

Queen Bees and Wannabes: Gender Equity in the Classroom

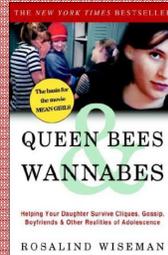
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Background on Boy World/Girl World

Boy World

- Boys' behavior, choices, and personal boundaries are largely dictated by their definition of masculinity.
- Most boys won't reveal their feelings and problems to their male friends. If they reveal their problems to anyone, it's usually to a female friend.
- Most boys aren't violent. A few are and the rest have no idea how to stop them.
- The more a boy believes in gender stereotypes, the more vulnerable he is to perpetrate violence.
- The boy honor code values loyalty and silence over everything else.
- Just like girls, boys are often intimidated by and in awe of the leader of their group.

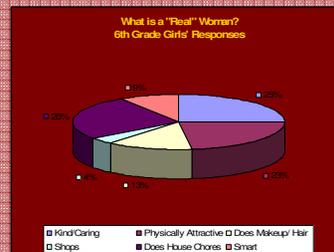
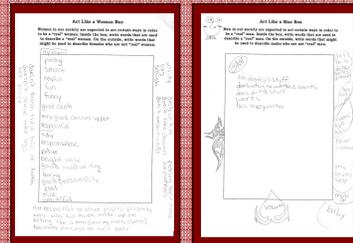


Girl World

- A clique is defined as a group of girls who are close friends.
- Cliques are worse in sixth, seventh, and eighth grade.
- The power of cliques silence girls because those in positions of power will not take responsibility for their actions, and those not in power fear the consequences of speaking out in public.

Gender Equity Survey

- Three groups of 6th grade students in Colfax, Wisconsin were asked the question: what is a "real man/woman?" The results of this survey appear below.
- The study group consisted of a limited sample of three classes of sixth grade students with varying numbers of males and females.
- Each student was given one copy of the "Act Like a Man/Woman Box" (pictured to the right).
- Students were given no cues as to what answers may be appropriate in order to obtain candid answers.

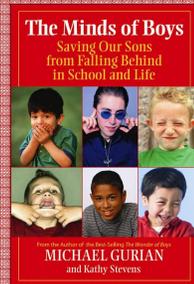


Resources

- Sadker, D. (2007). *Teachers, Schools, and Society*. Boston, MA: McGraw-Hill.
- Sadker, M. & Sadker, D. "Education for Equity" Workshop.
- Gurian, M. (2007) *The Minds of Boys: Saving our Sons from Falling Behind in School and Life*. Jossey Bass.
- Wiseman, R. (2002) *Queen Bees and Wannabes*. Three Rivers Press.

Adolescent Brain Activity

- Boys and physical learning
 - Boys have more dopamine in their bloodstream which can increase impulsive behavior.
 - They also process more blood flow in the cerebellum, the area of the brain that is associated with "doing" and physical movement.
 - These two factors are contributed to boys' tendency to learn less than girls when exposed to instruction without physical movement.
 - Boys are more likely than girls to connect learning to physical movement.
- The corpus callosum (the connecting tissues between the two hemispheres of the brain) of boys is shown to be up to 25 percent smaller than that of girls. This greater amount of connection in the brain allows girls to multitask much better than their male counterparts.
- Girls' frontal lobes are generally more active than boys and develop at earlier ages. Because of this, boys are less able to avoid impulsive behavior and will act out more often in the classroom.
- Girls also exhibit advanced development of the language centers of the brain. In general, girls tend to use more neural pathways and brain centers for word production and expression of experience, emotion, and cognition through words than do boys.
- Hormonal differences in boys have been shown to naturally learn better through action response and competition versus verbal communication.
- Boys use less of their brain for thinking, use 15 percent less blood flow to the brain, and are set up to use less multi-tasking than girls. Therefore, boys typically do better with focusing on one task at a time coupled with a short break between tasks. Multi-tasking can cause boys to become frustrated which leads to more behavior outbursts than comes from girls.



Strategies for Creating a Gender Equitable Classroom

- Call on an equal number of boys and girls when asking questions.
- Increase wait time to 3-5 seconds before calling on students.
- Distribute students evenly by gender in your classroom.
- Encourage girls to join you in the front of the room for demonstrations.
- Discipline the students equally when the misbehavior is identical.
- Praise both boys and girls for the appearance and neatness of their work.
- Offer specific feedback to both genders on their work, including praise, criticism and remediation.
- School textbooks and supplemental resource materials tend to be filled with male protagonists and stories. Teach lessons that portray an equal number of male and female protagonists and stories.
- Use precise, clear feedback and distribute it fairly.

Funding

- Differential Tuition
- Office of Research and Sponsored Programs
- Department of Curriculum and Instruction