Same Sex Schools: Battle Of Academics

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In the current generation we are in, there are many methods to the way a student will obtain knowledge in class. There are many factors that effect this. One, is the environment setting of how a student learns the material. A learning environment of either all females or all males are what is to be determined. What proof is out there to prove which type of learning offers the best education to a student? The environment can also lead to other traits that may be developed in a student as years go on in learning in the specific environment of a single-sex school or a co-ed school, with both girls and boys. The setting of the environment also consists of the teaching and who is doing the teaching. “The issue of same-sex education may be moot for many Americans, since the number of single-sex schools is still relatively small. However, as the trend toward single-sex education continues, the debate over whether this is the best way to educate America’s children is also sure to grow.” (Chen par. 15). So, is single sex education better than co-education? In my opinion, attending a same-sex school has minimal benefits because of the negative impacts on a students’ developed communication skills and personality that are unconsciously learned from associating with the same sex; therefore , same sex schools take away from one’s learning experiences during the important developmental years.

Same sex schools in the past were referred to as segregated, it was changed later in history to be more appropriately referred to. “Segregating boys and girls in an education setting has been challenged with respect to the 19th amendment of the U.S. Constitution and the Civil Rights Act of 1964. However, it has been deemed legal under specific conditions.” (Xiong p.1) The reason for separating students was because they began to believe it will provide better learning with the different environment provided to students. “Additional research on the effectiveness of single-gender classrooms is necessary, but we all can agree that we need to construct an educational environment that meets the social and intellectual needs of boys and girls.” ('Research Spotlight on Single-Gender Education' 2002-2019) “Today, there are 25 same-sex public schools in the nation, almost all formed after 1996, according to NASSPE. Another 72 schools offer single-sex classes.” (Mendez par.5).

As a student myself now I know I would feel as if I am always competing if I was in a single sex school. School is a place of education, but the surrounding environment plays a role in the way a student will want to obtain information. Many do not take education lightly and parents are the ones to ultimately decide on the best way for their child to learn. Some parents look at it from a social aspect and others not so much. Either way it goes, if a parent is told one kind of teaching is better than the other, the parent will still choose what they feel is best. Their decision may have something to do with past experiences or it may also be guided toward just solely believing that they are giving their child the best academic education possible.

Based off multiple research being done it has been proven that having single sexed schools is much better than co-ed schools because the test scores are better. So even if the students were at a co-ed school and put into one class with their own gender the test scores were proven to improve. “Test-score gains reveal positive pattern of achievement in reading and language arts, especially as related to single-sex classes.” (Spielhagen p.120). Research and study is

likely to always be the best way to prove a point, and majority of this research says that it is actually beneficial to have single-sex education rather than co-ed. “Girls who grow up with brothers tend to be more interested in sports and building toys than girls without brothers. For their part, boys have been found to develop better verbal ability and relational skills, and especially, achieve greater academic growth the more time and space they shared with girls.” (Elliot par. 13). Then there is also research against what others may want to prove to be true or can say shows evidence through numbers. “Controversary over brain-based research fuels other objections by many researchers and educators, as well as by feminists and civil-rights advocates. Critics maintain that research on the effectiveness of single-sex education has been mixed, with critics citing methodological flaws in most studies” (Chen 15)

Students in co-ed school may benefit more over a single-sex school because it produces more developmental skills in academics, social and communication skills, and everyday life skills. This is not to say that one is not outweighing the other, but both have their own upsides. From social skills to basic life skills attending either version of schooling will result in a way a student learns. No one student is the same, meaning learning environment will impact the student in their own way. “The American Association of University Women published Separated by Sex: A Critical Look at Single-Sex Education for Girls (1998), which notes that single-sex education is not necessarily better than coeducation.” ('Research Spotlight on Single-Gender Education' 2002-2019)

Another reason co-ed education may be better over single sex is, because the teachers also play a big role into education. Even if a school is single sex it will not change the sex of the teachers to all one gender as well. With that being said, the teachers will take on a bigger role of conceiving a way of learning to the students given to them based off a specific curriculum. There is an impression that whether you are teaching boys or girls it changes how an educator will teach. “While the evidence is compelling, opponents of single-sex education have equally damning evidence against the practice. An article at Science 2.0 cites psychologists and educators that disregard evidence that single-sex education works, and instead claim it fosters sexism that gets in the way of a positive learning environment.” (Chen 13)

Sexism in our generation is looked down upon, and this is what single sex education is creating. No one will want a child to become gender biased because of how they learn in the classroom. “Similarly, in classroom-based research Valerie Lee at the University of Michigan found the greatest expression of sexism in all-boys’ schools. She found such behavior was not limited to males – all-girls’ campuses could also foster stereotyping and a type of “pernicious sexism,” or dumbing-down of challenging material.” (Elliot par. 9). Learning is among the bigger standpoint of the issues but if educators are saying single sex education will do better over co-education, is this not saying that either boys or girls are better? The gender a student may be will lead them to believe that their education and sex is better than the opposite because it will be all the students know. “…maintains and even exacerbates sexist attitudes and gender stereotypes (e.g., gender oriented facilities and teaching content and methods create a gender-stereotypical environment, limit exposure to the opposite sex and cross sex social-emotional learning)” (Xiong p. 2).

Education all together is important, and the point is that students are obtaining the valuable information they will need to succeed in life. Single sex schools nor co-ed schools, from my research, has been seen to be better than the other. Even though I want to be able to say that single sex education is just outrageous, factually speaking there is just know steady way of

proving this. In hindsight, it is important that students know the opposite sex because it avoids teaching the skill of sexism. Boys are neither greater than a girl and vice versa. The education a student can absorb really has a lot more factors than just who the student is learning with. So, whether they are learning in a single sex school or a co-ed school, also factoring in how they are taught the material, and the way the teacher approaches students has an effect as well. As I said school is a way of teaching some of the life skills that will follow along with you in the future. “At this time, the answers to basic questions about same-sex education cannot be satisfactorily answered by formal research findings. Prevailing pro and con arguments reflect a host of considerations” (Cindy Xiong 3). So, after doing careful research I have found that really debating if single sex school has more benefits over a co-ed school really is nothing to debate about. The separation of sexes in the school districts in the future, may expand but the research I believe will stay the same. No matter how many schools supporting the fact that single sex education is better than co-education, the proof over the years has shown that there is no true evidence to solidly make either statement of which education is recommended. This whole debate to me is so touchy, this could go either way. At times, the research led me to believe this co-education was less productive in an educational matter than if a student received education in a single sex environment. Honestly, either environment is teaching a student to obtain all the life skills for in the future and present, not all students may learn the same skills from a single sex school apart from a co-ed school, but the students are still learning.

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