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Tapping Into a Boy's World: A Literacy Hook offers a wide comprehensive range of literature on boys' and their literacy development. The life world experiences (who and what they are) of boys are increasingly being recognized as a crucial component in the development and achievement of literacy skills.

A study by Smith and Wilhelm (2000) found that while boys valued school based reading in theory, they often rejected it in practice because the school-based reading was not characterized by the qualities that marked the activities (both literate and not) that the boys pursued out of school.

Blair and Sanford (2002) tracked a group of Canadian elementary school boys over three years. They conducted interviews, classroom observations and observations of the classroom literacy activities in which the boys were engaged. Analysis of the interviews with the boys in this study revealed five themes around which their literacy practices were constructed: **personal interest, action, success, fun, and purpose**. If boys are to be engaged in literacy, then these are the elements that teachers need to incorporate into their teaching and learning activities.

Boys' Literacy and Success: A Profile

Research indicates that literacy skills have a profound effect on boys' performance in all subjects, as well as their success in post-secondary education, the workplace, and their personal lives.

When compared with girls overall, boys; (1)

- Are less likely to go to university
- Have higher dropout rates
- Are more likely to be placed in special education programs
- Take longer to learn to read
- Read less
- Provide lower estimations of their reading abilities
- Value reading as an activity less than girls
- Are more likely to declare themselves non-readers
- Express less enthusiasm for reading

Boys' Literacy for Success: Critical Insight

Underlying the approach of the boys' literacy initiative and the challenge of boys' literacy achievement are a number of critical understandings and concepts: (1)

Boy's literacy is an equity issue: it is not about excluding girls, but including boys.

Boys are not homogeneous: in fact, differences among boys are greater than the difference between girls and boys.

All students' benefit: the educational approaches developed to improve boys' performance will also contribute to the success of girls.

Ability follows attitude: the research demonstrates that improving boys' attitude toward reading and writing is a critical factor in developing their achievement.

Teachers must be supported: the development of appropriate materials and best practices is fundamental to success.

Boys' literacy is a shared commitment: taking action requires strong collaboration at every level of the education system.

Boys' Literacy with Success: - Motivation – Materials - Male-mentoring

An inclusive home and school approach that encourages positive early literacy experiences for boys with engaging male-oriented materials will foster male-mentoring and promote boys' literacy with success. (2)

1. **Boys' motivation and engagement for early literacy skills:** can be improved and better sustained with action-driven topics and material presented in a highly visual manner
2. **Materials need to be developed:** that reflect a boy's natural interest and predisposition to physical play, aggression and competition
3. **Boys' benefit from male mentoring:** encouraging father and/or significant adult male mentoring during early literacy learning with engaged and supportive male role modeling in the family home is essential for boys' literacy to meet with success.