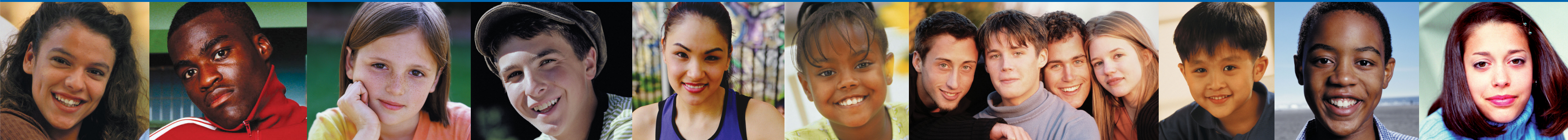


gen·der (jĕn' dər)

Sexual identity, especially in relation to society or culture; the condition of being male or female.

The Trouble with Boys



The Trouble with Boys

Recent studies into boys and education are not encouraging. Seventy percent of students diagnosed with learning disabilities are male. Eighty percent of high-school dropouts are boys. And the percentage of male college students in the U.S. has now dropped to just 42 percent (down from 50 percent in 1996). What is the trouble with boys? Or is the trouble with the nation's education system, a system that some say is geared toward girls?

Researchers are now beginning to find differences in the brains of boys and girls, along with key differences in the way they learn. Many say the time has come for the education system to acknowledge these differences, and adapt to them. "Fifteen years ago we realized that the classrooms didn't work for girls in terms of math," says Michael Gurian, author and family therapist. "We said, 'We've got to change the classroom to fit the girls.' Well, that's what we have to do with the boys now."

This special program was produced by the Emmy® award-winning television and education team at CWK Network, Inc.

RESOURCE GUIDE



Connect with Kids

- Fact Sheet
- Parent Tip Sheet
- Grades 3-5 Lesson Plan
- Grades 6-8 Lesson Plan
- Grades 9-12 Lesson Plan
- Discussion Questions
- Self-Reflection Questions

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Tolerance	Trustworthiness



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Connect with Kids

The Trouble with Boys

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This resource guide is designed to accompany the video entitled *The Trouble with Boys*. This resource guide includes:

- Fact Sheet
- Parent Tip Sheet
- Grades 3-5 Lesson Plan
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- Self-Reflection Questions



Connect with Kids



Connect with Kids

For the
Classroom

The Trouble with Boys

Self-Reflection Questions

Students can reflect on what they've learned after viewing the show. Use these questions as a guide for discussion.

1. The video talks about the importance of human relationships and connections to others being a cure for a lot of these problems. Who plays an important role in your life? What is the importance of this connection for you?
2. Why is it important to have hope? What are some ways that you create hope in your life?
3. Is there someone in your life that has excelled despite challenges? How has that impacted you?
4. To reach our potential we need to discover and recognize our strengths, what are some of your strengths? How do you or can you nurture them?



Connect with Kids

The Trouble with Boys

Fact Sheet

WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW

Boys are trailing behind girls in school in a number of academic areas. According to the 2000 National Assessment of Education Progress (National Center for Education Statistics, 2000) and Dr. Michael Gurian of the Gurian Institute, the following statistics should raise concerns for everyone:

- Two-thirds of all learning disability diagnoses are for boys.
- Seventy percent of all Ds and Fs on report cards go home in boys' backpacks – not girls.
- Ninety percent of school discipline referrals are for boys.
- Eighty percent of all Ritalin takers are boys.
- Eighty percent of all school dropouts are boys.
- Fewer than 40 percent of college students are currently male.

Girls in general are surpassing boys in school in all subjects except math and science, and even that gap has closed significantly in the past few years.

When education lapses and youth choose dropping out over staying in school, they are at risk for a number of negative outcomes, including an increased likelihood of violent and criminal behavior, the possibilities for good employment being dramatically lowered, self esteem drops, and causing suffering among families and loved ones. Youth who drop out are more likely to depend on government welfare and contribute less to society.

We need to rethink how we teach young people and how we approach the learning differences of girls and boys. Teachers, coaches, parents and all adults involved with both genders need to be aware and of the different learning styles and teaching strategies that work with boys and girls.

WHAT YOU CAN DO

We all know that boys are different from girls, but recent studies of the brain are now able to demonstrate how the brain structures and functions of girls and boys are “wired differently.” Different wiring means they learn differently. To help our boys be successful, educators need to recognize how boys and girls learn differently and incorporate these changes into classrooms and schools.

Michael Gurian offers these suggestions to teachers to make their classrooms more “boy-friendly:”

- Learn ways to include physical movement in the curriculum.
- Don't eliminate recess! If punishment is necessary, provide active service alternatives such as cleaning the cafeteria or some other task requiring physical activity. Try to avoid idle time.
- Help boys become interested in language arts by adopting more male-friendly reading choices, including personal reading choices on topics that interest them.
- Become more project-oriented in teaching rather than standard and strand-oriented. Include projects that meet the national standards, not just worksheets.
- Provide male mentors. Boys' brains respond strongly to one-on-one relationships.

And Michael Thompson, author of the book and the PBS documentary “Raising Cain” offers one more very important suggestion: Allow boys to express their sense of humor and help them find appropriate ways and times to do so.



Connect with Kids

The Trouble with Boys

Fact Sheet (cont.)

RESOURCES

Education World, "Helping Boys Learn: An Interview with Michael Gurian"

Educational Leadership, "With Boys and Girls in Mind", Nov. 2004

The Gurian Institute

PBS Parents



Connect with Kids

The Trouble with Boys

Discussion Questions

Students, educators and families can discuss gender differences after viewing the show. Use these questions as a guide.

OPEN

1. Why do you think colleges have higher female enrollment these days?
2. Do you think the current education system favors girls? Why or why not?

PART ONE

1. How has brain research shown that boys' and girls' brains are different? What specific examples do the documentary give?
2. What are the implications of these studies for schools, parents and other concerned adults?
3. How do the girls' classes differ from the boys' classes at Cravens and Foust Elementary Schools? How do you think you would fare in a classroom like these?
4. How can your school change to accommodate the learning differences between boys and girls? Will this shortchange one group over the other? Explain.
5. Do you think schools will listen and respond to the research in this documentary? Why or why not?

PART TWO

1. Describe Eric DeGreeff's story. Do you think his parents did the right thing? Explain your answer.
2. Why do parents of one out of ten males readily turn to Ritalin to help "antsy" boys?
3. What methods of teaching seem to work for many boys who might be considered ADD? In your opinion, is this a better route than taking Ritalin? Why?

PART THREE

1. What does the video mean when it says the reason school doesn't work for many boys in America is a problem of hope? Explain your answer.
2. Why do many dropouts say they don't see the point of finishing school?
3. What do gangs offer dropouts that schools do not?
4. How can we give hope to young people?

CLOSE

1. How is Travis Murphy a good example of a boy who has 'discovered his strengths'?
2. Do you agree or disagree with the last statements of the documentary? Explain your answers.
 - a. Boys *do* learn differently ... the wiring in the their brains is different
 - b. They'll do better in school if we can find ways to teach them that accommodate their learning styles ... different from girls ...
 - c. The real trouble with most boys isn't them ... it is us.
3. What did any of the adults in the documentary do that you thought was helpful?



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The Trouble with Boys

Grades 9-12 Lesson Plan

Who Are You In School? (cont.)

5. After the class has developed questions, break them into pairs (use your discretion for pairing students) and give them about 10 to 15 minutes to conduct the first interview, write their responses and give a verbal summary to the person they just interviewed.
6. At the end of the interview, the interviewer will need to tell the person what he/she has learned about him/her in the interview.
7. Then have them switch roles and the other person conducts an interview.
8. When they are done, ask: *Based on the information you just found out, what is the one thing you admire most about the person you interviewed? Take a moment and write a sentence or two about it at the bottom of your interview summary.*
9. Depending on your classroom population, you might want to discuss their findings, have them make presentations to the class or have them write up their interviews in paragraph form.

EVALUATION

- Did each student understand the success stories from the video?
- Did students participate in creating interview questions?
- Were students able to create original questions during the interview?
- Did each student complete an interview and the final project?

For the
Classroom



Connect with Kids

The Trouble with Boys

Parent Tip Sheet

WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW

What parents and other interested adults have always known is now being explained by scientific studies of young male and female brains – boys act differently than girls. In general, boys are more physical and girls are more verbal, girls express their feelings and boys “act tough,” and girls like to play dress up while boys like to engage in make-believe battles.

Because of their chemical and structural differences, most girls can function well in school where students sit or listen for long periods of time, while most boys need physical activity in order for their brains to operate at maximum levels for learning. Parents need to make sure their boys – and their girls – are receiving enough time to move around during the school day, whether that be in P.E. class, recess or during regular class time. Children should be encouraged to move around after school and engage in some physical activity and exercise before starting homework. This will especially help boys concentrate on homework tasks later and promotes good healthy behavior.

Michael Thompson, author of RAISING CAIN, offers these suggestions to parents of boys:

- Give boys lots of opportunities to be physical. Get out and play, run around and expend that physical energy. It will invigorate their brains as well as keep them in shape.
- Help boys find things that interest them and things they absolutely love to do. Provide them with opportunities to learn and practice activities in which they are interested.
- Make sure there are strong male role models and mentors in your boys’ lives. Find a good neighbor, a coach, a teacher, a church leader, a big brother program, a co-worker or someone you respect and KNOW WELL in your

community. Show your children how you have made connections with people you respect and enlist them as role models.

- Read aloud with your boys and have them read to you. Allow them to select the reading material and discuss what you have read.
- Help your boys learn to recognize and talk about feelings. A lot of good discussion can come out of playing a game of catch – keep up the physical to get to the verbal.
- Ask your boys to help you solve problems. It builds skills and shows you respect their ideas and opinions.
- Praise them, be interested in their lives and what interests them, and love them.

RESOURCES

Education Leadership, November 2004, Closing Achievement Gaps, “With Boys and Girls In Mind” by Michael Gurian and Kathy Stevens

Newsweek, “The Trouble with Boys”

PBS Parents

Raising Cain by Michael Thompson, 1999, New York, The Ballantine Publishing Group



Connect with Kids

For the
Classroom

The Trouble with Boys

Grades 9-12 Lesson Plan

Who Are You In School?

INTRODUCTION

Research shows that reasons for youth dropping out vary, but they include not feeling connected to school, not seeing a long-term purpose for staying in school and not experiencing success in the classroom.

Students in this lesson will have an opportunity to interview each other to discover reasons for staying in school and to learn about their peers' strategies for being successful in school.

OBJECTIVES

Students will ...

- Analyze the successes of students in the video and compare them to their own lives.
- Develop questions and interview a classmate about their school experience.
- Determine, from the interview, one thing they admire about the person.
- Summarize the interview and present to the class in oral or written form.

MATERIALS

- Black/white/green or smart Board
- Paper and pencils
- *If possible:* Internet access to the StoryCorps website: www.storycorps.net. NOTE: Previous experience with developing interview questions is helpful. StoryCorps is an excellent resource for interview questions. Go to the section entitled "Question Generator."

PROCEDURE

1. Discuss the examples of boys in the video who are successful in schools despite the odds against them. They have stayed in school because ...
 - a. They discovered their strengths.
 - b. They had mentors or people who gave them lots of attention and helped them succeed.
 - c. They had teachers or an entire school that changed its way of teaching to better meet their learning needs.
 - d. They found hope and goals for the future.Say to the class: *"Whether you are a boy or a girl, any of these strategies can help you succeed."*
2. Say to the class: *Think for a moment about your own school experience. The mere fact that you are here in school means something. What keeps you in school? Have you discovered your strengths? Who are the people that have helped you along the way? What are your goals for the future? What goes on in your world that makes you believe that school is important?*
3. Explain that their assignment will be to interview a classmate to find out why that person has stayed in school and how he/she has been successful in school in any way. They will ask questions and take notes on the answers.
4. As a group, develop at least eight questions they can use to start their interviews, and encourage them to create more. Remind them that these questions should elicit stories, not just "yes" and "no" and one-word facts. Write the class' questions on the board. Remind them that an interviewer not only asks the questions that he/she has prepared ahead of time, but creates more questions based on the answers he/she receives.

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Connect with Kids

The Trouble with Boys

Grades 6-8 Lesson Plan

Gender-Friendly Classroom *(cont.)*

5. Have each pair present their creation to the class. When all the presentations are done, have the group determine which ideas would really work in the classroom. Ask: *What can be implemented without spending money? Which would need more funds? What can we try?*
6. If possible, have the class vote on the changes and rearrange the room according to the gender-friendly design. Let the class “live with it” for a period of time and then evaluate its success. Have you truly developed a “gender-friendly” space? Why or why not?

EVALUATION

- Did each student participate in the discussion?
- Did students understand the concept of a “gender-friendly classroom”?
- Did each student help create an original design?
- Did each student present his/her creation?
- Did all students participate in reorganizing the classroom?

For the
Classroom



Connect with Kids

The Trouble with Boys

Grades 3-5 Lesson Plan

I’m Good At ...

INTRODUCTION

In the documentary, students flourished when they found and developed their skills and talents. In this lesson, students will create a list of the things they are good at and brainstorm with their classmates what kinds of jobs and careers match up with the items on the list. Students will engage in an art activity to create a visual representation of their interests and the related skills and activities required of that job.

OBJECTIVES

Students will ...

- List their skills.
- List the things they like to do.
- Identify the jobs or other activities that require those skills.
- Create an art collage predicting what they will be when they grow up and the skills they will need to continue developing.

MATERIALS

- Paper
- Pens/pencils
- Magazines
- Glue
- Scissors

PROCEDURE

1. On a sheet of paper, have each student write down three things he or she does well. This could be activities such as drawing, making people laugh, writing neatly, playing first base, surfing, ballet, or math. Go around the room and ask them to share at least one thing from their lists with the class.
2. Of the three things they listed, ask: *Which is your favorite? Which one could you do for a long time? Why? Do all three things go together, or are they things they do separately?*
3. Break the students into groups of three or four. Each group must think of jobs that include the things that each student in the group does well. For example, if Safi wrote she draws, reads and sings well, the group might come up with a list that includes drafting, illustrator, a professional singer, a book editor, etc. If Tomas can lift weights, skateboard and run fast, he might look at jobs such as a professional athlete, a coach, a skateboard instructor, a furniture mover, a construction engineer, etc. The jobs can relate to one thing on each list or all three. Each person in the group should write down all of the jobs that relate to his/her skill list.
4. After an appropriate amount of time, each person is to pick one job from the list and create a collage that defines this particular job. Students can use pictures and words to describe and show the career position and what kinds of skills it takes to be successful.
5. Each student then needs to answer the following question somewhere on their art activity: “Based on what I can do now, what would I like to be when I grow up and what do have to do and learn to get there?” They will present their art to the class.

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Connect with Kids

The Trouble with Boys

Grades 3-5 Lesson Plan

I'm Good At ... *(cont.)*

6. Make sure you mount their artwork in the classroom, and, if possible, take their pictures during the presentations.

EVALUATION

- Could students list their skills and the activities they enjoy doing?
- Could they find things they do well?
- Did each student participate in a group?
- Did each student complete an artistic representation of the assignment?
- Did each student present his/her final project to the class?

For the
Classroom



Connect with Kids

The Trouble with Boys

Grades 6-8 Lesson Plan

Gender-Friendly Classroom

INTRODUCTION

The latest research shows that boys and girls thrive in different types of learning environments and settings. In this lesson, students will have the opportunity to redesign their classroom to make it more "gender-friendly." They will then define what "gender-friendly" means from both a male and female perspective and discuss what it takes for both to function successfully together.

OBJECTIVES

Students will ...

- Define gender and gender-friendly environment.
- Observe their classroom and analyze how it appeals to each gender.
- Design a gender-friendly classroom.
- Cooperate with the group to create a final redesign and/or reorganization of the classroom.
- Work cooperatively with the teacher and other students to implement the design.

MATERIALS

- The classroom itself
- Paper, pens, markers, colored pencils, crayons, etc.
- Magazines that can be cut up
- Scissors, glue
- Poster board/large paper
- Possible funds or donations to meet new design criteria as set by class

PROCEDURE

1. After watching the video, discuss the idea of gender with the class. Ask: *Do girls really think and learn that differently from boys? What have you observed in school that would lead you to hold this opinion? How do schools and teachers support your opinion?*
2. Now ask them: *"Do you consider the classroom you are in now more acceptable and appropriate for girls or boys. What do you see in particular that is more gender friendly to girls? To boys? Why?"*
3. Have them break into same-gender pairs. Their assignment is to first analyze the classroom for gender-friendly spaces, supplies and general set-up. What is good for girls in the room? What is good for boys? What is good for both?
4. The second part of the assignment is to design a classroom that would be more gender-friendly for both groups. They can do this by drawing a picture of the room or by making a model of their ideal room. In their design, they should focus on using the supplies and furnishings that are currently in the classroom, but they can also get creative and add some additional items they believe would make the room more gender-friendly. They may move furnishing and items around – in their picture/design – any way they would like, as long as they can discuss why this reorganization would be more gender-friendly. Each pair must create a visual of their design, either drawing it by hand or using pictures from magazines to illustrate their ideas or by creating a model.

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