

# BUILDING CONNECTIONS

Teaching Boys: A Global Study of Effective Practices



**NATIONAL BOYS' SCHOOLS CONFERENCE, SOUTH AFRICA**  
**International Boys' School Coalition**

MARCH 6-7, 2009



## TEACHING BOYS

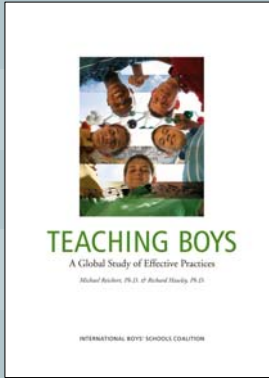
A Global Study of Effective Practices

Michael Richert, Ph.D. & Richard Healey, Ph.D.

INTERNATIONAL BOYS' SCHOOLS COALITION

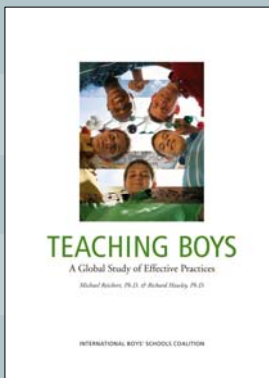
HOW BOYS LEARN 1





Auckland Grammar School, New Zealand  
Belmont Hill School, United States  
Brisbane Grammar School, Australia  
Christ Church Grammar School, Australia  
Collegiate School, United States  
Crescent School, Canada  
Dulwich College, England  
Gilman School, United States  
The Haverford School, United States  
Knox Grammar School, Australia  
Lindisfarne College, New Zealand  
McCallie School, United States  
Salisbury School, United States  
Selwyn House School, Canada  
Saint Alban's College, South Africa  
Saint Christopher's School, United States  
Saint John's College, South Africa  
Trinity Grammar School, Australia

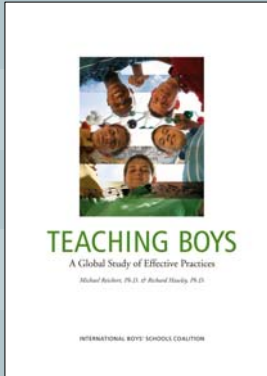
HOW BOYS LEARN 2



## ■ RESEARCH DESIGN

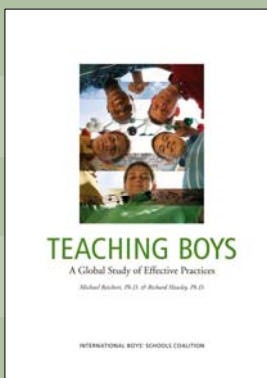
HOW BOYS LEARN 3





## A CLIMATE OF CONCERN ABOUT BOYS

HOW BOYS LEARN 4

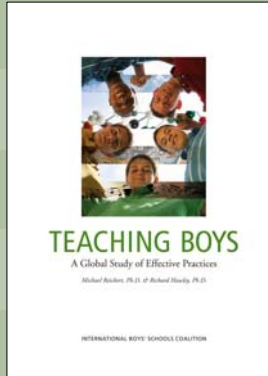


### Teacher Questions

1. Please describe an effective practice you have employed. In narrating your observations, take care to avoid evaluative terms like “wonderful” or “inspired.” Instead, show the qualities that evoke those feelings in you with clear narration of what is said and done in the course of the lesson.

HOW BOYS LEARN 5

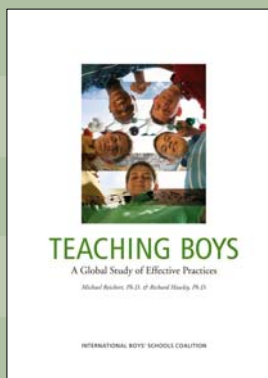




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2. To what do you attribute this lesson’s special effectiveness? (There is no need to be authoritative or “scientific” in this appraisal.)

HOW BOYS LEARN 6

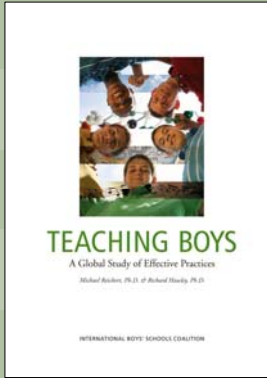


## Teacher Questions

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2. To what do you attribute this lesson’s special effectiveness? (There is no need to be authoritative or “scientific” in this appraisal.)
3. Is there something about this lesson that you believe is specially pitched to boys’ learning?

HOW BOYS LEARN 7

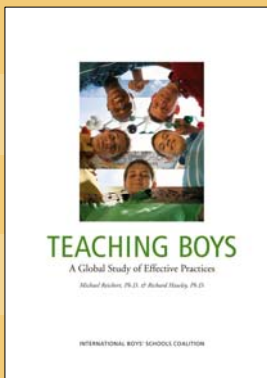




## Teacher Questions

1. Please describe an effective practice you have employed. In narrating your observations, take care to avoid evaluative terms like “wonderful” or “inspired.” Instead, show the qualities that evoke those feelings in you with clear narration of what is said and done in the course of the lesson.
2. To what do you attribute this lesson’s special effectiveness? (There is no need to be authoritative or “scientific” in this appraisal.)
3. Is there something about this lesson that you believe is specially pitched to boys’ learning?
4. Are there measurable outcomes—or outcomes that might conceivably be measured—that could objectively document the effectiveness of this practice?

HOW BOYS LEARN 8

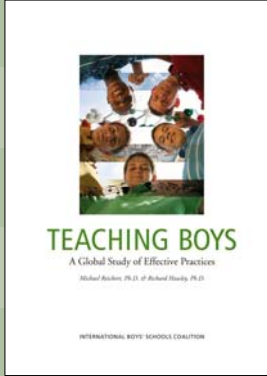


## Student Questions

In the box below, tell us the story of a class experience that stands out as being especially memorable for you. By this, we mean that it was especially interesting, engaging or motivating for you. It might be a particular lesson, unit of study, a choice of text or subject matter, a class activity or exercise, or a project or assignment. It doesn't have to be an occasion when you achieved well in a subject, but simply one in which you found yourself especially engaged, interested or motivated. When you tell this story, please give as many details as you can in describing what took place. Avoid judging or praising with words like “terrific” or “best”; rather, show what occurred. You do not need to give the name of the teacher, but if it is easier for you to refer directly to the teacher by name, it will be removed later on.

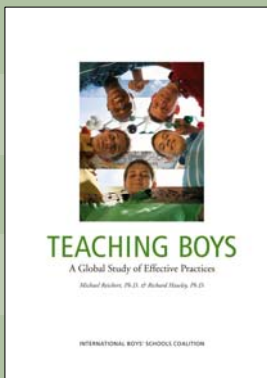
HOW BOYS LEARN 9





## TEACHER RESPONSES

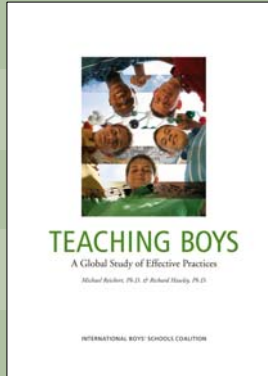
HOW BOYS LEARN 10



## CATEGORIES OF EFFECTIVE PRACTICE

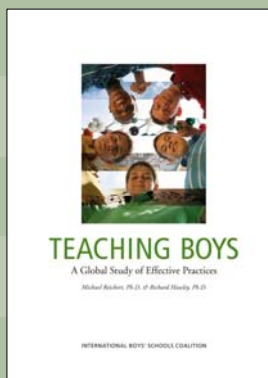
HOW BOYS LEARN 11





## Categories of Effective Practice

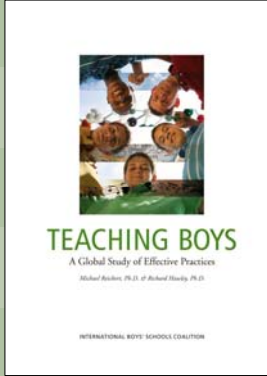
- Created Product
- Gaming
- Motor Activity
- Role Play/Performance
- Open Inquiry
- Team Work/Competition
- Personal Realization
- Responsibility for Outcomes
- Intrinsic Subject Matter
- Interactive Technology
- Boy-Specific Pedagogy
- Metacognition
- Novelty, Drama, Surprise



## Teacher Responses

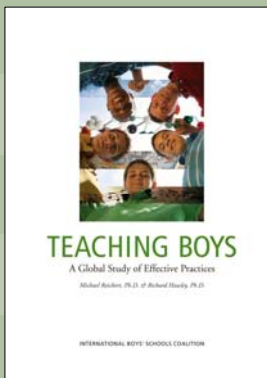
- The Ubiquity of Technology





## Teacher Responses

The Ubiquity of Technology  
Effective Lessons:  
Formative or Merely Fun?

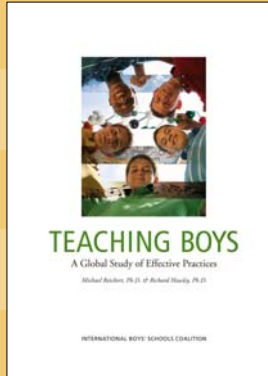


## Teacher Responses

The Ubiquity of Technology  
Effective Lessons:  
Formative or Merely Fun?  
The Transitive Factor in Effective Lessons

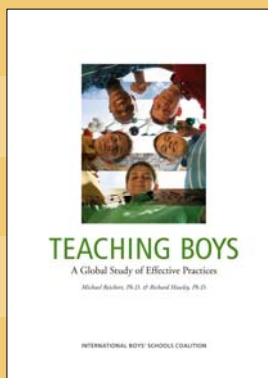






## STUDENT RESPONSES

HOW BOYS LEARN 16



### Student Responses

**Playfulness:**

fun, play, gaming, surprise, role play, screentime

**Adventure and Discovery:**

being “free”, being “outside”

**Centering:**

reaching in, drawing out, mobilizing, being physical, visual illustrations, ‘hands-on’ illustrations, making things

**Social Validation:**

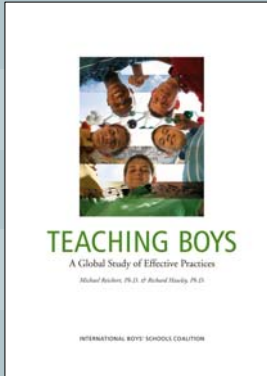
performance and display, debate, competition, teamwork, peer learning and teaching

**Self-Completion:**

lifted to success, meeting the challenge on one’s own, personal realization

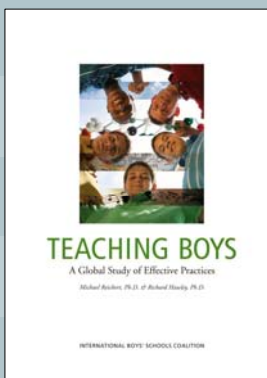
HOW BOYS LEARN 17





## THE RELATIONAL CONTEXT

HOW BOYS LEARN 18



### The Relational Context

- Reading the Teacher
- Drawing Attention
- Incorporating Humor
- Offering to Mentor
- Demonstrating Mastery
- Offering Inspiration
- Friendly Style
- Structured, Authoritative style
- Personal Disclosure and Modeling
- Reciprocating Care

HOW BOYS LEARN 19



### Carol Gilligan

“Voice and relationship are interdependent. Having a voice, speaking for oneself, representing oneself, saying what one knows, speaking from experience – these human capacities flourish or wither depending on the relational climate (2005, p. xii).”

Gilligan, C. (2005). Foreword. In M. Raider-Roth, *Trusting what you know. The high stakes of classroom relationships*. New York: Jossey-Bass.



### Miriam Raider-Roth

“Just as the theory of the relational self postulates that the self is born and develops in the cradle and life of relationships, so the notion of the relational learner postulates that the learning self is constructed and developed within the relationships of school (2005, p. 21).”

Raider-Roth, M. (2005). *Trusting what you know. The high stakes of classroom relationships*. New York: Jossey-Bass.



### Andrew Martin

“Girls are more inclined than boys to adopt a learning or mastery focus, plan schoolwork, manage study effectively, and persist in the face of challenge...Boys are more inclined than girls to self-sabotage (p. 142).”

Martin, A.J. (2004). School motivation of boys and girls: Differences of degree, differences of kind, or both? *Australian Journal of Psychology*, 56 (3), 133–146.



### Andrew Martin

“Particularly critical to students’ engagement and motivation in a particular subject was their *relationship with their teacher* (p. 54)”.

Martin, A. J. (2003). Boys and motivation. *The Australian Educational Researcher*, 30 (3), 43–65.



### Mark Merry

“The formal curriculum therefore may tend to be the ‘main game’ in the teaching of girls. For boys, it is possible that this is but one narrative in the classroom; running parallel or in conflict is the relational narrative.”

(2009, PhD dissertation)

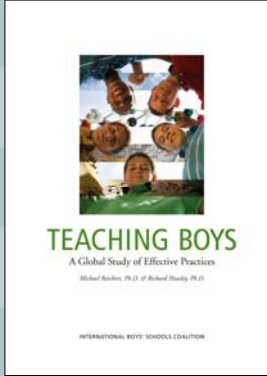


### Nel Noddings

“When we need to draw on ethical caring, we turn to an ethical ideal constituted from memories of caring and being cared for.”

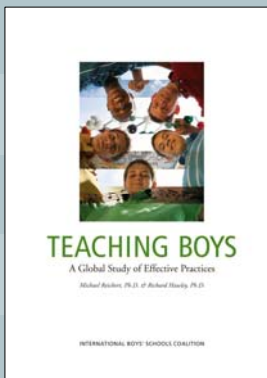
Noddings, N. (2002). *Educating moral people*. New York: Teachers College Press.





## CONVERGENCES AND DIVERGENCES

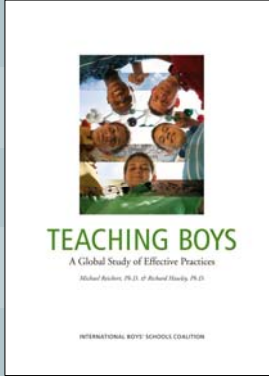
HOW BOYS LEARN 26



## IMPLICATIONS FOR TEACHERS

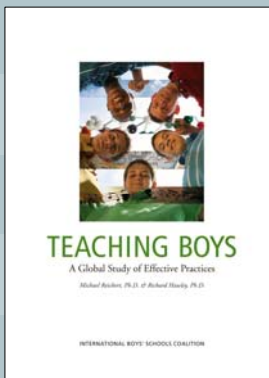
HOW BOYS LEARN 27





## Implications for Teachers

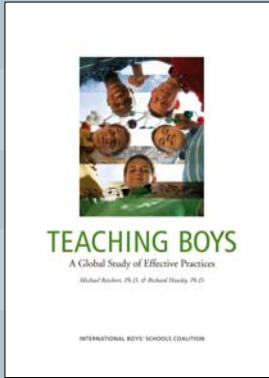
Clear Contours:  
Active Learning



## Implications for Teachers

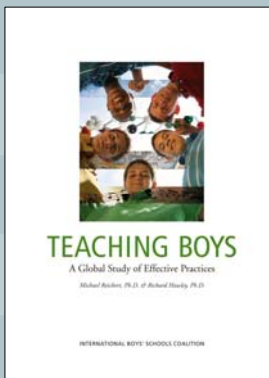
Clear Contours:  
Active Learning  
Competition  
and Collaboration





## Implications for Teachers

Clear Contours:  
Active Learning  
Competition  
and Collaboration  
A Sense of Immediacy

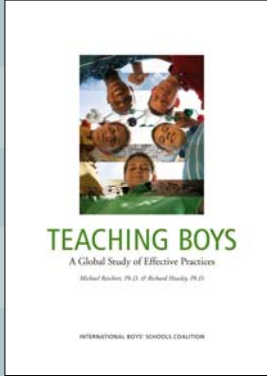


## Implications for Teachers

Clear Contours:  
Active Learning  
Competition  
and Collaboration  
A Sense of Immediacy  
The Relational Dimension







## Implications for Schools

Gender-Specific  
Classrooms for Boys



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HOW BOYS LEARN 33

