

Matthew and I negate; resolved: Single-gender classrooms would improve the quality of education in American public schools.

Observation One: There are key tenets that must be met in education reform.

Jerome Bruner, senior research fellow at the NYU School of Law, outlines the first, teacher involvement. **No educational reform can get off the ground without an adult actively and honestly participating** – a teacher willing and prepared to give and share aid, to comfort and to scaffold. **Learning in its full complexity involves the creation and negotiation of meaning in a larger culture, and the teacher is the vicar of the culture at large.** You cannot teacher-proof a curriculum any more than you can parent-proof a family. And a major task for any effort at reform – especially the participatory kind I've briefly outlined – is to bring teachers into the debate and into the shaping of change. For they are the ultimate change agents. It was a dedicated teacher corps that finally realized the ideals of the French Revolution – through nearly a century of dedication.

Paulo Friere expounds with the second tenet, critical thinking **Education** thus **becomes an act of depositing**, in which the students are the depositories and the teacher is the depositor. **Instead of communicating**, the teacher issues communiques and makes deposits which **the students patiently receive, memorize, and repeat. This is the "banking" concept of education**, in which the scope of action allowed to the students extends only as far as receiving, filing, and storing the deposits. They do, it is true, have the opportunity to become collectors or cataloguers of the things they store. But in the last analysis, it is **the people themselves** who **[then] are filed away through the lack of creativity, transformation, and knowledge** in this (at best) misguided system. For apart from inquiry, apart from the praxis, individuals cannot be truly human. **Knowledge emerges only through invention and re-invention, through the** restless, impatient, continuing, hopeful **inquiry human beings pursue in the world, with the world, and with each other.**

Martin Luther King Jr. emphasizes the third, objectivity **Education should equip us with the power to think effectively and objectively.** To think is one of the hardest things in the world, and to think objectively is still harder. Yet this is the job of education. Education should **cause us to rise beyond** the horizon of legions of half truth, **prejudices** and propaganda. Education should **[and] enable us to "weigh and consider," to discern the true from the false**, the relevant from the irrelevant, and the real from the unreal. The first function of education, therefore, is to teach man to think intensively. But this is not the whole of education. If education stops here it can be the most dangerous force in society. Some of the greatest criminals in society have been men {who} possessed the power of concentration and reason, but they had no morals. Perhaps the most dangerous periods in civilization have been those periods when there was no moral foundation in society. Education without morals is like a ship without a compass, merely wandering nowhere. **It is not enough to have the power of concentration, but we must have worthy objectives upon which to concentrate.** It is not enough to know truth, but we must love truth and sacrifice for it.

If the Pro team can't show that single-gender classrooms could improve these three institutional problems of educational quality, then no improvement can be discerned.

Contention One: Discrimination would become the norm.

Sub-point A: Segregation in the classroom.

The American Civil Liberties Union explains

In response to widespread sex discrimination in schools, in 1972 Congress passed Title IX, which mandates that **no one shall "be excluded from participation in . . . any education program or activity receiving Federal financial assistance" on the basis of his or her sex.** For over thirty years, Title IX has opened the doors to educational opportunity by prohibiting sex segregation and sex discrimination in schools. The **new regulations, however**, adopt a through-the-looking-glass interpretation of Title IX and **invite school districts to segregate their classrooms and schools based on the flimsiest of educational theories.**

By encouraging schools to institute such separate and unequal programs, the regulations invite schools to violate the Constitution, which prohibits sex segregation in public schools absent an exceedingly persuasive justification. As a result, school districts across the country will unnecessarily expose themselves to liability and harm students.

The Department of Education has defended the regulations by asserting that any sex-segregated program would be optional, but **by its nature, sex segregation can never be truly voluntary. A girl cannot opt into the boys' class, and a boy cannot opt into a girls'.** "It's precisely because segregation denies individuals the right to make their own choices that we as a society have rejected it as an educational model," said Martin. "It is deeply troubling that the Department of Education has chosen to turn back the clock on this progress."

There exists a three-fold impact. Rebecca Bigler, professor of psychology and women's and gender studies at the University of Texas at Austin furthers

While single-sex schooling does nothing unique to improve academic achievement, gender segregated classrooms are detrimental to children in several ways. First, research in developmental psychology has clearly shown that **teachers' labeling and segregating of social groups increases children's stereotyping and prejudice.** Imagine the consequences of creating separate math classes for "black students" and "white students." **Even if enrollment were purely optional, the mere existence of such classes would** lead to increased racial stereotyping and prejudice. As is true for race, classroom assignment based on gender teaches children that males and females have different types of intellects, and reinforces **[reinforce] sexism** in schools and the culture at large.

Second, research on peer relations indicates that **children who interact mostly with same-gender peers develop increasingly narrow skill sets and interests.** For example, boys who spend more time with other boys become increasingly aggressive; girls who spend more time with other girls become more sex-typed in their play. **Developmental research finds better mental health outcomes among children who develop a mix of traditionally masculine and feminine skills and interests — like playing competitive sports and discussing emotions — compared to more one-dimensional peers.**

Most importantly, single-sex schooling reduces boys' and girls' opportunities to learn from and about each other. **Boys and girls must learn to work together, and the classroom is the ideal setting for such practice because it is both purposeful and supervised.**

Sub-point B: LGBTQ discrimination.

Gerald Walton initializes

The hidden curriculum is thus a mechanism by which social and cultural norms are replicated and regulated. For students who are marginalized through constructs of identity such as race, ethnicity, religion, gender, class, physical and mental ability, and sexuality, **the effects of the hidden curriculum can render their school lives particularly challenging to negotiate and even to survive.** In this paper, I focus on the hidden curriculum as a regulator of gender and sexual orientation in schools. **Gender schemas and** the concomitant assumption of **heterosexuality, for instance, are enforced and reinforced, thus excluding and marginalizing** lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer **(LGBTQ) students.** Gender and sexuality are thus constructs supported by hegemony and ideology. LGBTQ students transgress dominant expectations of gender and sexuality that are especially salient in schools. My examination of the hidden curriculum as a concept explores implications for LGBTQ students and their families and how exposure of the hidden curriculum can advance social justice in schools particularly in the areas of gender and sexuality diversity.

David Cohen continues

These components of a school's gender regime are reflected in the different aspects of the essentialist **myth of masculinity** surrounding single-sex education. **A school that acts according to the myth [of masculinity] and expects boys to be aggressive toward each other and toward girls is constructing that school's power relations.** A school that associates boys with sports and action-based reading preferences is setting up its division of labor. **A school that** either **separates sexes because of heteronormativity** or that focuses on activity and competition for boys as the best way for them to learn because of their innate biological differences **is establishing a pattern of emotion within that institution.** A school that expects boys to have difficulty expressing emotions and feelings also contributes to the school's pattern of emotion. And all of **these components that schools might adopt as part of single-sex education** from sports-obsession to heteronormativity to "othering" females and femininity, contribute to a school's symbols. Combined throughout these

components of a school's gender regime, a school adopting this masculinity narrative **tells students that masculinity should be a certain way.** Even more powerfully, it tells boys that they must conform to this narrative in order to truly be a boy.

The impact is that certain individuals have a marginalized educational experience. Cohen corroborates

The difficulties faced by boys who break the norm of heterosexuality and those who are physically disabled are particularly illustrative of the harms facing boys who do not exhibit traditional hegemonic masculinity. Many researchers have described the peculiar harm experienced by those who break the norm of heterosexuality, one of the previously discussed components of the essentialist myth from single-sex education. "Studies consistently report that **gay and lesbian youth who depart from traditional norms** of masculinity and femininity **are often targets** of violence and harassment in school **because they do not conform to cultural ideals of what is** considered 'appropriately' male or female." Boys who do not exhibit stereotypically heterosexual traits—those who position themselves outside scripts of hegemonic masculinity—routinely report being teased, excluded, humiliated, or bullied. Heteronormativity requires the stigmatization and oppression of homosexuality because homosexuality is perceived as threatening to young people's emerging sexuality. This stigma certainly exists in coeducational schools as well as single-sex schools. However, **a school that switches to single-sex education by emphasizing heteronormativity can exacerbate the problem.** This is true **whether heteronormativity is emphasized directly or indirectly by acting in accord with the** hegemonic **masculinity narrative.**

Contention Two: Single-gender classrooms create an undue burden on the education system at large.

First is funding. The Institute for Education Sciences explains

According to Leonard Sax, however, this would set a school up for possible failure because the teachers need special training. **Single-sex schooling may actually be more expensive** than educators assume **because**, besides more training, schools may need to hire more teachers — two for the single-sex classes and possibly one for the coed class. In many cases, **schools will have additional administrative burdens, professional training costs, and evaluation and legal costs.** Coeducation may be more economically feasible, requiring fewer teachers, buildings, and classes (McCloskey, 1994). **Instead of using funds for single-sex education, redirecting funding to reduce class size, increasing other resources, and providing additional training for teachers to meet their students' academic, social, and emotional needs and to avoid sex discrimination and stereotyping could well produce better outcomes** for districts with large numbers of underachieving students (National Coalition for Women and Girls in Education, 2008).

Second is teacher scarcity. Amanda Datnow furthers

Establishing and maintaining a high quality education for students was a major challenge for the **single gender public schools**, in part because they **were unable to attract and retain a high quality staff.** Granted, **there were a few teachers who saw the single gender academies as a unique opportunity** to address students' needs in a new way. This was particularly true for some of the teachers who had girls-only classes. **Many teachers were concerned about the discipline problems that would arise in all-boys classes** particularly given the "troublesome" students that many of the schools targeted. In **some** schools, **administrators found it difficult to attract veteran teachers to the academies, as teachers were scared that accepting a position** that was **funded by a temporary grant might result in unemployment when the money ran out.** The assistant principal at one school explained that experienced teachers often said, "I've been here for twenty-five years. I've seen the funding come in; I've seen it go out. If I go out there and I cut the limb off my knee what am I going to be doing? I don't think so." In order to be in compliance with the legislation and with local teachers' union regulations, teachers could not simply be assigned to teach in the single gender academies. This assistant principal went on to explain: [Teacher assignment] had to be voluntary. We couldn't say, 'okay you're in there' because they'd be over to see the union rep. real quick. I guess we could have forced their hand a little bit but if we could have selected the teachers all the teachers. There were some good ones in the program, don't get me wrong, but I think ...the boys particularly, probably, would have been more successful, [with a better teacher]. Even when schools were fortunate to find **good teachers** they **typically did not stay long**, often citing personal problems as the reason for leaving. **The truth was that in numerous schools, the students**, particularly the boys, **were challenging to teach. The number of original teachers remaining in the single gender academies was disappointingly low** as illustrated in the table below.

Third is legality. Datnow furthers

The sustainability of the public single gender academies was also threatened by the prospect of Title IX complaints against single gender public schools. Feeling somewhat protected under the grant, administrators began worrying when they no longer had the state defending the existence of their schools. As one educator stated, "You know, frankly, we could always point to the Sacramento initiative that was born here. It was an initiative that was born in the state." Districts became scared, however, when the safety umbrella of the legislation ended. As we explained earlier, **single gender schools throughout the country were being challenged on grounds that they were violating Title IX** imperatives. The California single gender schools were afraid they would experience similar attacks.

Administrators were concerned they were "getting into an area that is a little bit cloudy from a legal perspective" and were thus reluctant to support continued implementation. Although the schools made every effort to maintain equal funding, resources and opportunities for boys and girls, there were some real practical constraints that undermined their efforts and left them vulnerable to legal action. As we explained, maintaining equal enrollments of boys and girls demanded by the state of the single gender schools caused serious concern for all the administrators in this study. In some cases, **administrators suggested that they might be interested in continuing one of the academies (boys or girls, whichever [academy] seemed to be "working" in a particular context), but they knew that offering single sex education to only one gender was not constitutionally defensible.**