

McGarry-Moore, Joan, 2005, *School Effectiveness and Co-education: A Comparative Study in Male/Female Student Perceptions of Effective Education in Single-sex and Co-educational Schools.*

ABSTRACT OF DISSERTATION

The purpose of this study is to investigate whether or not the school type has any significant bearing on students' views of what constitutes effective education. This dissertation investigates students' responses to the positive effects that school effectiveness research has championed, attempting to discern whether the responses are congruent in the three school types under investigation; a female single sex secondary school, a male single sex secondary school and a co-educational community college.

The results of the study indicate that significantly more students of both genders from single sex schools (47% female and 40% male) select having a safe environment as their top priority, as opposed to male (30%) and female (27%) co-educated students. The latter ranked involvement in extra-curricular activities as important (13% male and 3% female) by contrast with no students from single sex schools.

School councils were deemed important for 10% of co-educated females while 0% of female single sex school students considered this to be so, and unlike the 7% of the two other male student types. 83% of male single sex students compared with 59% of co-educated males, 73% of co-educated females and 63% of female single sex school students deem school type to shape school effectiveness 'very much'. 77% of male single sex school students claimed that they would feel happier in co-educational schools, by comparison with 96% and 100% of co-educated male and female students respectively and 37% of female single sex students. However 7% of co-educated males by contrast with 0% co-educated females and only 3% of both genders in single sex schools found their schools 'not good'.

Both genders in single sex schools placed a premium on teachers who were good at explaining things while co-educated students felt that the above trait and teachers being interested in their subject were equally important. Students from single sex schools preferred teachers to exert high demands on them, preferred that their parents should be closely involved in school life, prized SPHE and valued the interventions of class tutors and year heads more than their co-educated peers.

More single sex school students valued streaming over mixed ability structured classes than co-educated students. For male single sex school students the most important ideal promoted by schools was academic attainment by contrast with the ideal of promoting a well-rounded individual for all other students. A worrying 18% of co-educated males felt that their overall experience of school life had made them

unhappy by contrast with 3% of male, 10% of female single sex school students and 0% of female co-educated school students.