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I am writing a submission to the enquiry to Boys in Education. I am a Primary School teacher at in Geelong, Victoria. My classroom is based around treating boys and girls differently in the classroom. Not necessarily for behaviour, but the type and how I get the students to produce their work.

I think that the biggest problem for boys is the structure of the school and the classrooms that were designed 50-100 years ago. Some boys are certainly in trouble more because they are out of their seat or would like to be more active. This in turn creates labelling of these students and as a result the self esteem of these students is diminished. However, I believe in some cases students can be more productive out of their seat than in their seat. I am convinced that most boys learn better when they are walking around the room interacting with other students and creating.

The rule in most classrooms and schools is not to get out of your seat. The problem with that is, what if the students you are sitting with at that time don't have the answers or interests at that time? The boys become frustrated and that is the end of their learning. For most schools, this is extremely sensible in areas where there are behaviour problems. However, the solution, could be an exciting and engaging classroom where the students have some control over the curriculum. This is the push in Middle Years at the moment. Secondary teachers especially are far too worried about teaching their area of expertise and not looking at the individual student as a person with their own particular interests.

Many classrooms I believe are boring, just look at the amount of photocopying teachers do . Generally these activities are too easy and not challenging. I must add that teachers have enormous time constraints and therefore resort to the most efficient preparation.

In my classroom I have a money system where the students earn fake money. It began by doing jobs to make money and I was using the money as positive reinforcement and now the students are creating their own businesses. From this I run an integrated unit against all learning outcomes to try and get their reading, writing and mathematics out of them. For the entire class I set contracts where the students choose from activities.

The girls will finish these set tasks because they are well organised and always willing to please. If the boys choose not to work from the contract and work on their business I do not punish them, but find a similar learning outcome in their business activity down the track. The problem in most classrooms, is that the students have no choice in the curriculum. Boys want to move around to discuss ideas, create not complete work which is irrelevant to their own stimulation. The idea of businesses in the classroom has been phenomenal. One of the most important things is "that education is not the filling of a pail, but the lighting of a fire". I believe the way my classroom operates, the lighting of the fire has

exploded. This is the answer to the education of boys in general. To get them engaged. I have samples of work that I have used for my review this year that is the result of the students creation and not the curriculum of the teacher. Some of the businesses the boys created were library's, stamp collections, newsletters, magazines, cards, animals, paper aeroplanes etc. With the contract system I find there is a problem with time management, especially for the boys. However, when it comes to business, there is no problems with time management. I use focus group teaching to ensure that the boys have the necessary skills in language. If you would like further information about my beliefs please email me back .

Thankyou for your time Scott Thompson