

Submission to House Committee on the Education of Boys

Motivation of boys at school

What motivates boys to behave in a certain manner and not in another?

Self image is everything

How is self image formed?

Personal qualities

Position in peer group

Other less important factors, eg Dad's car

Back in the bad old days when we all got report cards with marks and we all knew who was ahead of who in each subject, there was a fair bit of unhealthy competition between boys (and girls - don't want to be beaten by girls). Boys tried harder, because academic achievement was relevant to image. In these enlightened times when children are protected from the evils of competition, their academic achievements are a much less important factor in determining their overall position in the peer group.

For many boys (ie the ones who aren't too nerdy) this means that academic performance is irrelevant to anything. Certainly less important than being able to do skateboard jumps, or being a key player in a good football team, or being a hit with the girls.

And since it is not natural for a boy to want to sit and listen and do girly things with numbers and letters, school is irrelevant to any consideration of what is important.

To all the sensitive types who have hijacked education since I left it, congratulations on stuffing up my kids' education and their future. I have three boys aged 17, 15 and 12 and none of them can write a sentence (remember sentences - subject, verb, object, capital letters, full stops, clauses, conjunctions, all that stuff.) They belong to the generation that literacy forgot, and numeracy - what's that? One glance at their English workbook tells you that their English teacher doesn't understand sentence construction either, but maybe that doesn't matter as much as some of the other good stuff they do at school.

To anyone who hasn't worked it out yet, I will ask one question:

Why would a boy want to have anything to do with schoolwork?

I'm not being silly, I am asking a serious question. Think about it Einstein. There is no answer, except to say that there is *no* reason why a boy would want to have anything to do with schoolwork. Most boys would run a mile to get away from it. It used to be a bit important before year 10, but the material was of little interest in itself. Who cares if they process oil in Kwinana or if James Cook discovered Australia (not many kids fell for that one anyway)

It is girls' stuff, invented by girls, presented by girls, for girls.

School became more interesting in Year 11 and 12, when a bit of maturity surfaced, and the reality of having to work at something became a more immediate concern.

But that doesn't happen to as many boys now, because the basis has not been laid for a two year burst at the end. It's too late now, because a boy has been dodging schoolwork for so long that the good habits aren't there and the tendency to dodge rather than grind it out is too deeply ingrained. For most boys it is too late to catch up with the girls.

What's the solution?

a. Continue to pay lip service to the importance of boys education while allowing the better mobilised forces of feminism, trendism and the sensitive types to continue to ensure that boys receive a second rate education. (Of course, silly!)

b. You could introduce some secondary motivators like results based on objectively obtained marks for tests and reduce the amount of classwork based assessment by teachers. Boys aren't interested in sucking up to teachers to get a good result. The mere thought of it is nauseating. Assessments were a joke even when I was at school.

There is only one possible outcome, because the problem is too long term to affect the next election, and that will ensure that the result will be "a," ie a cave in to the existing forces. Which means there's no hope for boys whose parents cannot afford private school education.

Good luck

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