

Gurian, Michael and Kathy Stevens: The Minds of Boys: Saving Our Sons from Falling Behind in School and Life. Jossey- Bass, San Francisco.

This book is an excellent resource for both teacher and parents. Those of us who are teachers and parents of boys are well aware of the differences between the sexes in terms of behaviour and learning styles; however, we are often at a loss to find scientific and practical information regarding gender differences.

Each chapter in the book is written outlining scientific data available on gender differences and follows it up with supporting strategies useful for parents at home and those strategies specific to use in a classroom. It also provides examples from the personal experiences of Michael Gurian and Kathy Stevens.

The main focus of the book is to acknowledge the truth behind curriculum development and school environment as it relates to boys. We have known for years that our current methods favour girls' learning styles. It provides a way of looking at academic expectations with respect to boys and suggestions for creating alternative methods of instruction and assessment to ensure success.

For my own research purposes, I've chosen to use a few suggestions put forward by Gurian and Stevens with respect to classroom writing activities. The incorporation of choice and team competition in the writing process and its effect on reluctant writers I the focus of my teacher inquiry.

Another area of particular interest is Chapter 5 titled "Removing Environmental Stressors from Boys' Lives." It highlights the importance of the brain scan in determining incidental injuries to the brain through aggressive play and sports activities. The injuries may go undetected yet be a significant contributor to learning difficulties. "Screen Time" is also discussed in some detail. Television, computer and video game activity is another issue cited in the book. Gurian and Stevens make a strong argument for the connection between too much screen time and ADD/ADHD. They include information and statistics from various research reports to support their statements. They also include data on how diet and drink affect brain health and positive steps which can be taken to make improvements in nutrition.

While some of the information may seem like common knowledge to many of us, it is a worthwhile read. It provides information and strategies for those of us who can appreciate the uniqueness of both girls and boys.