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So Gender Does Matter After All — Even in the Classroom

Friday, September 16, 2005

Newsweek reports that educators are finding that boys and girls learn differently - leading to a reconsideration of educating boys and girls together in the same classroom. In "[Boy Brains, Girl Brains](#)," reporter Peg Tyre lays out the story — and the controversy:

Three years ago, Jeff Gray, the principal at Foust Elementary School in Owensboro, Ky., realized that his school needed help—and fast. Test scores at Foust were the worst in the county and the students, particularly the boys, were falling far behind. So Gray took a controversial course for educators on brain development, then revamped the first- and second-grade curriculum. The biggest change: he divided the classes by gender. Because males have less serotonin in their brains, which Gray was taught may cause them to fidget more, desks were removed from the boys' classrooms and they got short exercise periods throughout the day. Because females have more oxytocin, a hormone linked to bonding, girls were given a carpeted area where they sit and discuss their feelings. Because boys have higher levels of testosterone and are theoretically more competitive, they were given timed, multiple-choice tests. The girls were given multiple-choice tests, too, but got more time to complete them. Gray says the gender-based curriculum gave the school "the edge we needed." Tests scores are up. Discipline problems are down. This year the fifth and sixth grades at Foust are adopting the new curriculum, too.

Then again, some within the educational establishment claim that calls for single-sex classrooms are "part of a long history of pseudoscience aimed at denying equal opportunities in education."

The differences between boys and girls are profound. Most classrooms are girl-friendly and largely feminized in culture. Boys think differently, communicate differently, and are incentivized differently. Young boys cannot sit quiet and still for long periods of time. Their concentration patterns are very different from those of girls — and they know it. Resisting an acknowledgement of these differences requires a tremendous capacity for denying the obvious.

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