This article is about the comparison of the reactions of children in the fourth grade, both from the time periods of 1975 and 1977, to the book “William’s doll.” The researchers wanted to see if children have become a little bit more aware about “gender equity” and their idea of “gender roles” (324).

If you don’t know anything about the book or haven’t’ heard of it, the story was mainly about a boy who wanted a doll. His father wanted to get him toys that were considered normal for boys. His brother and his neighbor made fun of him. The only person that supported him was his grandmother, who had got him the doll and explained to William’s father why it was all right to give him a doll.

The article states four theories that try to give and explanation of how children see the roles and ideas of gender. The theories are social learning, the theory of cognitive development, gender schema processing theory, and a theory that combines all of the previous theories.

The first portion of the article goes on saying that it is the people around the child that are responsible for influencing children’s views and ideas of gender. Although these sources should reassure children that it is all right to get out of or go against these gender-stereotyped norms, they discourage children from choosing sides or living life in a non-stereotypical manner. And this is evident in the kid of toys that parents buy their children’ William’s father rejected a doll for his boy, and pushed on a basketball and train as ideal toys for his son.

How it can be used:

One of the statements that would be helpful in the essay on gender is the quote that was describing the social learning theory and its idea that “children are influenced by their awareness of personally significant people and their daily activities…” (325). This statement could be tied into the prompt because it can push the idea that teachers are responsible for influencing the
children’s interpretation of gender considering that the children spend a significant amount of
time with their teachers in the classroom. At the same time this can be used to describe how it is
the parent’s responsibility to teach their children about gender.

Another quote that that can be useful stated that “Even the most open minded parents fall
into the habit of buying gender-stereotyped toys, thereby perpetuating gender stereotypes” (325).
This quote can be used against the idea that parents should be the only ones responsible for
guiding children’s interpretation of gender. It explains why it is also important for teachers to get
involved in their student’s ideas of the subject of gender.

One of the most important quotes in this portion of the article states that gender roles are
presented directly and indirectly though “language, behavior, and visual representations, and
they are major components necessary for the formation of perceptions relating to gender” (325).
This quote can be used either way to show how both parents and teachers can influence the way
children view gender.

Another useful quote in the article states that “For children, the possible sources of
information on gender-role expectations in society include parents and other family members,
peers, the media, and educational settings including personnel and instructional materials” (325).
This quote can be used to show how parents are not the only ones responsible for guiding
children’s interpretation of gender roles.

What does it all mean and implications for the classroom.

“Teachers send messages to children about gender through their own behavior, their language in
the classroom, and the documented differential treatment given to boys and girls.” This quote
can be used for people who are agreeing that teachers have the responsibility to help children
close the gender gap. This quote talks about how teachers sometimes send messages to their
children without even being aware that they do it. “Teachers, however, are in an ideal position to address children’s stereotypical perceptions of gender on a personal level in authentic situations where perceptions can be discussed openly.” This is another quote that captures the importance of a teacher figure in the classroom attempting to close the gender gap between boys and girls. It proves that teacher above any other role model, is fit to the job. In order to help our children feel more comfortable with gender issues the article discusses the possibility of presenting “situations to children that promote authentic discussion about gender perceptions.” These gender discussions can be directed the use of literature because it “affords students the opportunity to talk about issues in other people’s lives while maintaining distance from their own, teachers may want to seek out children’s books and develop consciousness-raising activities.” Boys and girls both go through a lot of emotional pain when kept or discourage from playing with non-traditional toys and activities. When boys desire objects that are “typically feminine” it can “lead to a distorted and unhealthy view of what it means to be male.” Teachers sometimes think that this only happens in the home, but it’s not true. Teachers are often guilty of being biased towards a certain gender and most are “unaware and typically deny that they perpetuate biased perceptions of males and females.” We as teachers even forget that we make gender biases in the classroom and it could be used as an argument that we need to set an example. If we deny that we do that, then it becomes dangerous for our students, because we become unaware that we are hurting their feelings or being insensitive.