Places for Struggling Teens™

Published by
Woodbury Reports, Inc.™

"It is more important to get it right, than to get it first."

August 2009 - Issue #180

Single Sex Education

By: Lon Woodbury



For most of the 20th century, it was a general assumption that co-ed classes were the only way to go in education. It got to the point that single-sex classrooms were considered inherently discriminatory according to federal guidelines. However, in the last decade, federal guidelines have been relaxed and a number of public schools have experimented with single sex classes.

The proponents mostly seem to argue that single sex classes help in practical terms in that grades usually improve and discipline problems decline. They often argue that the first step in healing is for children to get to know themselves before they take on the challenge of learning how to appropriately deal with the opposite sex. This is especially true for those children whose life style consists of promiscuity or other inappropriate relations with the opposite sex.

The opponents assert that not only does it tend to be discriminatory, but that it is important that these children learn how to deal with the opposite sex in a structured environment where role model adults can help guide them through rough spots and point out inappropriate relationships.

Private parent-choice residential schools and programs for struggling teens have been expanding their use of single sex classes and wilderness expeditions for several years. Most of those utilizing single sex activities are enthusiastic about them, claiming that it helps both sexes. It seems those people with concerns are more ideological based—their thinking is derived from the mainstream view that single sex classes and activities are inherently discriminatory rather than claiming any specific practical advantage that might or might not come about.

The first time I saw a private program experiment with single sex classes was in the early 1990's at an RTC in Utah. The program was co-ed and scheduling conflicts resulted in classes being held in the evenings. To solve this scheduling problem, they tried single sex classes so the classes could be held during the day when the students were more alert. The results were that grades went up across the board, and discipline problems decreased. The RTC was so impressed with the results that single sex classes became a fixture.

Since then, there has been a rapid expansion of all girls' and all boys' schools and program. Even in co-ed programs and schools, there has been an expansion of using a single sex option, as there has been in wilderness programs. In the co-ed schools and programs, there is often a mix, with single sex assignment when it seems appropriate, or co-ed when appropriate. Now parents looking to place their struggling teen can choose between either a single sex or a co-ed school or program, and even into a co-ed program with the option for extensive single sex work when the needs of the child are so indicated.

In private schools and programs, single sex schools, programs and activities are now well established without getting lost in the ideology of all single sex or all co-ed.

What do you think? Comments are welcome here, or on my blog that discusses this issue.

Inside...

Essays:
Impacting the Brain / 3

Coach's Corner:
Addressing Treatment Fatigue / 5

Visit Reports:
Freedom Mountain Academy / 7

Visits Continued:
Stevens Treatment Programs / 8

New Perspectives:
Vista at Dimple Dell / 9
Renaissance Adolescent Services / 10

Extended Insights:
Horse Therapy / 11

Seen N' Heard / 13

A good education prepares a child to be a good employee and a good citizen— in that order, with the importance of the former never exceeding the importance of the latter.

– Cullen Hightower

[Essays and articles appearing in this publication are the opinions of the authors, and do not necessarily reflect the policy of Woodbury Reports, Inc.,™ or StrugglingTeens.com.™ We urge our readers to conduct their own investigation of the products and services identified herein.]