



**Boys' Learning**  
Research group on men and their families.



**ARTICLE**



LEARNING HAS NEVER  
**BEEN SO EASY**



SCHOOL MADE EASY  
**ARTICLES**

# 10 THINGS TEACHERS CAN DO TO HELP BOYS LEARN

A must for teachers to read and use.

PETER WEST\*

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# **TEN THINGS TEACHERS CAN DO TO HELP BOYS LEARN**

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## **1. TALK LESS.**

Boys are not terribly good listeners. Cut the words you use down to the absolute minimum. Get boys active early in the lesson. Avoid a long preamble.

## **2. GET BOYS DOING.**

Focus on – what will boys DO in this lesson? Most males are focused on action. It comes partly from their biology. And partly from what we expect of boys.

## **3. USE HUMOUR**

Use a joke now and then. It really helps to get boys on side and it discourages trouble from appearing because they are bored.

## **4. GET HELP.**

Use a teacher buddy to help you watch underachievers who slide under the radar. Tell the class someone is coming in to give you a hand.

## **5. “CAN YOU DO IT?”**

Challenge boys more. Boys say school doesn't challenge them enough.

## **6. COMPETITION WORKS.**

Get boys competing-against others, against themselves, against teachers.

“I bet I can do this faster than you...”. Many boys will do it, and enjoy proving the teacher wrong.

## **7. HELP WITH WRITING**

Cut down writing tasks to what is absolutely necessary. Show boys how to write assessment items. Use guidelines, rubrics, models. Work on what interests the boy in front of you. And don't imagine that boys are all the same.

## 8. BEING A MAN MEANS...

Get boys talking about what it means to be male. Women have a useful role to play because they have experience of men as husbands, partners, sons; don't be afraid to give boys some help in getting on with other people. Men have a role, too. Guys, don't try to be a big he-man. Show boys by example – read books, be gracious and thoughtful to female teachers. Look at examples of men in the media and help boys question them.

## 9. KEEP IT CLEAR

Explain tasks simply, step by step. Put the steps up somewhere and refer boys to them.

## 10. BE BRIEF - BE POSITIVE - BE GONE

Go around and encourage boys with a quick word of praise. And move on to the next student. We all like some praise! Don't you?

Ideas from:

West, P. (2002) *What is the Matter with Boys?* Choice Books, Sydney.

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