people's legal responsibilities and rights.

Bias is the unconscious underlying network of assumptions that say men and women are and should be different, not only physically, but also in their personalities, abilities, and occupations. We are all biased, even those of us paid not to be. Only a few of us intentionally discriminate.

Understanding bias leads to understanding how we unconsciously shape our students and ourselves. We can analyze how we bend other people out of shape to meet our preconceptions. We also learn to develop positive traits, such as independence in boys and nurturance in girls, that can be extended to everyone.

If bias is understood, it is likely people will see equity more positively. If they are given a “this is the law approach” they may fight every effort. Therefore, leap-frogging over discrimination to deal directly with bias may in the long run be the most effective way to comply with the law.

7. Understand first, act later. Never assume everyone shares, or even understands, the goal of equity. Discussion of sex bias—where it comes from, how to recognize it, how pervasive it is, what it does to people—should precede any effort to develop or commend specific practical strategies, or to persuade anyone to begin to take any sort of action. Remember that every member of your audience is a person first and a professional second, and that the issues you are discussing hit close to home in one way or another on a personal level. Pushing specific activities in an effort to “keep it simple” before misgivings are allayed may be perceived as “coming on too strong.” In any given session, provide information first, then allow time for reaction, questions, and anecdotes. Starting with discussion may reinforce previously held stereotypes. Keep work in the context of a planned approach to locally identified needs.
8. Keep a balanced approach. Include both males and females as leaders in discussion examples and on presentation teams. Illus-

trate points with anecdotes about both sexes or alternate female and male examples.

9. Never laugh at anyone. Fears of integrated rest rooms, lost femininity, or boys growing up homosexual if they play with dolls are real fears and should be answered seriously. Religious questions especially must be treated with respect.
10. Laugh as much as possible with others and at yourself. Use humor to help build commitment and allow people to work through feelings and concerns on equity issues.
11. Portray a positive view for promoting positive actions. Try to avoid the negative and the nonaction orientation. Provide something for participants to take with them, such as a handout, resources list, or activity.

Student Competencies and School Actions

Historically, as the methodology of equity developed, those involved in equity work developed checklists of what could be done. These checklists described actions teachers, counselors, and administrators could take to ensure equity; students were rarely mentioned. The actions mentioned in the checklists were very specific and were carried out in an isolated way. They usually were not part of an overall plan and were not based on identified student needs.

■ Figure 15

Attacking Discrimination	Understanding Equity Issues
attacks only the symptoms	addresses causes
addresses only those who actively discriminate	addresses everyone
creates defensiveness and hostility	reduces defensiveness; can even intrigue, excite, fascinate
encourages the “compliance” mentality: and minimal action	encourages positive investigation consistent with individuals’ own goals as educators
redresses wrongs	opens opportunities
appeals to women’s sense of outrage, to men’s sense of altruism or guilt	appeals to everyone’s sense of self-development and benefit
focuses mostly on girls and women	focuses on women and men equally

The strategies and activities in this equity model are aimed at the development of student competencies and school actions (see Figure 13 on pages 33 to 35 and Figure 16). Student competencies build the knowledge and skills that both male and female students need to develop economic self-sufficiency and achieve equal employment and life opportunities. The school actions describe the efforts in which schools can engage to provide equitable programs and environments.

Figure 13 identifies a number of sex equity-related student competencies and the strategies that address these competencies. School actions that generate a sex-equitable atmosphere and the strategies that support or create these actions are described in Figure 16.

Equity Strategies

The strategies and activities in a local equity plan comprise the program for action, which in turn will build student competencies through school actions. Thus is equity achieved (see Figure 17).

The strategies are organized in seven broad areas:

- Promotional (publicity, recruitment)

- Staff development (training and inservice on equity concepts and issues)
- Affirmative guidance (retention, career awareness, and information)
- Curricular (instructional methods, materials, course and program objectives)
- Classroom/school environment (physical integration, teacher-student interaction patterns)
- Administrative (policies, procedures, leadership)
- Parent/community involvement (reaching out to build support for students and schools)

When considering the strategies to be used in the local equity plan, keep in mind that the actions are most effective when implemented in a comprehensive, coordinated approach based on local needs. It is not enough to rely on one strategy area to achieve equity.

While considering the possible strategies, think about how they work together to inform students of life, career, and vocational options. Also consider who will be involved in carrying out the strategies.

The model described in this guide is based on involvement by individuals in a variety of roles and coordinated by an equity planning team. The strategy areas serve as a vehicle to help a variety of people conduct and implement equity actions.

School Actions and the Strategies that Apply

School Action	Strategy
<p><i>School</i></p> <p>The school will build an equitable environment for students by</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. finding and using materials that show the changing roles of men and women, both in the workplace and in the family. 2. designing information, awareness, and recruitment materials (for nontraditional classes), such as brochures, course description, and handouts, that encourage both males and females to enroll. 3. reviewing curriculum, content, strategies, and projects for appropriateness to both males and females. 4. eliminating or modifying materials or strategies that might reinforce bias and stereotyping. 5. collecting and analyzing enrollment statistics by course and program to determine patterns in male/female enrollments. 6. planning student activities that help female and male students work together cooperatively. 7. portraying both females and males in nontraditional as well as traditional roles during discussions, in educational materials, and in displays such as bulletin boards. 8. arranging for nontraditional role models, both male and female, to provide job-shadowing opportunities, to speak at career fairs or in classrooms, and to be mentors. 9. modifying teaching behaviors so that they encourage equity (for example, sex-fair, inclusionary language; equitable discipline; and equal attention and support to both sexes). 	<p>Promotional Classroom/School Environment</p> <p>Promotional Affirmative Guidance</p> <p>Staff Development Curricular Administrative</p> <p>Staff Development Curricular Administrative</p> <p>Staff Development Affirmative Guidance Administrative</p> <p>Curricular Classroom/School Environment</p> <p>Promotional Curricular Classroom/School Environment</p> <p>Promotional Affirmative Guidance Curricular Classroom/School Environment Administrative</p> <p>Staff Development Administrative</p>

Figure 16 (continued)

School Actions and the Strategies that Apply

School Action	Strategy
10. incorporating equity topics, such as sex discrimination, stereotyping, and bias, into regular course content and discussions whenever possible.	Curricular Classroom/School Environment
11. helping students to recognize sex discrimination, stereotyping, and bias in textbooks, curriculum materials, and media.	Curricular Classroom/School Environment
The school will practice equitable guidance techniques by	
12. publicizing current information on work force trends to point out the changing career choices available to both females and males.	Promotional Affirmative Guidance Curricular Parent/Community Involvement
13. providing realistic information about students' probable job futures (for example, most can expect to hold paying jobs, even if they marry and have families).	Promotional Affirmative Guidance Curricular Parent/Community Involvement
14. encouraging both young men and young women to enroll in courses that lead to realistic life and work futures.	Promotional Affirmative Guidance Curricular Parent/Community Involvement
15. reminding both boys and girls that mathematics, science, and technology will be required for most jobs in the future and that they should plan to include such courses in their schedules.	Promotional Affirmative Guidance Curricular Parent/Community Involvement
16. encouraging students to base their academic, career, and personal decisions on their abilities, informed interests, and values rather than on sex-role stereotypes.	Affirmative Guidance Parent/Community Involvement
The school will actively plan to recruit and retain non-traditional students by	
17. having in operation a plan that encourages students to enroll in and complete nontraditional classes.	Promotional Affirmative Guidance Administrative

School Actions and the Strategies that Apply

School Action	Strategy
18. initiating new and earlier opportunities for students to explore nontraditional options at the elementary and middle/junior high school levels.	Promotional Affirmative Guidance Curricular Administrative
19. supporting current and potential nontraditional students through support groups and contacts with role models and counselors.	Affirmative Guidance
The school will provide leadership for addressing equity in the school by	
20. developing and implementing an inservice program to help staff members become more aware of equity issues and actions that promote equity.	Staff Development Administrative
21. actively selecting women to serve in leadership roles, such as to chair departments and special committees and to facilitate leadership training sessions.	Staff Development Administrative
22. reviewing curriculum to ensure that both content and instructional materials are sex fair.	Staff Development Administrative
23. collecting and analyzing male/female staffing data to determine staffing patterns.	Administrative
24. monitoring class enrollments and paying particular attention to any class or program enrollment composed of more than 75 percent of one sex.	Affirmative Guidance Administrative
25. developing and implementing a district policy statement on sex equity.	Administrative
26. developing and implementing an equity plan, which is reviewed and revised once every two years.	Administrative
27. promoting equity and educational excellence with parents and community members through advisory committees, task forces, newsletters, and so forth.	Administrative Parent/Community Involvement
28. designing a master schedule that encourages sex-fair enrollment patterns (for example, a traditionally female class is not scheduled at the same time as a traditionally male class).	Administrative

Figure 16 (continued)

School Actions and the Strategies that Apply

School Action	Strategy
<p><i>Work</i></p> <p>The school will actively promote equity in education for employment programs by</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. promoting economic self-sufficiency and equal employment opportunities to students, parents, and community members through newsletters, school board members, and advisory meetings. 2. pointing out that wage discrimination exists between the sexes. "Typically female" jobs pay lower salaries than "typically male" jobs. 3. discussing with both male and female students job salaries and cost of living as they relate to career interests. 4. presenting to students, on a regular basis, nontraditional career options through preregistration sessions, career fairs, guest speakers, and career education materials. 5. providing inservice programs for all staff members on equity issues, including topics on current work statistics and family trends and how to provide a sex-equitable environment, curriculum, and philosophy. 6. offering introductory career courses at the upper elementary and middle/junior high school levels to encourage students to explore nontraditional options and familiarize themselves with the language and equipment involved in a particular occupation. 7. identifying and incorporating into the curriculum a new body of knowledge on changing male and female roles and the costs of sex-role stereotyping. 	<p>Promotional Parent/Community Involvement</p> <p>Promotional Affirmative Guidance Curricular</p> <p>Promotional Affirmative Guidance Curricular</p> <p>Promotional Affirmative Guidance Curricular Classroom/School Environment Parent/Community Involvement</p> <p>Staff Development Administrative</p> <p>Affirmative Guidance Administrative</p> <p>Curricular</p>

School Actions and the Strategies that Apply

School Action	Strategy
8. providing curriculum that gives students the skills they will need in the future and that forsakes the stereotyped and limited occupational expectations, roles, and responsibilities of a bygone era.	Curricular Affirmative Guidance
9. establishing instructional objectives in each area to facilitate critical thinking about the impact of major social and economic changes on the individual, the family, and on work.	Curricular Affirmative Guidance
10. preparing students for the dual roles of "work of the family" and work in the paid labor force.	Curricular Classroom/School Environment
11. encouraging both female and male students to have greater respect for traditional "women's work."	Curricular Classroom/School Environment
12. preparing both female and male students for the work partnerships of the future business world.	Curricular Classroom/School Environment
13. creating an environment that builds trust between the sexes which, in turn, will lead to greater teamwork and productivity for business and industry.	Curricular Classroom/School Environment
14. implementing a curriculum that promotes greater understanding and appreciation of both women's and men's experiences, needs, perspectives, values, and futures in the rapidly changing world of work.	Curricular Classroom/School Environment
15. planning instructional activities that provide students with broader, more flexible definitions of masculinity and femininity.	Curricular Classroom/School Environment Affirmative Guidance
16. creating an environment that lets students feel free to enroll in courses nontraditional for their sex and that prepares them to accept and support nontraditional coworkers in their future.	Curricular Classroom/School Environment
17. planning to recruit women and men for nontraditional teaching and administrative positions.	Administrative

Figure 16 (continued)

School Actions and the Strategies that Apply

School Action	Strategy
<p><i>Family</i></p> <p>The school will promote equity awareness with parents and the community by</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. informing families through parent-teacher organizations, newsletters, and school career days of current family trends and statistics and how they are changing. 2. providing current information on the labor market, career choices, and training needs of both males and females. 3. explaining how bias and stereotyping hurt both males and females in personal and family relationships. 4. encouraging parents to help their sons and daughters realize that they likely will have both a family and a career. 5. involving parents in their children's career planning. 	<p>Promotional Affirmative Guidance Curricular Parent/Community Involvement</p> <p>Promotional Affirmative Guidance Curricular Parent/Community Involvement</p> <p>Promotional Affirmative Guidance Curricular Parent/Community Involvement</p> <p>Promotional Affirmative Guidance Parent/Community Involvement</p> <p>Parent/Community Involvement</p>
<p><i>Self-Awareness</i></p> <p>The school will enhance equity awareness by</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. addressing the issue of equity seriously, as it affects the classroom and the learning that goes on there. 2. using sex-fair, inclusionary language in both written and verbal communication and encouraging students to do the same. 3. assisting students, faculty, parents, and community members in identifying work and family trends. 4. encouraging students of both sexes to participate in traditional and nontraditional activities. 	<p>All seven strategies</p> <p>All seven strategies</p> <p>All seven strategies</p> <p>Promotional Staff Development Affirmative Guidance Curricular Classroom/School Environment Administrative</p>

School Actions and the Strategies that Apply

School Action	Strategy
5. helping students understand equity issues and how those issues affect their lives.	Affirmative Guidance Curricular
6. examining classroom learning activities for sex fairness, and planning lessons that focus on increasing students' equity awareness.	Curricular Classroom/School Environment
7. inspecting instructional materials for sex-role stereotyping and sexist language and discussing such instances with students.	Curricular Classroom/School Environment
8. making a conscious effort to assign leadership and support roles equitably to girls and boys, both in and outside the classroom (for example, field trips).	Curricular Classroom/School Environment
9. creating the classroom to portray sex fairness using posters and other visual displays showing females and males in nontraditional and traditional roles.	Classroom/School Environment
10. directing class discussion in an equitable manner so that all students feel free to participate. Studies show that teachers give more attention to males, call on them more frequently, and respond to their answers with more positive rewards.	Classroom/School Environment
11. promoting cooperation and integration of girls and boys through activities that help students work together more effectively.	Classroom/School Environment
12. avoiding generalizations based on sex stereotypes (for example, "You drive like a woman.")	Classroom/School Environment
13. using a variety of examples showing men and women expressing a wide range of interests, feelings, and career choices.	Classroom/School Environment
14. promoting self-esteem and personal and social responsibility.	Affirmative Guidance Curricular Classroom/School Environment

■ Figure 17

Equity Strategies

