

# Classroom Sex Differences Can Affect Learning Rate

Sex makes a difference everywhere except in the classroom. That's what educators used to think. But they're starting to revise their opinion.

Some now believe that sex makes a big difference in class, too—especially when the class is made up of both boys and girls. And to test it out, a few schools have inaugurated all-boy and all-girl classes.

Walter B. Waetjen, education professor at the University of Maryland, is one who thinks sex does make a difference in learning. He discussed his views in a recent issue of the "NEA Journal," published by the National Education Association.

IF SEX DOESN'T make a difference, he says, "then we are hard put to explain why there are two to three times as many boys who underachieve in school as there are girls. It is equally difficult to explain why there are four times as many boys who are poor readers or non-readers as girls; and why 85 per cent of the children in the hands of youth authorities are boys."

"While these figures are startling enough, we can also point to the fact that anywhere from 75 to 95 per cent of the children who are in speech clinics for functional disorders are boys," he says.

BUT WAETJEN THINKS any all-boy, all-girl classes should be instituted only experimentally and only "at the junior high-school level in academic areas."

In the Washington, D.C., suburbs two schools are trying out the notion.

Last year, Broome Junior High School in Montgomery County, Md., inaugurated two all-girl and two all-boy eighth grade classes in English and history.

After a year of operation, Carl J. Fahrner, school counselor, believes the program has worked out pretty well although a full evaluation—based on tests given to students at both the beginning and end of the year—still have to be made.

GENERALLY, he says, the four teachers involved liked the experiment and have recommended expanding the program to take in seventh and ninth graders too.

The teachers reported, Fahrner says, that the boys seemed to be more enthusiastic about their studies than the girls (who needed more motivation to study hard).

"Both boys and girls in the experimental classes appeared more willing to ask—and to answer—questions than those in the conventionally grouped classes," he says.

ANOTHER SCHOOL in the metropolitan area—Wakefield Forest Elementary School in Fairfax County, Va.—tried separating by sex some students in the first, third, and fifth grades. Principal Glenn Wells said that although these sex-segregated classes in the lower grades seemed to have worked out well, he is not making a final judgment until more statistical evidence is in.

For example, he said that the advances he has noted in children grouped by sex could well be due to other factors as well.

AGE IS ONE of these factors. In every class grouped by sex, he says, a concerted effort has been made to match the students by age because previous studies showed that in a fourth grade class, achievement was higher when the students were within a few months of each other in age and behavior problems were fewer, too.

Experimenting with grouping by age, one of the classes came up with 27 boys and four girls. The teacher suggested that the four girls be removed to control the experiment even more. Subsequently the teacher found the boys—many of them with learning and personal problems—"made tremendous strides both intellectually and socially."

NOW IN SIXTH grade, some of these same boys have reached achievements one-and-one-half years above their grade level.

Boys who subsequently moved into mixed classes after a year in an all-boy class were found to be the new leaders, even though their intelligence levels were below the girls'.

"The confidence they gained from this one year carried over with these boys," Wells says.

LAST YEAR, boys in the fifth grade, who as fourth graders had been in an all-boy class, were tested for achievement. After being statistically matched with boys from another school entirely, the Wakefield youths were found to be "significantly" higher in achievement than the control group.

"Personally," says Wells, "I know that these boys and girls are functioning better in single-sex classes." But it's still not statistically proven, he points out.

BUT WHILE the teachers have accepted the grouping-by-sex

experiment, while the students involved like it, there are many mothers who are against the plan.

One mother, he said, complained that it was the worst year her boy had had in school. But the boy himself liked the class and his achievement showed he was nearly three years ahead of the average student in the same grade.

## Bloomfield System Plans Bus Facility And School Addition

The Bloomfield Hills school system construction program will include two projects this year.

A three-room addition to the Hickory Groves School will be ready for occupancy some time after Thanksgiving. It will cost an estimated \$52,000.

A parking lot at the East Hills Junior High School will be the system's new bus facility. It will be blacktopped, fenced and lighted. The cost for the facility is \$20,000. A building will be erected for the buses at a later date.

# Cranbrook Schools Make Staff Changes

Sept. 11 is the first day of student activity at the Cranbrook schools.

On this date Brookside School will resume classes.

Registration for new students at Cranbrook School will take place on Sept. 16, while former students will register the following day. Classes begin on Sept. 18.

After registration on Sept. 16, Kingswood School girls will begin classes on Sept. 17.

CRANBROOK SCHOOL enrollment totals 380. There are 180 day students and 200 boarders.

September will bring 87 boarding students to Kingswood and 213 day students.

Faculty new to Cranbrook School or in new positions include Delvin H. Walden, mathematics; Harold G. Schneider, French; George B. Stewart, Spanish; and the Rev. H. David Sox, assistant chaplain and instructor in religion.

CHANGES in the faculty roster at Kingswood School are Mrs. George Stewart, teaching English;

William Levitt Jr., Cranbrook Academy of Art; Ellen McAfee, English; Laura Elkins, Latin; Mrs. Robert O'Hara, English; Mildred Tierney, physical education; Ullene Mai Sinks, French; Joan Page, science; Mrs. John Blish, mathematics; Mrs. Floyd Smith, librarian; and Stephen Beck, art.

Brookside School faculty changes are as follows: Gustav Konopnicki, English; Judith Billiter, English and strings; Mrs. Carleton Stewart, reading; Mrs. Edwin Fower, rhythms, dance and vocal music; and Mrs. John Adams teaching art.

## Camel Is Coming

According to the American Institute of Men's and Boys' Wear, longtime favorite men's wear shade, camel, makes a big comeback in '63—led by what will be a big back-to-school choice, the camel blazer. The color is seen in profusion, also, in regular sport jackets, sweaters, knit shirts and almost everything else.



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