

The Story of Sally Ride (Stereotypes and Inequality)



Level: Third/Fourth

This lesson plan will support you to deliver a lesson about the life and times of Dr. Sally Ride, which encourages pupils to think critically about inequality, discrimination, and stereotypes in a historical and contemporary framework.

This lesson plan accompanies The Story Of Sally Ride (Stereotypes and Inequality) Third/Fourth Level powerpoint slides.

Additional lesson activity ideas are provided at the end of this plan, including ideas for home or project work for pupils.

Curriculum for Excellence Links

Experiences and Outcomes	Benchmarks
<p>I can explain why a group I have identified might experience inequality and can suggest ways in which this inequality might be addressed.</p> <p>SOC 3-16a</p>	<p><i>Provides at least two simple explanations as to why a selected group might experience inequality, for example, gender, race/ethnicity, age, disability.</i></p> <p><i>Makes two or more suggestions of ways in which this inequality might be addressed.</i></p>
<p>I know that popular culture, the media and peer pressure can influence how I feel about myself and the impact this may have on my actions.</p> <p>HWB 3-46b / HWB 4-46b</p>	<p><i>Demonstrates respect and understanding of the diversity of relationships.</i></p> <p><i>Identifies and explains influence/impact of media, including social media on self-esteem and decision making.</i></p>
<p>By studying groups in past societies who experienced inequality, I can explain the reasons for the inequality and evaluate how groups or individuals addressed it.</p> <p>SOC 4-04a</p>	<p><i>Demonstrates the ability to provide a valid argument on a historical theme.</i></p> <p><i>Provides at least two valid opinions to support the argument.</i></p> <p><i>Draws at least three reasoned conclusions about the reasons for inequality.</i></p>
<p>Having critically analysed a significant historical event, I can assess the relative importance of factors contributing to the event.</p> <p>SOC 4-06a</p>	<p><i>Uses critical analysis to evaluate the relative importance of the factors which led to an historical event.</i></p>

LGBT Inclusive Education Learning Themes
Recognising and challenging gender stereotypes
LGBT past and present figures and role models

Equality Act Characteristics Covered
Sexual Orientation
Gender Reassignment
Sex

Learning Intentions

- Pupils will learn about gender stereotypes and the impact of gender expectations
- Pupils will learn about example/s of inequality experienced by women
- Pupils will learn about example/s of inequality experienced by LGBT people




Success Criteria

- I can give examples of gender stereotypes and can consider how they might be challenged
- I understand that I should not be limited by gender stereotypes and expectations
- I can provide an example of a role model who defied expectations and overcame inequality

Resources accompanying this lesson

- The Story of Sally Ride (Stereotypes and Inequality) Third/Fourth Level (Powerpoint Slides)
- UCTV - [Honoring Sally: Tam O'Shaughnessy Aboard the R/V Sally Ride](#) (YouTube Video)
- Sally Ride Biography Handout (PDF)

Lesson Plan

Powerpoint Slide	Teaching Notes
<p>The Story of Sally Ride</p> <p>Third and Fourth Level Stereotypes and Inequality</p> 	<p>Introduce the lesson, explaining to pupils that they will be learning about the life of Dr. Sally Ride, and considering the impact of gender stereotypes and some examples of inequality experienced by different groups of people.</p> <p>Begin the lesson by asking pupils whether they have heard of Sally Ride before.</p>
<p>By the end of this lesson, I:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Can give examples of gender stereotypes and can consider how they might be challenged.• Understand that I should not be limited by gender stereotypes and expectations.• Can provide an example of a role model who defied expectations and overcame inequality. 	<p>Discuss the Success Criteria with pupils.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Sally was born in Encino, Los Angeles on 26th May 1951.• From a young age, Sally was interested in maths and science.• She enjoyed playing American football, but her parents pushed her towards tennis - as they felt it was 'safer' for her. 	<p>Provide pupils with some background to Sally Ride's life.</p> <p>Highlight that, even from a young age, Sally experienced the impact and limitations of gender expectations because she was a girl - despite enjoying playing American football, her parents encouraged her to play tennis because they felt it was safer for her.</p>

- Sally achieved degrees in Physics, Astrophysics, and English from Stanford University - where she played for the tennis team, and became the number one women's singles player.
- She met champion tennis player Billie Jean King during her studies, who encouraged her to drop out and become a professional player!



Provide pupils with an overview of Sally's academic achievements - and highlight that she continued to excel at tennis, becoming the number one women's singles player at Stanford University.

She was so good that tennis superstar Billie Jean King encouraged her to give up her studies and pursue tennis full time - but she didn't take this advice.

- In 1977, as she was finishing her studies, Sally spotted an advertisement from NASA in the newspaper: they were recruiting for new astronauts, including women.
- NASA had a history of excluding women from its space programs. Astronaut John Glenn, said in the 1960s: "The men go off and fight the wars and fly the airplanes....The fact that women are not in this field is a fact of our social order."



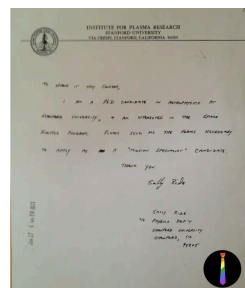
As she was completing her studies, Sally spotted a NASA advertisement in her university newspaper - they were recruiting new astronauts, including women.

Explain to pupils that NASA had a history of excluding women from their space programs. NASA required all candidates to have engineering degrees and to have graduated from jet pilot testing programs in the military. However, the military didn't allow women to be test pilots and so all applicants were men.

The **Woman In Space Program** was privately funded in the early 1960s. 13 women qualified - but never entered an aircraft, and the Woman In Space Program was cancelled in 1962.

Astronaut John Glenn testified about the cancellation. What do pupils think of this quote? What attitude does this show?

- Sally Ride applied to NASA in 1977 and was chosen to join the Astronaut Class of 1978, along with five other women.
- Sally said that she felt "a lot of pressure to know my assignments as well as the men on the crew knew theirs, to be seen as an integral part of the mission."



Sally wrote a handwritten letter to NASA in 1977 requesting an application to join the space program. She was accepted into the Astronaut Class of 1978.

She said that she felt pressure to know her assignments "as well as the men on the crew" in order to "be seen as an integral part of the mission". Why do pupils think this might have been the case?

Discussion

- Why do you think NASA had excluded women from their space programs?
- Can you think of any modern examples where women experience discrimination or expectations based on gender stereotypes?



Facilitate a short discussion with your class, and encourage them to consider the reflection questions on the slide.

Point out that women were historically excluded from NASA's space program, and by 1977 they were purposely advertising to recruit women - an example of an agency trying to address an area of inequality. Why do pupils think that NASA considered this to be an important step?

Point out that, as of 2020, 65 women have travelled to space with NASA - whereas 501 men have done so. Has this inequality been sufficiently addressed?

- Sally became the first American woman, and the first known gay or lesbian person, to travel to space in 1983.
- Before her flight, she experienced sexism from media reporters, who often belittled her. They asked if she would "weep" if a job went wrong, or if she was taking beauty products into space.



Sally was chosen to travel on the space shuttle Challenger and she went to space in June 1983 - becoming the first American woman, the youngest American, and the first known gay or lesbian person to travel to space!

Despite her achievements, Sally still experienced sexism and felt the impact of gender inequality. Before her trip, NASA engineers asked her to help them create a makeup kit because they assumed women astronauts would want that in space.

She was also asked by NASA engineers if 100 tampons would be the right number for her flight kit, for one week in space.



Sally experienced a lot of sexism from the media.

This video clip shows Sally at a NASA news conference responding to a question of whether she would “weep” if a job went wrong.

Discussion

- Has society moved on since Sally Ride travelled to space in 1983?
- Do you think that successful women, and women in the public spotlight, are still treated differently by media?



Facilitate a discussion with pupils once they have watched the clip of Sally at the NASA news conference.

Support pupils to consider the reflection questions on the slide.

Do pupils think that successful women, and women in the public spotlight, are treated differently by the media than they would treat men?

Corey Cogdell (photographed) is a two-time Olympic medalist.

What do you think about this headline?



Discuss this headline with pupils, and ask them to identify the issue and/or suggest how this could be rewritten.

Point out that Corey Cogdell is a two-time Olympic medalist and successful in her own right, but her achievements and individual success was overlooked by reporters.

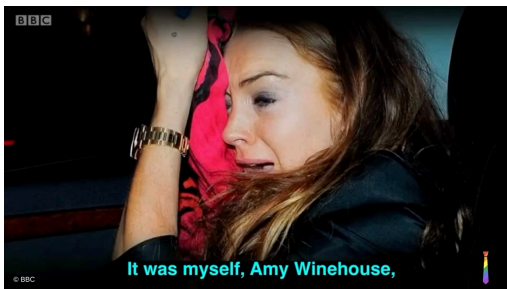
First Minister Nicola Sturgeon and then Prime Minister Theresa May had just met to discuss Brexit negotiations.

What do you think with this headline?



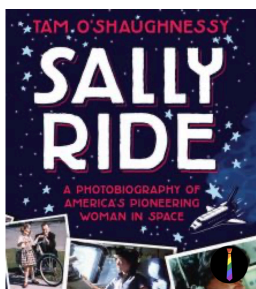
Discuss this headline with pupils, and ask them to identify the issue and/or suggest how this could be rewritten.

Ask pupils to consider whether a headline like this would have been written about male politicians?



This video clip from BBC shows how successful women, such as actors and musicians, and famous working class women are still treated differently by the media today.

- Later in life, and using her own experiences, Sally Ride worked to tackle these issues. She felt that gender stereotypes still affected girls in science and maths.
- She set up the Sally Ride Science program with her partner Tam O'Shaughnessy and they wrote children's books to help young people, especially girls, study science and maths.







Explain to pupils that Sally Ride understood the impact of gender stereotypes, and the inequality that women face in society - because she had experienced it directly.

She knew that stereotypes could be harmful, so she committed her later life to setting up science programs, and writing children's books with her partner, to support more young people - especially girls - into science and maths.

Point out to pupils that [UCAS data](#) from 2017/18 shows that 81% of university students studying Computer Sciences and 63% studying Mathematical Sciences are male.

Do pupils feel that gender stereotypes still play a role in selecting what subjects to pursue at school? Have they ever been told that certain subjects are “for boys” or “for girls”?

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sally died in 2012. Her relationship with her partner Tam was only publicly revealed in her obituary. Tam said that while they did not hide their relationship from loved ones, they chose not to be public about it because "... we didn't have confidence that corporate leaders would support us if they knew we were a couple." 	<p>Point out to pupils that Sally's relationship with her partner Tam O'Shaughnessy - who she wrote children's books with - was only publicly revealed after Sally died in July 2012.</p> <p>Tam said that they chose not to be public because they were concerned about being discriminated against by corporate sponsors, who might not have supported the work that they were doing.</p>
	<p>This clip shows Tam accepting the Presidential Medal of Freedom on Sally Ride's behalf in 2013, and discussing their relationship.</p>
<p>Discussion</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sally and Tam were concerned that if their relationship was public, corporate leaders might not support the work that they were doing together. Research from Stonewall in 2018 found that 35% of LGBT people have hidden who they are in the workplace out of fear of discrimination. Why do you think this is the case, and what could be done to fix it? 	<p>Facilitate a discussion with pupils about the clip that they just watched.</p> <p>Why do they pupils that Sally and Tam would have been worried about experiencing discrimination because they were a couple?</p> <p>Point out that research from 2018 found that 35% of LGBT people hid who they are from their employer out of fear of discrimination.</p> <p>Why do pupils think that this is the case? What can be done to fix this inequality?</p>
	<p>Finish this lesson with a quote from Barack Obama as he awarded Sally Ride's partner the Presidential Medal of Freedom in her honour.</p> <p>He said: "She inspired generations of young girls to reach for the stars and later fought tirelessly to help them get there by advocating for a greater focus on science and math in our schools," he said. "Sally's life showed us that there are no limits to what we can achieve."</p>

Additional Learning Activities and Opportunities for Assessment:

• Personal and Social Education Activity (1)

Ask pupils to consider a time when they, or someone they know of, has been treated differently because of their gender, and write their chosen example on a sticky note. Ask pupils to place their sticky note on the classroom board. Initiate a discussion about what could be done to address the examples of stereotypes and inequalities that pupils have provided.

• Personal and Social Education Activity (2)

Initiate a pupil-led discussion regarding how much progress has been made around equal opportunities for women, and social acceptance of LGBT people, since 1983 when Sally Ride first travelled to space.

Separate pupils into two groups, by numbering each pupil either 1 or 2. Allocate opposing statements to each group, and give pupils time to consider their statement, and any supporting facts, evidence, or opinions which they might propose during the discussion.

Group 1 Statement: Sally Ride would not have the same experiences today.

Group 2 Statement: Sally Ride would have the same experiences today.

Facilitate a discussion within the classroom. You may wish to set out some ground rules to ensure that pupils feel comfortable, and that any inappropriate behaviour or comments is not tolerated.

- **Art and Design Activity**

Pupils begin by researching Sally Ride, and choosing (1) an image of her that they like and (2) a quote either *from* her or *about* her that they like. Once they have chosen an image and a quote, task pupils to draw/paint/create a portrait, in their own style, of Sally Ride which incorporates both the image that they have chosen and the quote that they have chosen.

While working through a design process in response to a design brief, I can develop and communicate imaginative design solutions.	By working through a design process in response to a design brief, I can develop and communicate imaginative and original design solutions.
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EXA 3-06a

EXA 4-06a

- **Multimedia Research Project**

Task pupils with creating a Powerpoint (Social Studies); writing a persuasive essay (English and Literature); recording an audio podcast (Technologies); creating a piece of verbatim theatre (Expressive Arts: Drama) about the life and times of Sally Ride.

Having used digital technologies to search, access and retrieve information I can justify my selection in terms of validity, reliability and have an awareness of plagiarism.	I can use digital technologies to process and manage information responsibly and can reference sources accordingly.
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TCH 3-02a

TCH 4-02a

Further LGBT Inclusive Education teaching resources:

- lgbteducation.scot/resources