Gender Equity Issues in Technology Education:
A Qualitative Approach to
Uncovering the Barriers

by

Jennifer A. Lee

A dissertation submitted to the Graduate Faculty of
North Carolina State University
in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the Degree of
Doctor of Education

Technology Education

Raleigh, North Carolina

2008

APPROVED BY:

Dr. Theodore J. Branoff
Chair of Advisory Committee

Dr. William J. Haynie
Technology Education Program

Dr. Alice Scales
Graphic Communications Program

Dr. Catherine Warren
Women's and Gender Studies
Abstract

LEE, JENNIFER ANNE. Gender Equity Issues in Technology Education: A Qualitative Approach to Uncovering the Barriers. (Under the direction of Dr. Theodore Branoff.)

This study was conducted in order to discover existing barriers that discourage females from enrolling in technology education (TED) classes in high school and college and to offer suggestions on ways to overcome those barriers. A pilot study was conducted in 2005 at an International Technology Educator’s Association (ITEA) National Conference to help inform the researcher on the best way to collect data for the study. Participants for the pilot study included female technology education students from several major universities around the country. The pilot study was conducted in order to inform the researcher on the best data collection methods for the current study. As a result of the pilot study, qualitative research methods were utilized for the current study including a demographic survey, focus groups, small group interviews, and document analysis. The subjects for the current study were male and female students attending a major university who were enrolled in technology education courses, as well as a group of females who were not technology education majors. Three groups were interviewed for the study: one group was composed of females majoring in technology education; a second group was made up of females enrolled in an introductory graphic communications class who were not technology education majors; and the final group was a group of male technology education majors. Data analysis revealed possible explanations for and solutions to low female enrollment in technology education and technology-related fields, which could influence the way technology education and STEM classes are taught in the future.