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Boys don't try—CPD session evaluation—18/5/20

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Before partaking in the 'Boys Don't Try' CPD session there was definitely a sense of apprehension, scepticism and doubt. I have been teaching for over 20 years and I thought that I clearly **do not** need advice or guidance on what strategies are required to help me to effectively teach boys! I have always believed in my ability to engage boys in my lessons, my interaction with them and the working relationships I have with male pupils within Key Stage 4 in particular are strong aspects of my teaching. I have however, previously had lower expectations of most boys in my classes and I have negatively categorised them as a problem because 'well they're boys, they just don't try as hard as girls, they're not as conscientious, they're not as bothered as girls and they have a lack of interest in revising'. Therefore, I have tried approaches like competitive tasks to encourage and engage boys.

As a PE teacher, I am a keen advocate in promoting a competitive nature within my lessons, as it is an integral part of sport and there are generally winners and losers. Whether it be a practical or theory lesson in a mixed gender class at Key Stage 4 or within an all boys class at Key Stage 3, I tend to focus on the element of competition based on engaging the boys. Whilst I am confident in my behaviour management, it can be quite difficult to manage a boys only class at times as they do tend to be quite boisterous in an all-male setting and this is where the competition element **can be** effective. It can help reduce changes in behaviour like poor concentration by giving them focus and a sense of belonging within their teams and it can help individual pupils achieve personal bests. However, it can split boys in terms of their behaviour and the whole class situation can change quickly when the competition produces losers.

Mark Roberts highlighted the aspect of competition and the issues it can create as a concern within the webinar and in his book. Mark identified that too often competition can cause more harm than good as it can lead to the concept that it will generally create more 'losers' than it does 'winners' and to some male pupils this can be demoralising. It can also generate the 'if I don't try, then I can't fail' attitude. They sometimes see that achievement is not always possible and they will often avoid effort if there cannot be a successful end result. Therefore, we need to address this to avoid fear and increase confidence to avoid a negative environment and to constantly stretch and challenge boys as much as girls.

The **CPD** training has supported my recent distance teaching and future lesson planning, as I am now trying to implement different strategies to try to ensure that the boys in my Btec Year 10 group in particular will become more engaged and successful. Within the boy heavy classroom environment it is important that I use praise and encouragement more often, incorporate modelling, use boy's work as examples of good responses and celebrate risk taking in lessons so that boys can enjoy the same success as girls when they see and experience that achievement is possible. I need to avoid negative low expectations and categorisation of boys and stop assuming that all boys want to be competitive in order to attain. I also need to focus more on the boy's emotional well-being so that they are more willing to produce good quality work.

