The Atypical Boy

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Who is the Typical Boy?

- Active
- Aggressive
- Loud
- Visual learner – not verbal learner
- Kinaesthetic approach works
  - Touches everything
- Peer oriented
- Interested in sports
- School is not a priority

Who is the Atypical Boy?

- Verbally oriented
- Passive and controlled
  - Responsive to teachers
- Nerd/Geek/Dork
  - Gamers/LARP/fantasy re-enactment
  - Asperger's syndrome
- Loner or friends with girls
- Interested in art/drama/dance or classical music
- Either developmentally mature or immature

Dealing with his parents

- Why did they chose a boys' school?
  - Want him to turn into a "normal" boy
    - Do not understand/approve of his interests
  - Social factors
- What can you do?
  - Help them come to terms with their son
  - Support the boy in his interests and abilities
  - Face the fact that your school may not be the right place for this boy
    - As a teacher, that is not your decision to make

The Verbal Boy

- The Problem
  - Boys' schools curricula designed for non-verbal student
    - A particular problem in maths and science
  - This boy can become a "teacher's pet"
- The Solution
  - Teachers need to plan curricula for all sorts of learners
    - Need to help students prepare for coed learning situation
    - Pushes staff to expand teaching approaches
  - This student will develop into more a versatile learner

The Passive Boy

- The Problem
  - Does not participate
  - Will not defend himself
  - Whines, blames others for his problems
  - Depends on parents for support
- The Solution
  - If parents are overinvolved, they need enlightenment, and child needs instruction in self-control
    - Parent group will help, good advisory/house system
  - Develop methods to help the boy participate in class
  - Encourage participation in extracurricular activities

The Nerd/Geek/Dork

- The Problem
  - Preoccupied with computer – don't do their work
  - Socially inept – Autism spectrum? Focus of bullying
  - Contemptuous of fellow students and some teachers
- The Solution
  - Limits on computer access, use of technical skills to help self, others, and school
  - Social skills training
  - Don't turn them into teacher's aides, but try to get them to help other students, not their peers
  - Provide upper level courses – special sections, local tertiary school

The Loner

- The Problem
  - May have substance abuse issues
  - May be a bad fit with the rest of the school
  - May be shy
  - May have home or abuse issues
  - May be due to sexual orientation differences
- The Solution
  - Find out the issue
    - Is he shy? Drugged? New? Unprepared? Can't keep up with the material?
  - Someone needs to step up to connect with this student
    - Likely to be someone who is "off the grid"
  - If shy, may need social skills help
  - Will need an advocate

The Artist/Actor/Dancer/Musician

- The Problem
  - Classical music not other types
  - Interests which can be seen as feminine
  - Appearance can make problems worse
- The Solution
  - Educate the school
  - Treat the pursuit of art similarly to the pursuit of sport
  - Encourage artist to participate in at least one sport
    - Swimming helps singers
    - Fencing helps actors
    - Debate helps all performers

Ahead/Behind of the Developmental Curve

- The Problem
  - Student is significantly larger or smaller than rest of class
  - Student is either academically way ahead of the rest of the class or way behind

- The Solution
  - It can be very hard for adults to respond appropriately to a child whose size is different than his peers – keep reminding them of his age
  - This student can be moved forward or held back, but it will create social issues

Welcoming all students to school

- Not all boys think or learn alike and the boy who is noticeably different may feel as if he doesn't belong
- Society can have a rigid definition of masculinity and any behaviour which is atypical can be threatening to young boys
- Adults can be unaware of their own prejudices and pressure students to conform
- Schools can develop an "us against the world" ethos and may be perceived as closed to those who do not fit the model