Single-Sex Instruction – The Latest Panacea or Just a Passing Fad

Gretchen Hein
Allison McGregor
Justin Rollis

April 12, 2010

Introduction to Diversity for Educators
EDF 2085, Section 002
Single-Sex Instruction – The Latest Panacea or Just a Passing Fad

“If there is any misleading concept, it is that of coeducation”
Adrienne Rich, 1979 (Riordan, 1990, p. 1)

Our schools are in trouble, once again. And, once again we are looking for solutions to solve the problems of low test scores, of how to lower suspension and drop out rates, especially of our minority males and what to do about the gap that exists between females and males educationally. These issues all come together as we take a look at returning to single-sex schooling. The Pros and Cons of Single-Sex Education for Middle School Boys and Girls, the initial topic for our research project led us to look at the history of education which initially was single-sex in our country’s early days, to the legal aspects of single-sex schooling, and a variety of issues that affect the ways in which boys and girls learn differently. Furthermore, the latest concerns with minority students, particularly African American boys has the world of educators looking at the possibility of single-sex instruction, once again. We explore the pros and cons of whether or not single-sex education may offer a solution to the problems facing those at risk.

History

Single-sex is not new in the world of education. Historically in this country our first schools were single-sex, not as a conscious choice to solve an
educational issue, but more as a result of how our society was structured. “In the first half of the nineteenth-century, it was largely boys who were sent to school among the middle and upper classes. Girls usually received a limited education at home, from governesses, alongside younger brothers and sisters,” (Skelton, Francis, Smulyan, 2006, p. 191). Young women were required to stay home and tend to the house or watch their younger siblings while their parents were at work. “By the mid 1800s, Horace Mann was championing free common schools as a birthright for all American children,” (Sadker, Sadker & Zittleman, 2009, 256). “With the advent of the common school in the more sparse parts of the country came coed schools. Schools were started in thinly populated districts and the

Advocates of single sex schools believed that the sexes were different by nature, and that those differences were honored and nurtured only in single sex schools,” (Sadker, Sadker & Zittleman, 2009, 256). “Some boys went to local, day grammar schools some of which had started as foundations for both sexes but moved to being for boys only. Others went to private boarding schools, an elite of which formed the Public Schools, which fostered appropriate sorts of (hegemonic, classed, and Christian) masculinity,” Skelton, Francis, Smulyan, 2006, p. 191). According to Leonard, from the late nineteenth century and into the early twentieth century, there were concerns that single-sex, especially residential, establishments - boarding schools and colleges- could lead boys and girls to homosexuality, (Skelton, Francis, Smulyan, 2006, p. 191). After these
concerns were addressed “... progressive educators started to establish new co-educational secondary schools, including boarding schools, from the 1890’s,” (Skelton, Francis, Smulyan, 2006, p. 191). The transition from single sex schooling to coeducation brought about many debates and arguments.

“Today, single-sex schools are an endangered species; they are [often] illegal in the public system and vanishing rapidly from the public sector. Would they be around another decade, or would they be gone,” (Sadker, Sadker & Zittleman, 2009, 253). The more schools they toured the more impressed they became with the curriculum in these single sexed schools. “Many girls in single-sex schools reported higher self-esteem, more interest in nontraditional subjects such as science and math, and were less likely to pursue stereotypical jobs and careers,” (Sadker, Sadker & Zittleman, 2009, 253). Single sex schooling for these girls provided them with an outlet where they were not just forgotten. They had an extensive amount of help from their teachers who made the curriculum focus solely on and around them. “The single sex high school can help girls make it through low self esteem during adolescence,” (Sadker, Sadker & Zittleman, 2009, 254). “...the single sex college develops women professionally, helping them realize they can be experts and authorities,” (Sadker, Sadker & Zittleman, 2009, 254). Women are able to be more assertive and seek a position of power once they have attended a single sex school.

“....(S)egregating children by sex is not a long term solution to gender bias in school or society,” (Sadker, Sadker & Zittleman, 2009, 255). It may be
very true that single sex settings have provided educational benefits. “In some cases, the environments enabled savvy teachers to impart candid social and moral guidance to students, the researchers said. Girls in particular told interviewers they were less distracted in class because there were no boys to copy off their papers, disrupt class, or harass them,” (Viadero, 2001, p. 2). While there were advantages gained from single sex schooling, “…. these advantages were muted by the disadvantages,” said Ms. Hubbard, (Viadero, 2001, p. 2).

In Williamsburg County the school board voted to discontinue the single gender education program at Kingstree Middle. “Those who opposed the program said sufficient evidence did not exist to justify the method of education’s continuance,” (Sweeney, 2009, p.1). Those who were in favor of keeping the program “…. pointed out that the program was working and if given more time, the additional statistics would support that claim, (Sweeney, 2009, p.1).

**The Legal Picture, Title IX and the AAUW**

The 1972 Title IX for all practical purposes mandated that American public schools be coeducational, when it prohibited sex discrimination in schools, (Riordan, 1990, pg. 3). The feminist movement of the 1970’s turned attention to the issues facing women in society and in the classroom. Curricula began to reflect the changing attitudes towards women and young girls began to push against previous inhibitions in math and science and all was well until the release
of a series of reports by the American Association of University Women in the 1990’s titled *Shortchanging Girls, Shortchanging America*, (Meyer, pg 10 – 11).

“Women and girls have made remarkable gains in education during the past 100 years, disrupting the belief – now largely unspoken – that boys and girls are better ‘suited’ to intellectual work,” (Corbett, Hill & St. Rose, 2008). Thus begins this landmark study bringing to our attention the gap that exists between the genders in our educational system and the beginning of a national debate regarding the differences between the sexes, especially as it relates to education – a debate that is to take place among educators, psychologists, policy makers, feminists and antifeminists concerning gender equity and gender differences, (Salomone, 2003, pg. 75). The report took many by surprise. By the 1980’s, girls were enrolling not only in advanced science and math, but in shop courses as well. Boys were allowed to enroll in cooking, typing and shorthand, though few chose to do so, (Sadaker, Sadaker & Zittleman, pg 258). The report showed how little distance we had covered in changing sexism, especially in our schools. The AAUW study drew a causal report between female self-esteem and how they perceive their abilities in math and science, (Salomone, 2003, pg. 74). “As girls ‘learn’ they are not good at these subjects, their sense of self-worth and aspirations for themselves deteriorates,” the AAUW concluded, (Salomone, 2003, pg. 74). A second report prepared for AAUW of the Center for Research on Women at Wellesley College drew data from more than 1,300 previous students and the earlier findings were confirmed – women were underrepresented in
school textbooks and curriculum, teacher behavior and standardized tests tended to favor boys and girls lagged seriously behind boys in math and science, (Salomone, 2003, pg. 74).

Over the years concerns about the efficacy of coeducation has arisen, (Riordan, 1990, pg. 8). With The No Child Left Behind legislation and the rewriting of Title IX, new rules gave local school districts options for the offering of single-sex classrooms for the first time in more that years, (Meyer, 2008, pg. 1). This extension of the interpretation of the law has allowed public schools to experiment with single-sex schooling in an effort to effect much needed change. At this stage of the game, programs organized by gender must be based on the attainment of an educational objective, be voluntary and be implemented in an even-handed manner, offering similar programs and opportunities to both female and male students, (Rex & Chadwell, 2009, pg. 1). Following these guidelines protects against a return to a throwback of sex discrimination and limited educational opportunities for both sexes, females in particular, (Rex & Chadwell, 2009, pg. 1). School systems have now begun to implement single-sex schools or single-sex instruction across the nation. Single-sex schools refer to schools in which only one sex attends the school. Single-sex instruction refers to that schools are attended by both sexes, however for instruction in the basic, core subjects, students are separated, such as girls only math or science, boys only English or math.
All of this has served to rise one of the most contentious questions in academia and other areas as well, that of whether males and females are the ‘same or are they different’? The question is whether girls and boys are in fact different in cognitive abilities and learning preferences. If indeed they are, do they then require distinct and different approaches in the classroom to learning? (Salomone, 2003, pg. 101). What keeps appearing in the research is that while girls now often surpass boys in school performance, they still lag behind boys in high stakes testing programs where academic and professional performance are at risk, (Salomone, 2003, pp. 101-102). Given that the scores are different between females and males, attention has been turned to what is the root of the difference, is it nature or is it nurture? What role does socialization play, what is biological and how does it affect what happens in our classrooms, how we are professional educators go about the business of educating all our students, (Salomone, 2003, pg. 102). What are the teaching strategies that we can use to make a difference and perhaps level the playing field or at least close the gap between female and male students?

“Until recently most feminists strongly resisted the research on sex differences. They believed that the issue itself was unscientific, politically motivated, and inevitably harmful to women’s social equality,” (Salomone, 2004, pg. 102). All that is beginning to change and most now believe that the differences are not one or the other, neither all nature, nor all nurture, but a combination or blending of the two, (Salomone, 2004, pg 102). Most now believe
that social, experiential and biological factors all interact to create the differences between females and males and the way they learn, (Salomone, 2003, pg. 102). There is a considerable body of research that documents the differences between female and male brain development from conception through puberty, from the formation of the brain itself as well as the effect of hormones on continued brain development. Acknowledging that differences do in fact exist, we have begun to document the ways in which learning is different for each gender. Given that our schools are failing to meet the needs of so many students, it is time to turn our valuable resources toward the solution end of the spectrum.

**Differences Between the Sexes With Regards to Learning**

Given that one of the more controversial topics in single sex schooling has been whether boys and girls learn differently let us look at some of the ways in which learning differs between females and males. Research has found that boys tend to be deductive in their conceptualizations, starting their reasoning process frequently from a general principle and applying it, or ancillary principles, to individual cases, (Gurian & Henley, 2001, p. 44). The text goes on to say that boys tend to use deductive reasoning more than girls. "Girls on the other hand, tend to favor inductive thinking, adding more and more to their base of conceptualization. Making it easier for a teacher to teach girls concretely, ".... especially in verbalization and writing,” (Henley & Gurian, 2001, pp. 44-45). With abstract and concrete reasoning, “... boys tend to be better than girls at not
seeing or touching the thing and yet still being able to calculate it” (Henley & Gurian, 2001, pg 45). This is evident in many of the typical jobs guys work in such as architecture and engineering. While reading a piece on language I found that, “.... on average, females do produce more words than males. During the learning process, we often find girls using words as they learn, and boys often working silently,” (Henley & Gurian, 2001, 45). Whereas girls tend to use words as they learn, “boys often find jargon and coded language more interesting,” (Henley & Gurian, 2001, 46). Studies have also shown that, “...girls are generally better listeners than boys, hear more of what’s said, and are more receptive to the plethora of details in a lesson or conversation,” (Henley & Gurian, 2001, 46).

“Boys tend to hear less and more often ask for clear evidence to support a teacher’s or others claim. Girls seem to feel safe with less logical sequencing and more instructional meandering,” (Henley & Gurian, 2001, 46). Studies have also shown that, “... boys get bored more easily than girls and this often requires more varying stimulants to keep them attentive. Girls are better at self-managing boredom during instruction and all aspects of education,” (Henley & Gurian, 2001, 46). In many classrooms today many teachers have found that, “... cooperative learning is often easier for girls to master in early stages of its use. Boys tend to focus on performing the task well, without as much sensitivity to the emotions of others around them,” (Henley & Gurian, 2001, 47). Boys are more concerned with the pecking order when it comes to learning. The pecking order is, “...Where the kids fit in the group’s social strata. Pecking order is
established by physical size, verbal skills, personality, personal abilities, and many other social and personal factors” (Henley & Gurian, 2001, pp46-47). Brain researchers have speculated for years now, “... that where a male is in the pecking order may have a great affect on how he learns because of the level of stress hormones (higher in males when they feel worthless,” (Henley & Gurian, 2001, 48). The use of symbolism within in a classroom has shown that, “... boys tend toward symbolic texts, diagrams, and graphs,” (Henley & Gurian, 2001, 49).

This relates to the fact that guys like coded nature of work better than girls. “Both boys and girls like pictures, but boys often rely on them in their learning mainly because they stimulate the right hemisphere, which is where many boys are developed” (Henley & Gurian, 2001, 49).

In taking a look at the differences above one can wonder how we made it as far as we have; historically, we provided a one method fits all and somehow we managed to produce a fairly well educated populace. Given that learning styles have been a fairly recent concept in education and that changing our educational system can be a slow and arduous task, only in the past decade or two has educational methodology begun to reflect what we are learning with regards to educating each gender. If we can indeed begin to change a dismal scenario by separating the sexes for particular subjects then perhaps we may be able to turn the table.

A Look at Some of the Myths, the Pros and Cons
There are a number of social theories about whether single-sex education or coeducation better serves society and the individual. Some of the arguments for coed classrooms are as follows:

**Natural Selection:** This argument presupposes that educating boys and girls together is natural; boys and girls must learn to work and live together, it is conducive to creating happier marriages. To separate them creates an unrealistic situation, (Riordan, 1990, pg. 41).

**Reduction of gender stereotypes:** Riordan (1990) goes on to discuss a possible positive contribution of coeducation, the **reduction of gender stereotypes**, (pg. 42). For at least 3 decades the, “...‘contact hypotheses’ assumes that intergroup animosities exist in part because of stereotyped expectation and misperceptions of other people’s beliefs, attitudes and intentions (Jones, 1972, p. 42). The goals of contact are to reduce negative and ill-founded attitudes toward outgroups by fostering realistic attitudes (presumably positive) through face-to-face contact.” (Riordan, 1990, pg. 42).

**Contact theory** presupposes that “prejudice (unless deeply rooted may be reduced by equal-status contact between groups. (Riordan, 1990, pg. 42).

**Egalitarian sex-role development**, an argument supporting coeducation learning environments deals with our need to prepare our young for less differentiated gender roles:
“Until recently, single sex schooling was not at odds with the world beyond the classroom.” (Boys were to follow their fathers’ footsteps and girls would follow their mothers’. Sex roles were divided in the home and in much of the dominant culture. However, today those roles are less well defined, they have become less differentiated. In the U.S., the two-wage earner family is the most common (54 % of all couples with children both work), nearly 25% of all children 17 or under live with only one parent (Hacker, 1983). Increasingly men and women share domestic chores, occupations and leisure, creating a greater discontinuity between sex-segregated schooling and life in the larger community. To meet these changing conditions, adults need skills and traits associated with both masculine and feminine sex-role stereotypes. Coeducation may provide this cross-sex role learning ...,” (Riordan, 1990, pg. 45).

Additionally, curricula should expose student to materials and situations that reflect non-stereotypical roles for females and males. However, since schools tend to be sex-biased, students are learning sex-stereotyped roles. Males are continually rewarded for dominant culture behavior and scientific careers while female students are rewarded for passive, quiet behavior and nonscientific careers, all leading to the reinforcement of traditional roles and expectations. (Riordan, 1990, pg. 45).

On the side promoting single-sex schooling are these arguments:
**Role Models:** Role modeling is a developmental process in which individuals with certain attributes – race, sex, class, etc. identify with other individuals who have the same traits after which they then pattern their behavior after those models, (Riordan, 1990, pg. 49). Our schools serve as institutions in which children develop their attitudes about gender roles, (Riordan, 1990, pg. 51). Single sex schools may be particularly advantageous for girls in which the top level of achievers will also be girls, (Riordan, 1990, pg. 45). Additionally the teachers in all girls schools are most often women, (Riordan, 1990, pg. 45). This also applies to males, somewhat to a lesser degree. The differing factor here is that there is a lower percentage of male teachers, even in all-boys schools, (Riordan, 1990, pg. 45). “Coeducational schools not only offer fewer roles models but also differentiate student roles according to sex,” (Riordan, 1990, pg. 49).

**Traditional sex-role** notes that historically schools, both single-sex and coeducational have served in the development of appropriate sex roles, in the defining of self as woman and man, their different needs, obligations and expectations. (Riordan, 1990, pg. 51). The belief that since life is a blending of the genders, schooling should also be. “The coeducational school has been seen as an enlarged family rather than as ... an institution in which the young are indoctrinated in the lore or “mysteries” of one sex says Hyde (1971, p. 20), (Riordan, 1990, pg. 51). Single sex schools are more likely to promote traditional sex roles while coeducation schools, in theory (Title IX) and in practice with
regards to role models are more likely to promote. “Coeducation serves the traditional masculine and feminine needs of both students less effectively.” Kolesnik (1969) hypothesizes that coeducation may contribute “to the convergence of sex roles in modern society and the consequent confusion among men as well as women as to what masculinity and femininity are all about (p.10). To the degree that teachers serve as role models, no teacher can model both male and female roles, (Riordan, 1990, pg. 51). In many elementary schools boys fail to find someone of the same gender they use as a role model, (Riordan, 1990, pg. 51).

**Sex Differences in the Curriculum:** There has been a history of one sex being steered away from or inhibited from taking particular subjects. Both single-sex and mixed-sex schools have done this to some extent, (Riordan, 1990, pg. 51). The positive effect of single-sex education in this area is shown in studies that document that women from single-sex schools are more likely than their counterparts choose non-traditional majors, (Riordan, 1990, pg. 55).

**The Adolescent Subculture:** In *The Adolescent Society* (1961) James Coleman presents the idea that our society has created an Adolescent Subculture that favors beauty and physical attractiveness and heterosexual popularity over academic excellence. This subculture undermines the educational goals for our schools, (Riordan, 1990, pg. 56). The adolescent subculture becomes the *raison d’être* of school, it is no longer the obstacle, (Riordan, 1990, pg. 57). When we remove the heterosexual popularity contest and its implications by separating
genders, the opportunity exists to turn attention back to learning, back to the educational process. This has indeed been demonstrated. Separated, boys can pay attention to their work, girls can pay attention to their work, and we return to the business of learning, (Meyer, 2008. pg. 10)

And so, there a questions and debates on both sides of the issues and where one stands depends on which set of arguments fits best into one’s view of society. Not to dismiss any of the issues, it can be argued that most of the arguments given for mixed-sex education can be ameliorated through conscious sharing of information and classroom activities that could serve to provide students with the experiences the arguments claim. Within the setting of single-sex classroom instruction it appears as though it may be easier to address natural selection, reduction of gender-stereotypes, egalitarian sex-role theory and contact theory. It seems fairly monumental to dismantle the adolescent subculture within the context of mixed-gender classrooms especially given the weight it seems to carry. The research is fairly recent, lacking long-term data. In Do Single-Sex Schools Improve the Education of Low-Income and Minority Students? An Investigation of California’s Public Single-Gender Academies, Hubbard and Datnow state that although California’s experiment with single-sex schools was short-lived and meaningful data was not available, it was possible to create an academic environment in which distractions were minimized and students were able to become more academically focused, (2005, pp. 115-31).
They state that lacking verifiable data, the informal studies report favorable outcomes.

**The Current Situation**

The current experiments with single-sex schools differs greatly from what we have seen in the past in our country. Instead of single-sex schools that are most parochial or designed to serve the needs of the more elite of the dominant culture we are seeing a proliferation of single-sex schools whose purpose is to remediate a system in dire straits, to turn around the numbers of students who are failing to learn at grade level, to reduce the disruptive element within the classroom and improve learning for those who are at risk, for those who for one reason or another are failing to learn. “There are gender-based performance gaps,” (Rex & Chadwell, 2009, pg. 28). It most clearly shows ups up in the percentages of boys and girls in grades 3 through 8 who score below basic competency in English, language arts and mathematics, (Rex & Chadwell, 2009, pg. 28). In South Carolina, single-sex education has been considered a win-win-win, (Rex & Chadwell, 2009, pg. 28). Teachers have become invigorated, students are more engaged and parents are more involved, (Rex & Chadwell, 2009, pg. 28). South Carolina has been able to make a shift to single-sex education fairly quickly and in a variety of formats and most importantly, at a fairly low cost, (Rex & Chadwell, 2009, pg. 28-29). In the course of one school year it is possible to examine the performance data in order to identify the special needs for boys and girls, select the appropriate grade levels and subjects
for single-sex classes, train the teachers, get parental involvement and buy-in, design and implement the program, (Rex & Chadwell, 2009, pg. 28).

The results are encouraging. Discipline referrals are dropping, one elementary school reported a drop from 0.36/student in the 2007-2008 academic year to 0.06 per student in the 2008-2009 school year. A middle school reported an increase in the percentage of 5th graders scoring at the proficient or advanced levels on state assessments, (Rex & Chadwell, 2009, pg. 28-29). Boys improved in math from 16.5 % proficient/advanced in coed classes to 31.3 percent proficient/advanced in single-sex classes. The percentage of 7th-grade males scoring below basic on the state tests dropped from 55% in 2006, the last year with only coed classrooms to 30% in 2008, (Rex & Chadwell, 2009, pg. 28-29). Mr. Chadwell travels the state of South Carolina providing free professional development for SC teachers and helps schools that are thinking or starting such a program. He states that, “No school should do this because it’s the next educational fad, . . . Each school has to look at its data. Where are the discipline problems? Where are the academic results sluggish? Where do we have energetic teachers? If you don’t do that, the programs won’t work,” (McNeil, 2008, pp. 20-22).

In 2008, single-sex classrooms can now be found in about 400 public schools in 37 states, (McNeil, 2008, pp. 20-22). As this begins to take root across our nation, women’s rights and civil rights groups are watching with concern that such programs do not reinforce sex stereotypes and nor do we find
ourselves in a situation where there is unequal distribution of resources, (McNeil, 2008, pp. 20-22). There are places that started down this path and pulled back from implementation, some because of concerns about these very issues. Additional resistance has come about a concern about promoting homosexuality, (McNeil, 2008, pp. 20-22).

It is interesting to note that females and males respond differently when queried about their perceptions of single-sex instruction. Hoffman, Badgett & Parker (2008), cite several reports. Girl’s tend to have more consistent and optimistic responses than do boys. They report a preference based on few disruptions, diminished feelings of embarrassment when speaking up in class, a more supportive environment, less hassle, and less ridicule and teasing from their peers, (Hoffman, Badgett & Parker, 2008, pp 15-35). Boys on the other hand felt they received more encouragement, appreciating the ability to talk about personal issues without ridicule from girls and that it was easier to concentrate on school work. Unrelated to academics, they also enjoyed the opportunity to talk about sports, (Hoffman, Badgett & Parker, 2008, pp. 15-35).

Setting aside the gender only issue, race and socioeconomic status enter into the picture in today’s conundrum. The South Carolina schools are again in the spotlight, but my no means the only ones working this edge. In the United States, there have been many efforts taken to improve the academic achievement of low-income and minority students; programs such as Head Start,
Success for All and Accelerated Schools, tutoring and mentoring program as well as after-school activities, (Hubbard & Datnow, 2005, pp. 115-131).

In looking at the racial issue, “The evidence is thicker than ever in these harsh times with children being raised today and not knowing their worth. There is such a broad scope of reasons as to why, when, and what went wrong with the youth of black men and woman, but my question is what is yet to come? When we first introduce a topic we realize that girls and boys bring different experiences and have different expectations of themselves,” (Cole, 1989, pg. 113). Men seem to be, at a higher rate, falling into the statistic of men not graduating or not even being enrolled in school. It is said in magazines that the world is going through a “boy crisis”. “Boys, these reports lament, are falling behind in academic achievement, graduating from high school at lower rates than girls, occupying fewer seats in college classrooms, displaying poorer verbal skills,” (Rivers & Barnett, 2006, pg.1).

Black men are struggling to be successful in life and obtain a high education. “Black boys represent 8.6% of national public school enrollments, (Skelton, Francis, & Smulyan, 2006 pg.331). But “black boys are also more likely than any other group to be suspended and expelled from school and to be missing from advanced placement and honors courses,” (Skelton, Francis, & Smulyan, 2006 pg.331). Bad behavior starts at home and parents are sending their children to school to misbehave. “The process of labeling black males as
less intelligent and prone to behavior problems begins at a young age (Noguera, 2002). Energetic and sometimes finding it harder to stay focused in elementary classrooms, younger black boys are seen as hyperactive (Hale-Benson, 1986; Kunjufu, 1988), hard to manage, and thus in need of teacher control, (Skelton, Francis, & Smulyan, 2006 pg.331). A lot of black students just don’t see the purpose or objective of school. This is the reason why kids often misbehave in school. “This time, experts are calling for a complete overhaul of American education based on gender, saying that boys are wired differently than girls, learn in different ways and may just need their own schools”, (Rivers, Barnett, 2006, 1).

Due to the different ways that both girls and boys learn, Hernando county conducted a experiment creating a single gender classroom environment to see if students would learn better. This approach had a enormous impact in the Hernando County Schools. "A year into the cutting-edge experiment, in which an all-girls and all-boys class was formed at each grade level at Westside Elementary School in Spring Hill, the students in single-gender classes have shown significant improvement over their peers in mixed-gender classes,” (Brown, 2008, 1). "Students' test scores have shot up, discipline records have dissipated and attendance has improved -- and the number of single-gender classes at Westside is set to double in August from two to four single-gender classes per grade level, principal Chuck Johnson said, (Brown, 2008, 1). This experiment also showed some differences in boys, girls and the physical learning
environment in which they are learning in. “Based on Sax’s research, boys learn better in bright lights and a cooler environment, while girls thrive with dimmer lights and a warmer classroom. "Girls learn better if it’s at 75 degrees and (less bright), while the optimal temperature for boys is about 69 degrees," Johnson said,” Brown, 2008, 1). This observation can be supported by a quote from the book, “the working environment or school climate may influence teachers in conducting their teaching process and thus determine students learning and

In addition to this, Black girls’ have higher high school graduation rates and lower rates of expulsion, suspension, and referrals to special education. This is often cited as evidence of girls’ academic strengths over those of Black boys, (Skelton, Francis, & Smulyan, 2006 pg.331). Early research from the 1980’s revealed that Black girls received less positive feedback from teachers and were more likely to be praised for their social behavior than for their academic performance and skill, (Grant, 1984). Black girls were also reported to be better able to maintain high self esteem over the course of their years in school. These findings may be the reason why Black girls hold very low opinions of their teachers. For this reason, the comparison and contrast of female students’ opinions toward their teachers and teacher attitudes toward female students is virtually phased out. The teachers’ opinion will be taken over the students’ regardless. If there was a way relationships could be improved between female
students and their teachers, maybe this issue can be resolved. One of the proposed solutions is the single gender classrooms which would definitely bring students and teachers together as a unit, and thus will make the learning experience much greater.

“The popularity of same sex high schools appears to be rising in Chicago as more charter schools open campuses designated for boys or girls only,” (Hutson, 2009, pg. 1). One of the successful charter schools in Chicago was built in Englewood. Englewood is known to be a crime-infested community. Englewood was originally developed as a suburb of Chicago, and became a city in 1899. The earliest residents of Englewood were German and Irish railroad workers and farmers. The name of this school is called Prep Academy for Young Men. The academy brought a great deal of success to the young black men in the community. The school's population consists of all African American boys. In order to attend the school students must enter a lottery first. Edward Briscoe, the director of recruitment said "Even after we hold a lottery for admissions we end up with a waiting list each year and rather than lose candidates to other schools we are expanding our campuses,” (Hutson, 2009, pg 1). The school was such a success that they opened up two more in other existing areas in Chicago. Parents became fond of this school because of their academic curriculum. Also, "a big attraction to parents besides academic curriculum is that they do not have to pay tuition each month like private school parents," (Hutson, 2009, pg. 1). The first senior class will be graduating this year. This class did such a fantastic
job academically; the entire class of 2010 has been accepted into college. It is evident that boys learn well together. Jean Hawkins, a retired University of Illinois sociology professor said "Boys and girls learn better when they are among themselves and not mixed with the other gender," (Hutson, 2009, pg1).

Concluding Remarks

And so if we extrapolate, taking what we know of the struggles that have faced our middle schools apply the current practice of setting up single-sex instruction and single-sex educational facilities perhaps we can effect a change that will help to boost self-confidence, improve academic achievement, develop good learning behaviors that will become part and parcel of who these struggling students become and how they approach learning. In fact, many of the schools experimenting with single-sex education are middle schools. There is very little contradicting possible success and our middle schools have been in trouble for quite some time, the problems seem to be growing worse and its seems as though single-sex may, at least for the short term provide some much needed victory. Single-sex education just be a panacea for what is ailing our schools at this point in our history, they seem to be providing an important measure of relief in some elementary, middle and high schools.
Works Cited


Appendix A

Allison McGregor

Works Cited


- I will have a slide show that will talk briefly about the different styles and the history of single sex schools. I will talk briefly about the history of education and the gender differences in learning. I will also assist in leading the directed discussions we have planned for our presentation
Appendix B

Gretchen Hein

Works Cited


• I will have slides for the slide show that will talk briefly about Title IX, the Pros and Cons of single-sex and mixed-sex classrooms and a portion of the current situation. I will also assist in leading the directed discussions we have planned for our presentation
Appendix C

Justin Rollis

Works Cited


- I will have slides for the slide show that will talk about the single-sex schools for minorities. I will also assist in leading the directed discussions we have planned for our presentation.