

Rationale

“..there is extensive, well-documented evidence about the kinds of teaching approaches that consistently have a positive impact on student learning. This evidence tells us that students learn best when teachers:

- create a supportive learning environment
- encourage reflective thought and action
- enhance the relevance of new learning
- facilitate shared learning
- make connections to prior learning and experiences
- provide sufficient opportunities to learn
- inquire into the teaching–learning relationship.”

NZ Curriculum (2008)

With this pedagogical policy in mind we, at Napier Intermediate, saw an area in our education system that required further depth of understanding. In 2010 we recognised that some of our boys were underachieving as a result of their disengagement from learning and often these boys were out of their learning environment due to behaviour.

While all teachers recognise that boys have specific learning styles and our teachers had professional development around this area we were not making the difference for some of our boys and they continued to under achieve. The first steps were to research and formulate whether or not single sex classes were a positive option for achievement. The principal, deputy principal and two interested teachers began to research, collect data and visit schools who were already modelling this initiative.

With this came the understanding that if some boys will achieve better in a single sex classroom then we must also accept that there would be some girls who would also benefit from a single sex classroom.

Frimley School was already implementing ‘boys’ only’, ‘girls’ only’ classes and as a result the intermediate to which these students would attend started a ‘boys’ only’ class.

After discussions with the principal of Frimley School, the teachers involved in these classes and the students in these classes we began to understand the positive outcomes of such an initiative.

One of the recommendations that the principal of Frimley School made was that the success of these types of classes hinged on the teacher and that the teacher would need to be carefully chosen. Our school had two such teachers who had the capability and the passion to undertake this initiative.

Letters were sent home to present parents and the parents of Year 6 students indicating the possibility of “boys only, girls only’ classes and a parent meeting was held to explain the philosophy behind these classes and to gauge the interest of our parent community.

Enrolments forms provide an opportunity to indicate an interest in a boys’ only class option or a girls’ only class option.

In 2011 Napier Intermediate embarked on their initiative of trialling a ‘boys’ only’ and a ‘girls’ only’ class with the focus on improving student achievement.

To date the students have been asked to fill in a PMI – plus, minus and interesting reflection form, the teachers of these classes have also completed the same form, and a parent meeting has been held to discuss how the “Boys’ Only, Girls” Only initiative is progressing.

This feedback has been collated and a copy of these results have been presented to the Board of Trustees and House Leaders to share with their staff.

Key Goals

- ✚ To improve student achievement levels, especially in numeracy and literacy. Data will be taken from 2010 and compared with data collected Term one 2011 and Term four 2011
- ✚ To develop higher levels of student engagement in the learning environment
- ✚ To compare behaviour data from 2010 to 2011 for the Year 8 boys and girls within the classes and analyse whether this data has any impact on student achievement.

Major Focus

- ✚ To lift student achievement.
- ✚ To create supportive learning environments that cater for gender specific learning needs.
- ✚ To increase participation in all aspects of school life.
- ✚ To build positive relationships in and out of the classroom.
- ✚ To increase confidence and leadership skills.
- ✚ To develop intrinsic motivation and encourage acknowledgment of the successes of others.
- ✚ To recognise the importance of identity and culture in education and personal success.
- ✚ To provide learning programmes that enables students to realise their full potential.

Key Competencies and Single Sex Classes

Thinking

- ✚ Making well informed decisions, actively seek, use, and create knowledge.
- ✚ Constructing knowledge that relates to boys/girls with specific focus on gender interests.
- ✚ Reflect on own learning and plan next steps.
- ✚ Develop intellectual curiosity.

Using Language, Symbols and Texts

- ✚ Communicating information, experiences and ideas.
- ✚ Increase the ability to interpret and use language, symbols and texts in a range of contexts focussing on student interest.
- ✚ Develop confidence to take leadership roles in communicating with others.
- ✚ To integrate ICT in the learning programme as a tool to gain understanding and develop a variety of communication skills.

Managing Self

- ✚ Learning to actively listen and ask 'information gathering' questions.
- ✚ Creating a 'can do' attitude, develop confidence to take calculated risks and accept challenges.
- ✚ Develop skills sharing, questioning and negotiating ideas
- ✚ Establish personal goals, make plans, manage projects, and set high standards.
- ✚ Develop strategies for meeting challenges.
- ✚ Know when to lead, when to follow, and when and how to act independently.

Participating and Contributing.

- ✚ Developing a sense of belonging, a sense of team
- ✚ Encourage involvement in family/whanau and community.
- ✚ Be actively involved in all areas of the school programme
- ✚ Develop confidence to participate within new contexts.

National Standards in relation to Boys' Only/Girls' Only Classes

- ✚ School will work with parents, families, whanau, iwi and community to help these groups gain knowledge and understanding about what these standards mean and how they relate to their child's achievement and progress.
- ✚ Involve parents, whanau and caregivers in supporting their child's learning at home
- ✚ Evaluate individual progress and achievement in relation to National Standards; support the students to understand their progress and co-construct goals and next steps.
- ✚ Use self-view processes and tools to understand their learning and recognise strengths and areas of development.
- ✚ Focus on student achievement and use both research evidence, overall teacher judgements and assessment information to inform practice, programmes and plan next steps.

Cultural Links

Whanaungatanga – building relationships

- ✚ Using restorative approach to solving problems
- ✚ Knowing students backgrounds and family situation
- ✚ Using people from the community as resources
- ✚ Generate opportunities to lead, to follow, to build relationships of trust and care

Manaakitanga – an ethic of caring

- ✚ Classroom is safe and secure environment
- ✚ Respect and positive relationships are the foundation for the classroom culture
- ✚ Develop an understanding that mistakes can be made and form strategies to problem solve and repair break down of relationships.

Ranitiratanga – teacher effectiveness

- ✚ Design programmes to cater for interest and the use of past experiences
- ✚ Provide real life experiences
- ✚ Provide opportunities to create and make
- ✚ Use student voice to inform practice and programmes

Kotahitanga – ethic of bonding

- ✚ Develop a sense of family within the classroom environment
- ✚ Develop an ethic of care and protection in the wider community
- ✚ Lead by example
- ✚ Operate by the underlying principles of partnership, protection and participation as represented by the Treaty of Waitangi.

Macfarlan, A (2004) Kia hiwa ra! Listen to the Culture – Maori students' plea to educators

Acknowledgement of Taupo Intermediate in providing support in creating this document. 2011

Boys' Learning Characteristics	Teacher Qualities
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Short, closed tasks broken down into chunks ○ Daily, regular physical activity ○ Purpose of learning clearly communicated ○ Cooperative learning ○ Competition ○ 'Hands on' activities ○ Quality more important than quantity ○ Allow for movement and different seating arrangements. ○ Need a sense of team – build a relationship of loyalty ○ Keep environment noise level minimal ○ Keep environment cool ○ Allow humour ○ Frequent monitoring, feedback and accountability. ○ Need to lead and feel confident in ability ○ Frequent goal setting of achievable goals and long term goal to look towards 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Clear, and non-negotiable boundaries: JDI's ○ Clear, structured programmed ○ Use a balance of teaching strategies ○ Provide a variety of practical, hands on opportunities to support learning ○ Provide a variety of experiences on which to build knowledge ○ Programmes that are challenging and with a practical purpose to the students ○ Clear expectations ○ Meaningful praise and positive support – moderate emotions ○ Clearly defined rules and responsibilities ○ "Boy' interest curriculum ○ Use of fun and humour ○ Allow action time between lessons (micro breaks) ○ An interest in 'boys' and their interests ○ Actively involved ○ A good role model

<i>Girls' Learning Characteristics</i>	<i>Teacher Qualities</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ <i>Purpose of learning clearly communicated.</i> ○ <i>Cooperative learning.</i> ○ <i>Need opportunities to create with colour and textiles.</i> ○ <i>Need opportunities to create using a variety of information tools.</i> ○ <i>Allow time to communicate ideas and unpack feelings.</i> ○ <i>Environment of support and positive interactions that are not judgmental.</i> ○ <i>Quality more important than quantity.</i> ○ <i>Allow for different seating arrangements to develop relationships and avoid clichés.</i> ○ <i>Need a sense of belonging – build a relationship of care.</i> ○ <i>Allow humour.</i> ○ <i>Frequent monitoring, feedback and accountability.</i> ○ <i>Need to lead and feel confident in ability to feel part of a team.</i> ○ <i>Frequent goal setting of achievable goals and long term goal to look towards.</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ <i>Fosters a safe and secure environment – a sisterhood</i> ○ <i>Provides a vast variety of learning programmes that allow creativity of thought and presentation.</i> ○ <i>Provides opportunities for open communication and verbal expression.</i> ○ <i>Understands and displays an empathy towards 'girl issues'</i> ○ <i>Understands relationships are unstable and can be easily disrupted.</i> ○ <i>Uses conscience and open communication to problem solve.</i> ○ <i>Cooperative learning.</i> ○ <i>Guides and supports students in their learning through conversations.</i> ○ <i>Helps set goals and next steps using visual and oral techniques.</i> ○ <i>Allows students to use colour and provides a variety of visual templates in which to mind map/scaffold learning.</i>