

17th ANNUAL CONFERENCE ON MEN AND MASCULINITIES
Sponsored By The
AMERICAN MEN'S STUDIES ASSOCIATION

Pre-Conference Workshop
Teaching Young Males
[Concordia University, Montreal, April 2009]

Animators: Jon Bradley (McGill University), Douglass Gosse (Nipissing University) and Steven Hoover (St. Cloud State University).

Workshop Description: This introductory and active workshop will build upon AMSA's mandate of exploring varying aspects of 'maleness'. Specifically, this workshop will delve into contemporary elementary and middle school classrooms in order to tease out how boys learn and what social and physical factors impact (both negatively and positively) that learning environment.

Statistically, within the North American context, boys drop out of school earlier and in greater numbers than their female peers; vastly more boys are on various mood altering prescription medications than similarly aged girls; and incidents of physical violence more often than not involve young males. Some main line news organizations have begun to label this evolving situation as 'boys at risk' or 'the boy crisis' and, even, 'lost boys'.

This workshop will provide a grounded look into theories and research about how young males learn, what facilitates that learning, and what classroom teachers and animators might do to encourage that learning. Participants will have an opportunity to view and react to salient sections of the PBS special *Raising Cain* (narrated by Dr. Michael Thompson). Further, we will explore and investigate some of the interesting and practical notions of teaching boys that comes from experience and from research in the field.

This is a participatory workshop and all participants will be encouraged to share their own experiences surrounding young males and learning.

WORKSHOP SCHEDULE

Friday, April 3, 2009

0900 to 1200 hours

Room H-521: Hall Building

- 0900 – 0910:** Introductions and schedule review
- 0910 – 0940:** The animators will offer varying orientations and narratives of experience regarding boys/young men and learning; including initial explorations of the “Pygmalion Effect”
- 0940 – 1000:** Audience input and reaction to views expressed and experiences raised
- 1000 – 1040:** *Raising Cain* vignettes
- 1040 – 1100:** Break and stretch
- 1100 – 1120:** Small break-out groups to explore reactions to *Raising Cain* scenes
- 1120 – 1140:** Avenues yet explored
- 1140 - 1200:** Wrap up and possibilities at the 18th Annual Conference

The following short reference list is not designed to be all encompassing. Rather, the material that follows specifically deals with boys/young males from differing cultural environments along with their academic and learning processes.

Black Youth:

Hopkins, Ronnie. (1997). *Educating Black Males: Critical Lessons in Schooling, Community, and Power*. Albany, NY: SUNY Press, 145 pages.

While examining the larger complex North American issues of Blacks and education, this volume specifically looks at ways that schools can create more inviting and more accepting environments for Black youth within the public system.

McClosky, Patrick J. (2008). *The Street Stops Here: A Year at a Catholic High School in Harlem*. Berkley, CA: University of California Press, 456 pages.

This book offers a year-long look at a religiously based secondary school catering to Black (and other ethnic minorities) in Harlem. The roles of teachers, students, religion, and community are carefully viewed as they impact on male youth and academic achievement.

Noguera, Pedro A. (2008). *The Trouble with Black Boys: ...And Other Reflections on Race, Equity and the Future of Public Education*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass, 324 pages.

A general view, the author looks at race and education through a variety of lenses. Specifically, the role of teachers within the overall learning process is critically viewed. Additionally, links between race, culture, home and community are examined.

Aboriginal:

Helin, Calvin. (2006). *Dances With Dependency: Indigenous Success Through Self-Reliance* Vancouver, BC: Orca Spirit, 313 pages.

Citing a 'perfect storm', the author argues that now is the time for First Nations Peoples to break with the past and to become full-time players in the North American landscape. Drawing on the success of other Aboriginal groups (such as the Maori), Helin suggests that one of the key areas that needs strengthening is education; specifically appropriate and meaningful foci for male aboriginals.

Widdowson, Frances and Albert Howard. (2008). *Disrobing the Aboriginal Industry: The Deception Behind Indigenous Cultural Preservation*. Montreal, QC: McGill-Queen's University Press, 330 pages.

The authors suggest that formal education for Aboriginal youth has been 'high-jacked' by an unresponsive structure whose avowed aims do not mesh with the contemporary practical results. Males, specifically, are being 'left-behind' within this increasingly separate and insular academic environment.

General:

Brozo, William G. (2002) *To Be a Boy, to be a Reader: Engaging Teen and Preteen Boys in Active Literacy*. Newark, DL: International Reading Association, 196 pages.

This volume provides very practical strategies to engage boys in literacy. The author draws on Jungian archetypes (not wild men in the woods but gentler Joseph Campbell types) through literature as the basis for providing engagement in reading for boys.

Gurian, Michael and Arlette C. Ballew. (2003). *The Boys and Girls Learn Differently: Action Guide for Teachers*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass, 216 pages.

Drawing upon research and decades long work with boys and youth, this volume offers classroom practitioners practical strategies so that a 'boy friendly' learning atmosphere may be achieved.

Kerr, Barbara A. and Sanford J. Cohn. (2001). *Smart Boys: Talent, Manhood, and the Search for Meaning*. Scarsdale, AZ: Great Potential Books, 358 pages.

This is the only complete book to look at the issues gifted, talented and high ability boys face in educational environments. The book has chapters dealing with counseling issues, talent development, and special challenges faced by high ability boys and young men.

Neu, Terry W, and Ruth Weinfeld. (2007). *Helping Boys to Succeed in School: A Practical Guide for Parents and Teachers*. Waco, TX: Prufrock Press, 269 pages.

This is a comprehensive overview of strategies which teachers and parents can undertake to increase boys' engagement in school. Further, the book offers a very wide ranging review of reading, writing, bullying, coaching/athletics, and developing boys' strengths.

Sax, Leonard. (2007). *Boys Adrift: The Five Factors Driving the Growing Epidemic of Unmotivated Boys and Underachieving Young Men*. NY: Basic Books, 267 pages.

Drawing on his medical experiences, Sax postulates that American boys are less ambitious and less resilient than previous generations. Not falling into the blame trap game, he offers practical suggestions to teachers and parents so that boys may become re-engaged in the educational processes.

Tyre, Peg. (2008). *The Trouble with Boys: A Surprising Report Card on Our Sons, Their Problems at School, and what Parents and educators Must Do*. (2008). New York, NY: Crown Publishers, 311 pages.

Investigative reporter Tyre interviewed hundreds of boys, parents, teachers, and so-called 'experts' in order to compile this report in which she calls for a 'gender revolution' so that male youth may be 'rescued' from an educational system that is now failing to meet their needs.

DVD:

Boys and the Boy Crisis Conference Video. (2007). True Equity Productions.

A two-volume (six hour) compilation of the July 2007 Washington, DC conference. This is a wide-ranging look at boys and men from a variety of experiences enhanced by a myriad of lenses that are used to anchor this topic within the North American landscape.

Raising Cain: Exploring the Inner Lives of America's Boys. (2006). PBS Home Video.

Narrated by Michael Thompson (co-author of the book by the same name), this 120 minute documentary explores the emotional and 'inner' lives of American boys and youth. Various realities are examined including home environments along with elementary and secondary learning situations.

Tough Guise: Violence, Media and the Crisis in Masculinity. (2002). Media Education Foundation.

Written by Jackson Katz, this documentary argues that there is a 'real' crisis in male America and much of the contemporary difficulties can be laid squarely at the feet of the mass media empires. A recurring question revolves throughout this 60 minute adventure; namely, why do males so readily use violence (in its many guises and varied locations) as a problem solving vehicle?