

Inclusive Talk and Framing For Gender-Inclusive Biology Instruction

The language we use in the classroom sets the tone for how students will talk and think about gender, sex, and sexuality. Consider the connotations of specific words used for diverse bodies. Shifting from words like “disease” or “abnormality” to neutral language such as “variation” or “difference” can have real impact.

- These [short](#) and [longer](#) language guides can inform your search for inclusive and specific language. For example, instead of overgeneralizing that “men produce sperm,” using a specific phrase like “testes produce sperm” makes science discourse more precise.
- Make room in your curriculum to regularly collect student feedback about curiosity, interests, prior knowledge, and experiences, then respond through instructional changes.
- Learn [the history of how the fixed male / female gender binary](#)—in conjunction with [cultural models of heteropatriarchy](#)—was imposed on Indigenous peoples during colonization as part of the process of cultural genocide and colonial control. Many now take these narrow views of gender categories and roles for granted as “how things are” in the face of extensive natural and social science evidence to the contrary.
- Teach accurate information about sex and gender whenever they arise rather than teaching rules with exceptions.
- Proactively learn students’ names, pronouns, and any identities that they feel comfortable sharing. Offer [a form](#) students can complete at any time to update names and pronouns.
- [This webinar](#) offers an overview of how to teach gender-inclusive biology, tools from the [Gender-Inclusive Biology website](#), and how focusing on your and your students’ language can be a good way to start in this work.

Visit [this document](#) for recommendations for elementary school educators and [stemteachingtools.org/brief/76](#) for the associated STEM Teaching Tool practice brief.