

Stacey L. Kirby Toolkit: "What is Gender?"

Abstract

This toolkit offers resources and activities for students studying gender. The activities and discussion questions integrate the work of artist Stacey Kirby and her performance piece titled, "I AM." Students will have the chance to interact directly with archived materials from this performance.

Grade Levels

Grades 6-8

Subjects/Concepts

Gender Expression, Identity, LGBTQIA, Sexuality, Health, Gender, Nonbinary, Cisgender

Learning Objectives

- Students will be able to describe the difference between gender and sex.
- Students will investigate the ways that gender is presented and defined differently by individuals.
- Students will have an understanding of the gender spectrum.

Who is Stacey Kirby?

"Kirby is a queer, white-bodied, self-appointed civil servant from North Carolina who creates socially-engaged interactive performance art. Her performative interactions set within site-specific installations utilize bureaucratic forms, postures and language in vintage office environments to engage participants and community performers in questions around civil authority. Through humor and satire, Kirby reinvents the bureaucratic process in alternative, private and public spaces to elicit diverse dialogue about identity, community and human rights in the United States. Developed over the past 20 years, in more than 200 performances, with over 300 community performers and 10,000 participants, Kirby's work evolves with the physical and historical setting, political climate and participants' involvement at each location." ([Stacy L. Kirby](#))

Stacey's Work: "I AM"

"I AM is a performative interaction by Stacey L. Kirby that continues the conversation about civil rights and the validity of communities, families, and individuals throughout the United States. Kirby transforms bathrooms and alternative spaces into offices in order to explore gender identity and discrimination in response to the passing of House Bill 2 by the North Carolina Legislature on March 23rd, 2016 at 9:57 pm. During the performance, the U.S. Department of

Compliance Facility Officer processes applications for usage of the restroom facility." ([Stacey L. Kirby](#))

House Bill 2 (HB2) limited restroom access so that only those whose birth certificate designated sex matched the facility could use that restroom. For example, those whose birth certificate described them as "male" could only use the "men's" restroom. HB2 disregarded personal gender identity in favor of sex assigned at birth.

Stacey's performance asked participants to complete the form linked in "Activity Resources," where they indicate their own sex, gender, and then investigate their own perceptions about gender.

Terms to Know

[Biological Sex](#): Classification assigned based on chromosomes, hormones, and reproductive organs (typically male/female).

[Gender](#): Socially constructed labels based on societal expectations and norms assigned to the "masculine" and "feminine."

[Gender Roles/Stereotypes](#): A set of assumptions/behaviors/feelings assigned to the masculine and feminine gender binary by society. (Example: Girls like pink and dolls. Boys like blue and trucks.)

[Gender Identity](#): Someone's personal conception of how they experience and label gender.

[Gender Expression](#): How someone expresses their gender identity, typically through dress or pronouns.

[Gender Spectrum](#): The gender spectrum is a break away from the traditional binary (just man/woman or masculine/feminine). It is a continuum/spectrum between the masculine and feminine.

[Cisgender](#): When assigned birth sex corresponds with personal gender identity.

[Transgender](#): When assigned birth sex does not correspond with personal gender identity.

[Nonbinary](#): Term used for individuals who feel that their gender identity cannot be described using the gender binary (man vs. woman).

[Pronouns](#): Pronouns are a reflection of someone's gender identity. Common pronouns include: he/him, she/her, they/them, she/they, he/they, etc.

Activity Resources

- Stacey Kirby "I AM" Video: <https://vimeo.com/175259945>
- "I AM" Archived Forms: <http://cargocollective.com/staceykirby/I-AM>
- "I AM" Blank Form:
<https://uncgeducationaltoolkit.github.io/pdfs/kirbyartisttalk.pdf> (Page 5)
- The Gender Unicorn (Video): <https://youtu.be/YPNCzXYy2CE>
- Bill Nye on Sexuality and Gender Spectrum (Video):
<https://youtu.be/aQDBNJ3mPa0>
- The Gender Unicorn Graphic (Interactive): <https://transstudent.org/gender/>

Class Activity

[BEFORE VIEWING BILL NYE AND GENDER UNICORN VIDEOS]

1. Introduce Stacey Kirby and her piece titled, "I AM" (p. 3-4). Watch Kirby's video (p. 7).
2. Have the students fill out the attached form that accompanied "I AM," the Application for Restroom Facility Permit (p. 6). Give them the option to discuss and compare their answers with others (not required).
3. Now watch the linked Bill Nye and Gender Unicorn videos (p. 6). If any students would like to use the Gender Unicorn graphic, give them the opportunity to explore the sliding scales/gender spectrum for themselves (p. 6).

[AFTER VIEWING BILL NYE AND GENDER UNICORN VIDEOS]

4. Go over "Terms to Know" together to offer any clarification from the videos (p. 5).
5. Give the students another blank Application for Restroom Facility Permit. Have them fill it out again, this time considering what they have just learned (p. 6).
6. After filling out the form a second time, complete the discussion questions below (p. 8).

Discussion Questions

1. Compare your answers to the Stacey Kirby handout before and after watching the videos. Did your answers change? If so, how and why?
2. Define sex and gender. Did your perceptions of the two change after the videos? Where do you believe gender originates?
3. What are some examples of gender stereotypes and roles? How do these affect you daily?
4. If you are comfortable sharing, compare your Stacey Kirby handouts with your neighbor. Do you perceive gender differently? How are your perceptions similar or different?
5. Look at examples from Stacey Kirby's performance. How do the participants see gender differently/similarly to you? Compare/contrast perceptions.

Resources to Support LGBTQ+ Youth

Resources compiled by GLAAD (Gay & Lesbian Alliance Against Defamation) for transgender people and their families: <https://www.glaad.org/transgender/resources>

Resources by Gender Creative Kids, a charity that advocates for trans and nonbinary youth, to support kids and their families: <https://gendercreativekids.com/resources>

Resources for guardians to utilize with their kids about gender and sexuality:
<https://heymama.co/9-resources-for-parents-about-gender-and-sexuality-tohelp-your-kids-feel-radically-free-to-discover-their-identity/>

Resources compiled by the CDC for LGBTQ+ youth, as well as family and educators:
<https://www.cdc.gov/lgbthealth/youth-resources.htm>