



Before reading the text check if you know the meaning of these words :

Context Indicate Variable Create Benefit

Where Are The Women In Math And Science

The former president of Harvard University upset many people when he explained why he thought there were fewer women than men in math and science jobs. He suggested that women may have less natural talent in these areas. He also argued that women spend more time with their families and fewer hours at their jobs than men do. Why are women who enter careers in science and math more likely to leave than men? Many people argue that ability and family commitment have nothing to do with it. They think that the educational context in which students learn math and science plays an important role.

For example, women in science, math, and engineering programs reported on a survey that their professors favored male students and preferred men's learning styles. Other studies show that in a typical science or math classroom, teachers call on male students more often.

Research indicates that men also respond to questions more confidently, quickly, and aggressively. Women say that, if called on at all, they are interrupted more often than men. Might social conditions like these create a context that drives women away from careers in the math and science fields? Some think that the most important variable affecting math performance is expectations.

Both girls and boys benefit from teachers who believe in their math abilities and expect them to do well. **Why** do you think there are more male scientists and engineers than female? **Should something be done** to promote gender equality in these fields? If so, what?

For Teachers :

Ask Students to read the text to get the main idea. Ask them to retell the story to their classmate. There are two important questions at the end of the text. Ask your students to think about them. You can have a discussion or assign a writing to them for the next session. Having a discussion may help them brainstorm and come up with ideas.

Debating the issue :

- A) The most important variable affecting whether someone goes into a career in math or science is interest, and boys are generally more interested in these subjects than girls.
- B) There are fewer women than men in math and science careers because girls do not have the benefit of high expectations and encouragement from teachers that boys have.
- C) The way girls are treated in math and science classes helps to create a context that discourages girls from pursuing scientific careers.
- D) There are fewer women than men in science and engineering careers because the way these subjects are taught does not highlight how using math can benefit people, which is something that girls often indicate is important to them.
- E) _____

Jot down a few quick notes before the discussion ↗

For Teachers :

Try monitoring the discussion asking them questions to rethink what they have already said; for example >>>

- You made a good point, but have you considered ... ?
- Can you show me evidence in the text that supports what you said ?
- That's very interesting . Can you add something to your reasons ?



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