

HEADMASTER'S REPORT

For the Month Ending March 31, 2004

I. OVERVIEW

Teachers will tell you that boys and girls have different learning styles. In the past decade research, including brain imagery, has confirmed the physiological basis for many of those differences.¹

For example, research indicates that boys and girls see differently. The female eye is built to identify an object, while the male eye is built to identify the location of an object.² Art teachers will tell you that girls often draw first-person pictures in which people face you, and boys often draw objects that move, like cars, planes or boats.

Another learning difference sometimes arises from a simple distinction in physiology: little boys do not hear as well as girls. When it appears that a boy is not paying attention, it may be that the teacher needs to talk in a louder voice.³

It is no secret that little boys' fine motor skills are less-developed. Reference that, at age five, many boys have more difficulty than most girls holding a pencil or buttoning a shirt or coat.⁴

Teachers who specialize in boys are aware of this difference and are especially patient in helping little boys master fine motor skills.

Many teachers have noticed that little boys are not as verbal as little girls. As a result, girls do better in following verbal instructions. Savvy teachers have learned to adjust by waiting longer for boys to answer questions.

Many little boys are not eager to talk about their feelings, while little girls are more likely to tell you how they feel. Studies indicate that the cerebral cortex controls a teenage female's ability to think and feel. "In males these two abilities are located in different parts of the brain."⁵ This may help explain why boys are often reluctant to talk about their feelings.

Teachers at boys' schools will also tell you that most boys feel more comfortable in a single-sex setting, and, as a result, they are more likely to lower their guard and express their feelings. Typically peer relationships seem better and the rapport between students and their teachers is stronger. In addition, during the exciting years of puberty there are many fewer distractions.

1. "The Lost Boys," Jennifer Bingham Hull, *Parenting Magazine*, October 2003, p. 146.
2. "Learning Styles Vary By Gender," Vianna Davila, San Antonio Express-News, February 11, 2004, Source quoted: Dr. Leonard Sax.
3. Ibid

4. "The Lost Boys," Jennifer Bingham Hull, *Parenting Magazine*, October 2003, p. 146.
5. "Learning Styles Vary By Gender," Vianna Davila, *San Antonio Express-News*, February 11, 2004, Source quoted: Dr. Leonard Sax.

Boys are frequently very active and very kinesthetic. As a result, guys do much better when lessons include hands-on-learning and the use of manipulatives. It also helps when there are larger spaces where they can move around. Little guys often have shorter attention spans and do better when there are more breaks. It's tough for a little boy to sit still for prolonged periods of time.⁶

Educators who work with boys note that boys are very competitive, very willing to take risks and sometimes learn by challenging. As a result, boys do better in high-energy classrooms where teachers are active and assertive and keep them engaged⁷. It is also apparent that many boys have different interests than girls. Guys typically gravitate toward adventure/action and sports stories, for example. All-boys schools specialize in creating a program and an environment that caters to the characteristics and interests of boys.

Schools like The Academy specialize in boys. We understand boys and have crafted an environment specifically geared for them – one structured to recognize their differences and channel them in positive directions and one which has lots of built-in ways to celebrate boys. If you're a guy, San Antonio Academy is a good place to be.