

Strategies to better engage male students in the Essential English classroom - Melanie Ralph

Today:

- I'll explain some **stereotypes and misconceptions** about boys' education
- We're going to look at an approach called **relational pedagogy** and the importance of informal dialogue.
- I will also share a range of **practical strategies and planning approaches** that benefit all students but have particular value for male students.

Reality check:

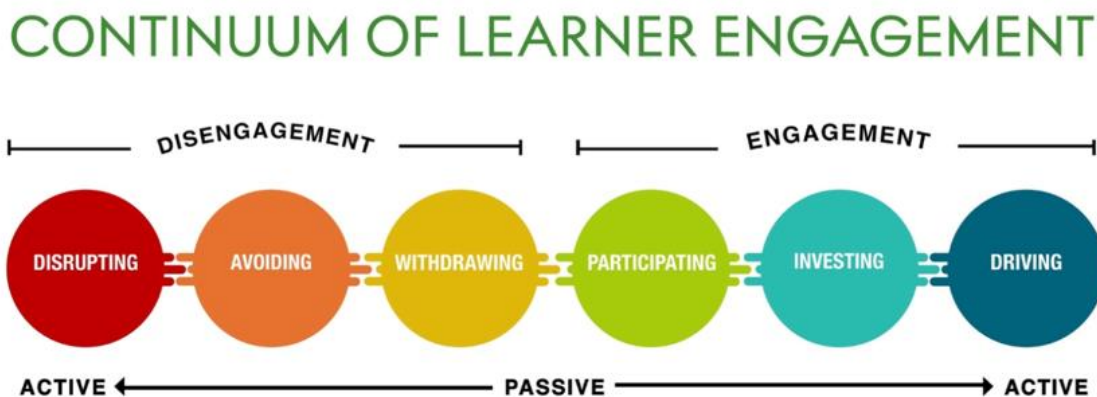
- boys are less likely to complete Year 12 in Australia than girls
- girls generally outperform boys in academic performance
- boys exhibit more overtly disengaged behaviour than girls and are suspended more often

While the education system is not deliberately biased against boys, there is evidence to suggest that it can work better for girls.

Non-cognitive skills include traits such as self-discipline, motivation, resilience, empathy, teamwork, communication, leadership, creativity, and emotional intelligence

Let's unpack how the 'gender straight jacket' plays out in schools:

Curriculum choices, Behaviour, Finishing school



<https://www.acer.org/au/discover/article/when-students-feign-interest-new-research-shows-how-to-get-them-back>

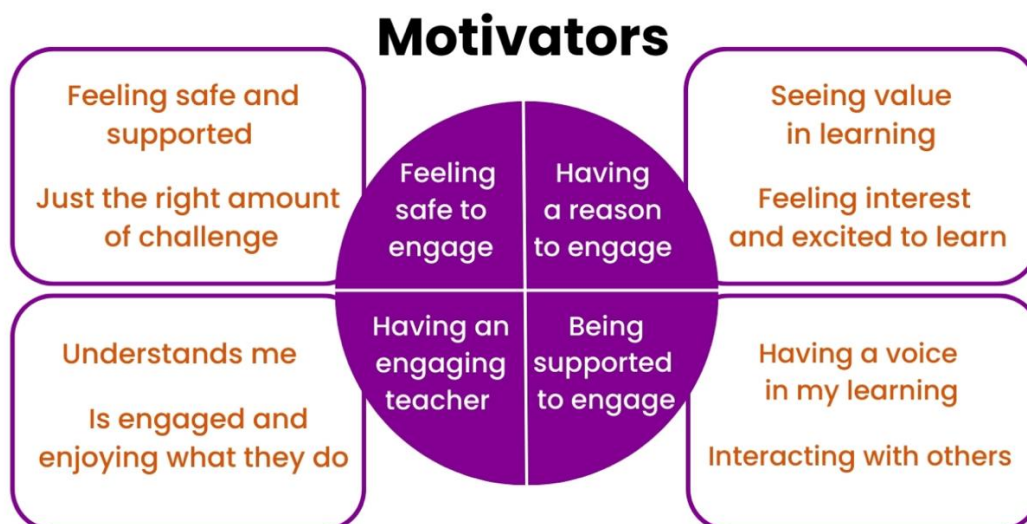
Stereotypes and misconceptions:

The Mars/Venus 'gulf'

New 'disadvantaged'?

The "which boys" approach

Relational pedagogy + informality



Authority:

Bonus strategies:

Festival design: Another great task I used to do in Essential 10 (but could suit Unit 1: Language that works in Year 11)

- Student pitch a festival based on their interests in a proposal to local council.
- PowerPoint presentation plus spoken persuasive
- Students make a logo, a poster, a timetable, and a map (I was inspired by Splendour in the Grass maps)
- Example:

Brisbane Motor Show

1st to 3rd of April

This one of a kind festival will showcase

- > Drifting events
- > Off-road racing
- > Road racing

Mount coot-tha



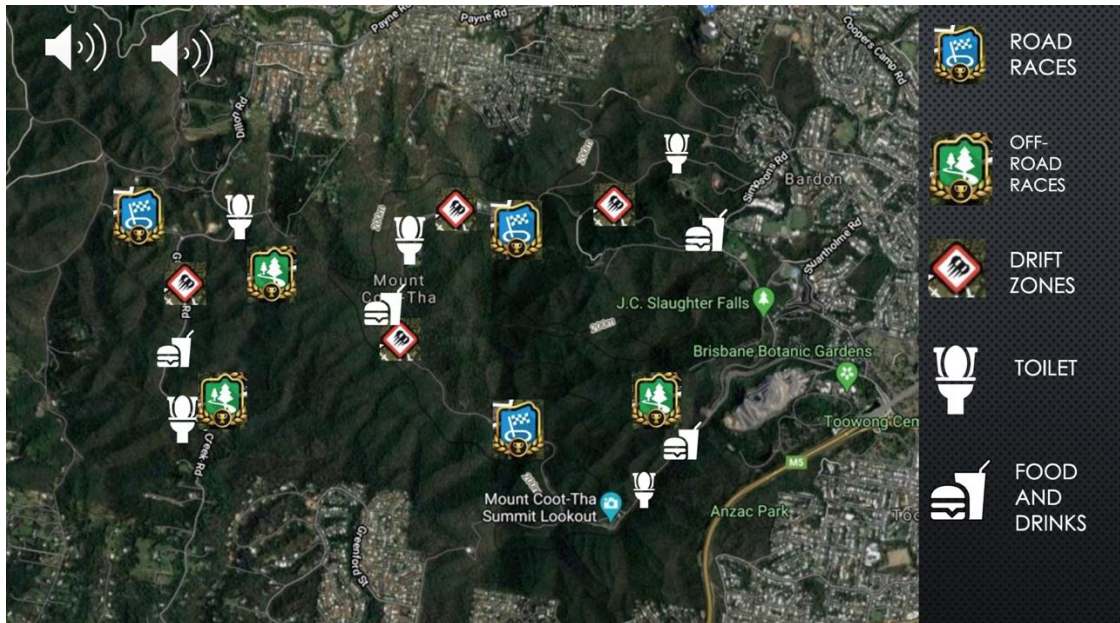
Red Bull



LB★WORKS



TIMES	10:00AM	12:00PM	2:00PM	4:00	6:00
DAY 1 ROAD RACE EVENTS		ROAD RACE EVENT 1	ROAD RACE EVENT 2		ROAD RACE EVENT 3
DAY 2 DRIFT EVENTS	DRIFT EVENT 1		DRIFT EVENT 2		DRIFT EVENTS 3
DAY 3 OFF-ROAD EVENTS	OFF-ROAD EVENT 1	OFF-ROAD EVENT 2		OFF-ROAD EVENT 3	



Note: Students can simply take a screenshot from Google maps of the location they'd like to have the festival and insert icons over it on PowerPoint, as above.

Journaling – Every Friday, I would bring along a tiny black journal for kids and give a writing prompt

- Opportunity to write reflectively – to be vulnerable
- Sometimes used NY Times writing prompts
- short, sharp, flexible writing – boys responded well to it and it helped to build literacy skills as well as relationships.
- NY Times ‘what’s going on in this picture?’
- Or I would ask open-ended, reflective things like “What is something you believe in?” or “How have you changed since last year?” Or “Tell me about a time when you were brave.”
- Journaling was a calming activity, too. I would take them home on a Friday and read them all and write a short note back to them.

The New York Times

What’s Going On in This Picture? | March 5, 2018

Share full article



What’s going on in this picture? Look closely at the image above or view it in a larger size, then tell us what you see by posting a comment. On Thursday afternoon, we will reveal more about the image and its origins at the bottom of this post. Rick Nederstigt/European Pressphoto Agency

nytimes.com/2018/02/05/learning/whats-going-on-in-this-picture-feb-5-2018.html

THE LEARNING NETWORK

The New York Times

Give the Times

WHAT’S GOING ON IN THIS PICTURE?

What’s Going On in This Picture? | Feb. 5, 2018

Share full article



Image 1

The farmers not getting paid enough so they want to court to sort things out, and the farmers gave the judge a taste of milk to prove that how full cream and delicious the milk is.

A+

Image 2

The mother prasing to Jesus ~~to~~ to shut them the hell up, the mother is putting all the babies on for adoptions that's why the have numbers on their shirt and the

mum is saying 2 for \$2

Gym

School

PICTURE PROMPTS

125 Picture Prompts for Creative and Narrative Writing

What story can these images tell?

Share full article 4



swellgarfo.com/scattergories/

Letter	Categories Add A Category - 12 +	
R	1	Historic Events
	2	Items in a Kitchen
	3	Things You Plug In
	4	Tools
	5	Items You Take on a Trip
	6	Personality Traits
	7	T.V. Shows
	8	Reasons to Call 911
	9	Notorious People
	10	Things You Make
	11	Things You Do at Work
Time	Change	Pause
111		
		Restart

Amazing – and FREE Scattergories: <https://swellgarfo.com/scattergories/> (perfect for classroom games)

Reading list: articles that informed this presentation

Do we really need male teachers? Forget those old reasons, here's new research, By Kevin F. McGrath, Deevia Bhana, Penny Van Bergen, Shaista Moosa
<https://blog.aare.edu.au/do-we-really-need-male-teachers-forget-those-old-reasons-heres-new-research/#:~:text=The%20presence%20of%20male%20teachers,job%20better%20suited%20to%20women.>

Boys: Getting it Right: The 'New' Disadvantaged or 'Disadvantage' Redefined? Zoë Gill, University of Adelaide
<https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/EJ743500.pdf>

"Being Normal is the Only Thing To Be": Adolescents' Perspectives on Gender at School, co-written with Wayne Martino, University of New South Wales Press, 2005.
https://www.researchgate.net/publication/277668202_Being_Normal_is_the_Only_Thing_To_Be_Adolescents'_Perspectives_on_Gender_at_School_co-written_with_Wayne_Martino_University_of_New_South_Wales_Press_2005

Factors Influencing the Educational Performance of Males and Females in School and their Initial Destinations after Leaving School
<https://citeseerx.ist.psu.edu/document?repid=rep1&type=pdf&doi=096850cd03fd8b942b10b2afdb5bb89028ec0586>

Boys, Literacy and Schooling: Expanding the Repertoires of Practice
https://www.researchgate.net/publication/239613045_Boys_Literacy_and_Schooling_Expanding_the_Repertoires_of_Practice

The Men — and Boys — Are Not Alright, Richard Reeves breaks down the evidence that many American males are falling behind in education, employment and health.
<https://www.nytimes.com/2023/03/10/opinion/ezra-klein-podcast-richard-reeves.html?>

'The World is Not a Safe Place for Men': The Representational Politics of the Manosphere Mary Lilly
<https://ruor.uottawa.ca/server/api/core/bitstreams/1eee5112-7f22-4ffc-a49d-a978a56bed05/content>

The Disappearance of Literary Men Should Worry Everyone
<https://www.nytimes.com/2024/12/07/opinion/men-fiction-novels.html>

The benefits of starting an intergenerational learning program at a school
<https://www.abc.net.au/education/the-benefits-of-starting-an-intergenerational-learning-program-a/102991056>

The Evidence Suggests Otherwise: The Truth About Boys and Girls, Sara Mead
<https://www.adlit.org/topics/policy-legislation-initiatives/evidence-suggests-otherwise-truth-about-boys-and-girls>

When students feign interest: new research shows how to get them back, ACER
<https://www.acer.org/au/discover/article/when-students-feign-interest-new-research-shows-how-to-get-them-back#:~:text=Students%20provided%20tips%20for%20teachers,to%20take%20the%20driver's%20seat'.>

About Intersectionality
<https://awis.org/intersectionality/>

Why Girls Beat Boys at School and Lose to Them at the Office, By Lisa Damour
<https://www.nytimes.com/2019/02/07/opinion/sunday/girls-school-confidence.html>

Boys Learning Languages, Sarah Pavy (5F's is from this document)
https://www.theibsc.org/uploaded/images/2007FEB/Boys_learning.pdf

Boys are more likely to play up at school, but it's more social than biological, By Amanda Keddie
<https://www.uq.edu.au/news/article/2015/01/boys-are-more-likely-play-school-it%E2%80%99s-more-social-biological>

The Myth of Pink and Blue Brains, Lise Eliot
<https://ascd.org/el/articles/the-myth-of-pink-and-blue-brains>

Proposing a conceptual framework for relational pedagogy: pedagogical informality, interface, exchange and enactment, Andrew Hickey and Stewart Riddle
<https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/epdf/10.1080/13603116.2023.2259906?needAccess=true>

Being a young man online: Tensions, complexities and possibilities
<https://www.esafety.gov.au/sites/default/files/2024-06/Being-a-young-man-online-June-2024.pdf?v=1737002426823>

Hungarians warning education becoming 'too feminine'- report
<https://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-62686894>

Women in the Workplace 2024: The 10th-anniversary report,
<https://www.mckinsey.com/featured-insights/diversity-and-inclusion/women-in-the-workplace>

The Gender Divide in Imposter Syndrome
<https://www.psychologytoday.com/au/blog/evidence-based-living/202408/the-gender-divide-in-imposter-syndrome>

Peter Dutton: Men are fed up with being overlooked, CEOs afraid to speak up
<https://womensagenda.com.au/latest/peter-dutton-men-are-fed-up-with-being-overlooked-ceos-afraid-to-speak-up/>

Real Boys: Rescuing Our Sons from the Myths of Boyhood
https://www.goodreads.com/book/show/2745.Real_Boys

Women still underrepresented in Australian parliaments, Bill Browne
<https://australianinstitute.org.au/post/women-still-underrepresented-in-australian-parliaments/>

When students feign interest: new research shows how to get them back
<https://www.acer.org/au/discover/article/when-students-feign-interest-new-research-shows-how-to-get-them-back>

Are Women to Blame for the Decline of Men? Leonard Sax
<https://www.psychologytoday.com/au/blog/sax-on-sex/201103/are-women-to-blame-for-the-decline-of-men>