



Boy Writers: Reclaiming Their Voices

Ralph Fletcher

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Writing test scores indicate that boys have fallen far behind girls across the grades. In general, boys don't enjoy writing as much as girls. What's wrong? How can we do a better job of creating "boy-friendly" classrooms so their voices can be heard?

In Boy Writers: Reclaiming Their Voices Ralph Fletcher draws upon his years of experience as staff developer, children's book author, and father of four boys. He also taps the insights from dozens of writing teachers around the US and abroad. *Boy Writers* asks teachers to imagine the writing classroom from a boy's perspective, and consider specific steps we might take to create stimulating classrooms for boys.

Topic choice emerges as a crucial issue. The subjects many boys like to write about (war, weapons, outlandish fiction, zany or bathroom humor) often do not get a warm reception from teachers. Ralph argues that we must "widen the circle" and give boys more choice if we want to engage them as writers. How? We must begin by recognizing boys and the world in which they live. *Boy Writers* explores important questions such as:

- What subjects are boy writers passionate about, and what motivates them as writers?
- Why do boys like to incorporate violence into their stories, and how much should be allowed?
- Why do we so often misread and misunderstand the humor boys include in their stories?

In addition, the book looks at: how handwriting can hamstring boy writers, and how drawing may help; welcoming boy-friendly writing genres in our classrooms; ways to improve our conferring with boys; and more.

Each chapter begins with a thorough discussion of a topic and ends with a highly practical section titled: "What can I do in my classroom?" *Boy Writers* does not advocate promoting the interests of boys at the expense of girls. Rather, it argues that developing sensitivity to the unique facets of boy writers will help teachers better address the needs of all their students.

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