

Boys and girls in my Engineering & Technology class exhibit many different behaviors based on many different factors. Each student behaves differently to gain teacher approval, good grades, or because he or she enjoys the project. At my current school, I have only had one student lash out continuously and refuse to work during class. My classroom includes a seating area, computer lab, and workshop for students to create technological products. Girls and boys behave differently in each section of the classroom.

In the seating area, students receive whole group instructions, work on projects that require the workshop, and participate in class discussions. Girls participate willingly, but boys participate more in sixth and seventh grade. Gollnick and Chinn (2013) identified boys “mature more slowly”, and exhibit “attention-getting classroom behavior” (p. 110). In sixth and seventh grade, boys seek by attention by answering my questions, asking more questions, and talking to me about their experiences. The boys want to know that we share common interest because I many of the same skills as their dads. The boys find it fascinating when they notice my confidence with power tools, and equipment in the shop. Gollnick and Chinn (2013) stated girls have “fewer learning and behavioral disorders”, and have “higher academic performance” (p. 110). In a year, I have fewer females with learning disabilities and more females in the gifted program. The girls, in all grade levels, answer my questions constantly and actively participate in class. Many times, the girls are nervous on power tools and equipment in the workshop. Many of them have not had experience on the machines, whereas the boys have used at least one piece of equipment before. I help the girls more in the shop, but they learn quickly and have great attention to detail.

Gollnick and Chinn (2013) proclaimed, “On television, a woman’s beauty can count for more than intelligence” (p. 113). Girls begin to experiment with make-up and reading beauty magazines around eighth grade. I notice they care more about their appearance, and talk about pretty girls on TV during class. The girls also ask more questions about my clothes, shoes, and what makeup I use. Many of the teachers at school comment positively on the girls make up and clothing. When girls wear too tight clothing or too much make up, I have the councilor or nurse talk to them about why they should not wear too much from a health perspective. I am reinforcing the stereotype that women are beautiful with my comments, and I try not to comment in front of the class so other girls do not feel the need to begin wearing makeup.

I have a very special opportunity in my class to see students who struggle in other classes become a leader. Many of these students struggle in the four traditional academic classes, but excel in engineering and technology. Gollnick and Chinn (2013) pointed out “males often receive more attention because of their misbehavior than for academic performance” (p. 135). At Buford Middle school, this is true in most other classes. I try to praise positive behavior, and encourage students to behave positively. For example, I may praise a student for cleaning up on their own in front of the class so the other students will demonstrate the same behavior. I have fewer problems with male students lashing out because I will not allow them to disrupt the class with negative behavior. I do not give attention to students who misbehave, discipline them without emotion, and ostracize them in class. I have excluded more boys than girls over the years, but only for a small period. When the students see they will receive more attention from me with positive behavior, all of them behave better in class. I give them more attention and praise them for positive behavior when the change occurs.

Buford is a very traditional, small town. The boys are football stars, and girls are beauty queens. The teachers and staff at Buford Middle school encourages students to participate in all activities, and find an activity you enjoy. I have students attempt to follow gender stereotypes in my class, but I want all my students to work hard in class and enjoy the curriculum so gender takes a backseat to hard work.

Resources

Gollnick, D., & Chinn, P. (2013). *Multicultural education in a pluralistic society* (9th ed.). Upper Saddle River: Pearson Education.