

Western Carolina University

Course: EDCI 616-51

Advanced Studies in Teacher Leadership

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Introduction/Rationale

There is a rising concern about the academic performance of boys that is linked to negative behavior. In our Jamaican Education System, it is seen where the negative behavior of our boys is linked to low test scores and poor performance on Standardized tests. The need to address such concern is essential for the future of our boys as well as for them to be positive influences for change within our society where more than 90% of the crime in our country is committed by males that are illiterate and unemployed.

According to Evans (1999) the present situation is undesirable from a societal perspective. The underachievement of any social group raises human capital issues, since developing countries such as Jamaica need a wide range and many educated and skilled personnel. The disparity in achievement also raises issues of equity, and social justice or equal distribution of social benefits. But to address this problem and develop appropriate interventions, it is necessary to understand the nature and extent of the problem, as well as possible explanations for the disparity, (p. 11). Therefore, this Influencing Action Plan will be geared towards analyzing the situation at hand as well as seek to effect a change where teachers are frustrated with the behavior of our boys and how we can seek ways of mediating such behavior and improve academic performance.

Being a teacher for more than a decade and a half the negative behavior of our boys are directly linked to things in their home environment and its surroundings. Such influences include absentee fathers, exposure to illegal activities such as robbery, murder, the sale of illegal drugs and the assumption that there is a learning deficit.

Evans (1999) contends that the tendency for boys not to conform to the school's norms affected teacher-student interaction, as well as teachers' expectations for boys. Boys, by their behaviour in class, constructed a definition of themselves as irresponsible and unreliable. This behaviour, influenced, in part, by a male peer culture, directly affected boys' engagement in learning activities (p.26). In agreeing with Evans my personal perspective also is that boys' behaviour is linked with academic achievement. However I believe that there are other underlying factors that prevent boys from performing well academically.

Situational Analysis and Perspective Taking

My Perspective

1. Boys displaying defiant behavior are usually ignored and their academic potential is ignored.
2. Having taught only boys for one school year I learnt that they learn differently from girls and that not being gainfully instructed will lead to disruptive behavior
3. The negative behavior displayed by boys is stressful to parents, teacher and students.
4. At my place of work there is gender bias because of negative behavior displayed by boys so girls tend to be treated better and more patience and tolerance shown.
5. Boys can be encouraged to perform better and their academia performance become on par with their female counter-parts.
6. There is a need to increase the performance on standardized test scores.
7. The fact also that the percentage of literate boys is lower than that of girls also adds to their frustration and contributes to underachievement.

Others Perspective

Teachers

1. A colleague of mine expressed her concern that her tolerance level for boys is low and she would prefer teaching only girls.

2. Guidance Counselor

There are several factors that can impact the behavior negatively hence affecting academic performance. Boys tend to misbehave sometimes as a result of the manner in which content or the curriculum is delivered. The activities are not geared towards boys hence the display of maladaptive behavior. The way can be viewed is that there could be issues at home affecting the boy such as a missing father. A missing father could mean that the boy assumes the role of the father hence trying to display this behaviour at school where he defies authority hence not being able to settle as he must be disciplined in forms such as suspension and several trips to the principal's office. He could also try to look for father figure outside of the home who might have negative influence on him. He could get involved in adult activities such as

	<p>drugs, drinking and sex. These practices usually impact boy's behavior negatively hence poor performance.</p> <p>3. <i>Principal</i></p> <p>Mainly concerned about percentages and GSAT placement and if these deviant behaviors continue then its impact on the percentages for Literacy and Numeracy will be significantly lower overtime.</p> <p><i>Parents</i></p> <p>4. Parents of Boys especially single mothers says that they ensure that their son (s) are at school daily because they give too much "talking" at home. Their desire is for their son(s) to stop being so uncontrollable and to behalf. They are willing to participate in any activity that will bring about a change in them.</p> <p><i>Administrator</i></p> <p>5. Boys do not perform favourably on pen and paper test and as a result. Boys enjoys activities and they prefer hands on activities</p>
Your position, your intended leadership role, and your reason for advocating for this issue	Specific example(s) to illustrate the situation and the various perspective
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> As a teacher –leader I intend to enquire practical solutions or mediations that can assist in modifying these deviant behaviors. For example: - there is a 	<p>There are many incidences that occur daily concerning our boys at my work place. Most times the outcome of these instances usually ends or begins with the boys receiving letters</p>

<p>student who could read at the grade 4 level but unfortunately his disruptive behaviour prevented him from effectively performing at this grade level. He lies and steals and devised ways in which he could avoid being in school.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I have had the privilege of been chosen to teach an all-boys class. The results were positive. It was also revealed that there is a definite relationship between boy's negative behavior in boys and their academic performance. More than 95% of the boys being taught were reading below grade level. These boys were all from homes where one or both parent was not present and they were left to fill the role of a father in some cases. 	<p>requesting visits from parents after at least two to three days suspension.</p> <p>Boys being involved in frequent fights usually resulting in blood shed because of the violent nature of the fight and the Guidance Counsellor having too many incidences to tend to.</p>
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Investigation/ Research

<i>The Issue</i>	<i>Ideal Outcome</i>
<p><u>How do you now this is a problem in Jamaica?</u></p> <p>Evans, (1999) reported in her research based on Gender Differences in Jamaica that boys give a lot of trouble in class, boys fidget, move about, and talk among themselves (while the girls sit quietly), sculling devotion, chatting, and appearing unconcerned, use expletives, hyperactive, teacher seems to use verbal abuse to shame the boys to get them to be quiet (p. 25).</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. That the gender gap between boys and girls will be reduced. 2. Organizations such as the school, church and clubs will aid the boys to be more social than antisocial. 3. Boys will perform better on all standard tests and regular classroom measurement activities. 4. That the strategies being sought will aid in modifying the overall behaviour

<p>UNESCO estimates that in Jamaica, 95% of girls and 94% of the boys are in primary school, but only 88% of males make it to grade 5, compared to 93% of the females.</p> <p>Reid (2012), cited that negative school and home environment are key contributory factors to male underachievement.</p> <p>Bertrand and Pan (2013) maintains that both the home and school environments affect children's early socialization. Therefore, we now turn our attention to possible influences of the early school environment on the incidence of behavior problems among boys. Some psychologists have discussed the possibility that boys are at risk of developing behavioral problems because schools expect too much from them from a very young age, when their brain maturity is not quite on par with that of girls (p.46).</p> <p>Berneche and Charleboise (1997) postulates that there is increasing evidence suggesting that behavior problems were not the sole factor associated with learning difficulties. Several characteristics associated with the learning environment (e.g., task difficulty, mothers' rearing strategies) may also have a significant influence on children's involvement and performance on learning tasks (p. 64).</p> <p>Boys in Jamaica are alienated, depressed and often suicidal; they nurture bizarre theories about sexuality and are sitting ducks for HIV,</p>	<p>of our boys who are having challenges and are at risk.</p>
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<p>hard drugs, and criminal behaviour... (John Maxwell, Jamaica Observer, July 14, 2002). Clarke (2005) debates that boys' poor school performance and anti-social behaviour is largely between two perspectives on gender and sexuality. He advocates that gender is prescribed and that one's gender behaviours are predetermined (p. 10).</p>	
<i>Existing Strategies</i>	<i>Research Strategies</i>
<p>Likelihood of solving the issue/How do you know that this issue could be solved?</p> <p>Case studies conducted in countries all over the world, inclusive of Jamaica, reveal that schools can make a difference. Reid (2012) also pointed out that we need to create a culture where high expectations are the norm, where achievement is celebrated, and where teaching and learning techniques takes precedence. Presently the Ministry of Education and Youth as a document entitled Boys in Education. The document gives an overall view about boys and how they learn and what strategies can be used to increase literacy.</p> <p>Also there are different avenues that boys (and girls too) can get counselling. For example there is a foundation known as Peace and Justice for children with behavioural conduct issues and they are referred to by the Guidance Counsellor</p>	<p>Parry (2000) identified strategies that may be implemented in order to improve academic achievement in our boys as well as reduce negative behaviour.</p> <p>i). Male gender identity as it is currently constructed has implications for classroom behaviour, educational motivation, participation in classes and educational performance.</p> <p>ii) All teachers, irrespective of higher educational qualifications, should hold an appropriate teacher training qualification. Just as we do not expect to be operated on by untrained doctors, we should not expect children to be taught by unqualified teachers.</p> <p>iii) Educators should be sensitive to the type of verbal disciplinary strategies that they use (p.72)</p>

<p style="text-align: center;">Fixing the Problem</p> <p>No one approach will lead to success. Successful schools are those that utilize appropriate strategies to suit their own situation. Good (1982) cited a few strategies that may assist in helping the situation with the boys. Research is needed therefore; in light of the changing education landscape to determine the effects parents' and media expectations may be having on teacher expectations as well as students' performance and behaviors and that future research is needed and careful work will yield new descriptions and concepts that can be used by teachers to think about and perhaps improve instruction (p.13).</p> <p>The solution also requires major changes and investments in instruction as well as infrastructural facilities in schools.</p> <p>It will also require major investments in time and effort in working with families, non-school</p>	

<p>organisations and the wider community in eliminating the deficits that boys currently are experiencing.</p> <p>The ultimate goal of any educational reform programme should be to improve the quality of the education system and raise the bar and benefit all learners, both male and female (Reid, 2012).</p>	
<i>Actions/Steps</i>	
<p style="text-align: center;">Strategies to assist in Remediating the Issue</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. According to Bertrand and Pan (2013) when observation is made across all family structures, the likelihood of boys to act out is sharply reduced when faced with larger and better parental input (p.61). Therefore, since our boys respond to the influence of positive parenting we need to facilitate mentorship for our males. 2. Reduce gender bias among teachers. 3. Majzuba and Rais, (2010) proposed that the following strategies be used to reduce underachievement <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a) Implement the Technologically Based Curriculum <p>Boys are technologically inclined and therefore the curriculum should integrate activities based upon technological skills and body kinesthetic usage. Thus, the curriculum should be more flexible and less “feminine based” The implementation of more physical activities such as outdoor projects can enhance the learning of boys. Teachers too need to be educated to identify the uses of ICT that will advance boys’ literacy learning</p> b) Male modeling: <p>There should be increased deployment of male teachers in school to become male role models. Boys identify with the same gender in learning and in extracting their world view. There should be conscientious efforts to attract males into the teaching professions. Attractive offers and a good reward system should be offered as males at times prefer to</p> 	

opt for the so called male vocations or occupations. Career guidance for boys should be a matter of utmost importance to prevent them dropping out or experiencing academic failure.

c) Enhancement of boys' engagement in schools

To entice and keep boys to be attracted to schools a more conducive teaching learning atmosphere must prevailed in the school set up. Teachers must be more responsive to boys who do not obtain the same grades as girls or who are not highly intelligent as girls. This increases the sense of belongingness to schools as at times boys feel that they do not receive preferential treatment as girls do. The development and planning of mentoring programs can help identify strengths and weaknesses of underachieving boys much earlier and concrete interventions in the curriculum procured. The schools should lessen the competitive climate between boys and girls and should instead work cooperatively.

d) Increase in literacy skills

There should be an increase in boy's literacy skills as boys are relatively poor readers as compared to girls. Literacy skills should be encouraged starting with the preschool curriculum. Boys' literacy skills can be enhanced through reading and writing activities using the multiple intelligence approach focusing on body kinesthetic skills. Reading sources for boys need to be identified with boys' needs and interests. Opportunities for drama and presentational talks are needed to encourage boys' literacy skills. The schools can engage boys in informative talk where boys are expected to explain their ideas knowledge or opinions as well as in presentational talk and in informative talk which necessitates reflection and exploration. There is also the need to integrate literacy across the curriculum, Thus efforts to overcome boys underachievement can be concentrated on four areas namely (a) the pedagogic implementation such as classroom teaching and learning (b) the individual level where the individual's attitude, skills and knowledge are enhanced (c) the organizational where all levels have to be involved using 'a whole school or community approach and (d) the socio cultural where boys and girls can work cooperatively to learn meaningfully.

e) Schools need to embark on a more reflective platform that is to conduct action research to study the personality and the learning styles of boys. Action research should be conducted on a collaborative basis and involving all stakeholders including the

students themselves. The culture of learning should be examined with regards to both achieving and underachieving students. The action research model can help recognize weaknesses and suggest alternatives to solve the problems of underachieving boys. Schools therefore must engage in deep reflective thinking and become change agents (p. 3163)

4. Implementation of a behavior modification programme at the school would be ideal.
5. Meet with the Curriculum modification Committee and discuss ways in which the National Standards Curriculum could be modified to aid in catering to the needs of the boys.

Obstacles to Overcome

- a. The willingness of teachers to collaborate-
- b. Suitable time for meetings and planning
- c. Commitment to tasks
- d. Funding to purchase resources (printing, paper etc)
- e. Availability of committee members for meeting

What steps, in order, will it take to initiate this change - from communicating your identification of the problem, seeking permission to proceed, involving constituents necessary for success, how to approach others, exploration of options, seeking buy-in? In order to effect a change within the boys we need to have the full support of the school's administration. The teacher leader will seek to

1. Counsel with the principal on this increasing matter. Initiating a change will not be easy nor will the effect of it be seen immediately but overtime. Permission will be sought and the principal will be given an outline of the programme to be done.
2. Seek measures to begin a Father's Club. This club will include the fathers of the boys that are displaying negative behaviour and underachieving as well as other fathers who are invited to be role models or model fathers to others.
3. Activate the Disciplinary Committee that will seek ways of positive disciplinary

measures that will seek to reinforcement undesirable behaviour.

4. Since boys learn differently from girls the Curriculum Modification Committee will be tasked to research methods of making the National Standards Curriculum more gender friendly to boys.
5. Suitable teachers will be chosen to teach an All Boys Class. These classes will be located in both upper and lower school.
6. Boys respond well to uniform clubs therefore the start of a Cadet Core or Boys' Scout would be ideal at this time to teach discipline and self-control.

How will you encourage implementation, measure the level of implementation and assess the effect of the change?

In order to implement such as programme with its strategies outlined above I will first administer questionnaires. This will determine if this issue identified is one that is really affecting the general school population, teachers and parents as well as how it is negatively impacting other students and academic performance. After questionnaires are completed and analysed then need to meet with my team that includes Principal, teacher leader, Disciplinary Committee, Curriculum Modification committee, Parents, Guidance Counsellor, and Male Teacher Role Model. This team will be told the present situation and give their feedback as whether or not they are encountering similar situations. Having received feedback, the Behaviour modification programme will be in effect. This programme will include:-

- a. Mentorship using men of positive influence in the community
- b. Father's Club
- c. Regular Literacy Pull-Out Programmes
- d. Student Centred Learning Activities

The programme will be monitored by using checklists and bi-weekly meetings and will run throughout the school year with a positive outcome anticipated.

Conclusion

What are little boys made of?
Snips and snails and puppy dog tails
That's what little boys are made of.
What are little girls made of?
Sugar and spice and everything nice,
That's what little girls are made of.

It would seem as if the future of our boys is bleak and dismal. It is clear that there has been a concern for more than two decades and that is the quest to save our boys is slowly happening. Base on the nursery rhyme it would also seem that there is absolutely nothing good or nice about our boys. There are hurting and have a high expectations to live up to. Based upon researches done by educators around the world it is clear the problem of behavior and academic performance of our boys can be fixed. We must earnest seek measures and best practices that are geared towards improving academic performance that is affected by negative behaviour.

According Parry (2000) the presence of female pupils in classrooms adversely affects educational performances of males should be treated with caution. The hard, macho, masculine behaviour, which runs contrary to educational requirements, was no less evident in male single

sex schools in the study than coeducational schools (p. 67). After familiarizing myself with the various researches I have recognized that there is sufficient evidence to conclude that there is a definitive problem among boys in Jamaica, especially the ones that are from the poorer classes. This situation with our boys and why they are failing cannot be ignored and must be dealt with. I am all for assisting as much that I can in implementing this plan of action at my school so that all who should benefit from such program will see its successes. What the research repeatedly shows is that the way boys have been socialized prior to starting school and even while in preschool makes them sometimes resist academic work, seeing it as feminine and therefore to be avoided.

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