

17 July 2000

David Raj
PO Box 812
Alice Springs NT 0871

Dear Dr Nelson,

Sometime ago I heard you on ABC Radio National asking for listeners views on why boys are not doing as well as they should. I am a teacher in a secondary school and here are my views.

1. There are significantly more female teachers than male teachers in the system. To those boys who do not live with their fathers, a male role model is not available at the school. There appears to be a definite bias against recruiting male teachers in all levels. Policy makers (often feminists) are keen to see equal number of men and women in Maths/Science area (often with detrimental effects, as there have been very very few women teachers who are competent in this area)but are happy to overlook the sex imbalance in other subjects.

2. The importance of subjects in which boys traditionally do well is slowly being downgraded. I'm talking about Maths, Physics, Chemistry and General Science. In many schools, equal time is allotted to Maths and Drama or PE or Cooking aka Home Economics or Home Science. I know of places where Maths and Physics syllabi are watered down so that girls can "catch up". More and more 'touchy, feely' subjects are entering the curriculum and boys are encouraged and coerced to do these.

3. Boys from a young age are told to modify their behaviour to be more like girls. Reasoning and thinking give way to feeling and emotions. Science gives way to pseudo-science.

4. Teacher Training courses such as Diploma in Education contain units which are totally useless in the teaching world, but discriminate against Maths/Science teachers who are predominantly male. These units go by vague titles such as Education Theory I and Education Theory II and so on and require a lot of essay writing, arguing and counter-arguing, a skill that's often foreign to Maths/Science teachers. Many potentially good Maths/Science teachers, predominantly males, find these units a major unnecessary hurdle. Many give up after the first few weeks. I can honestly say whatever educational theories I learned in my Education Diploma went out the window on the first day of my teaching.

5. There's a constant portrayal in the media and in the community of all men being rapists, sexists, violent and drunks. Not much future for boys to look forward to and some give up too early.

6. I suspect a lot of policy makers in education and syllabus modifiers are women, frequently feminists, whose only aim is to advance girls' education. If men do not agree with their views they are branded sexists and their views marginalised.

Yours sincerely,
David.