

# Hands in the Air Like You Just Don't Care

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## Introduction

Teachers commonly appear to be guilty when it comes to calling on the same students to answer questions during a lesson. Some teachers find themselves always calling on the "advanced" students, others find themselves always calling on the boys, or only calling on the students who raise their hand, and they never get any new students to share. This can greatly affect how much the students are learning and understanding what is being taught within the classroom, and can take a toll on the level of engagement teachers will receive from their students. Therefore, we decided to take a deeper look into which gender of students we see in our field experience classrooms being called on most by our cooperating teachers - males or females. Tons of research studies have been conducted observing which gender receives more classroom attention from teachers. From these studies, researchers found that it was more common for teachers to call on male students when their hands were raised rather than female students. A twenty year study that took place in an elementary and middle school found that boys received eight times more classroom attention than girls (Sortino, 2012). With that being said, we chose this topic because we wanted to see if our cooperating teachers had gender-bias within their classrooms when it came to calling on their students. By conducting our own study, we can see whether or not our cooperating teachers follow the same trends commonly found in other studies that point to teachers calling on more males than females within the classroom. As future elementary school teachers, being aware of this issue can significantly help maximize the learning that takes place for each individual student in our future classrooms.

## Methods

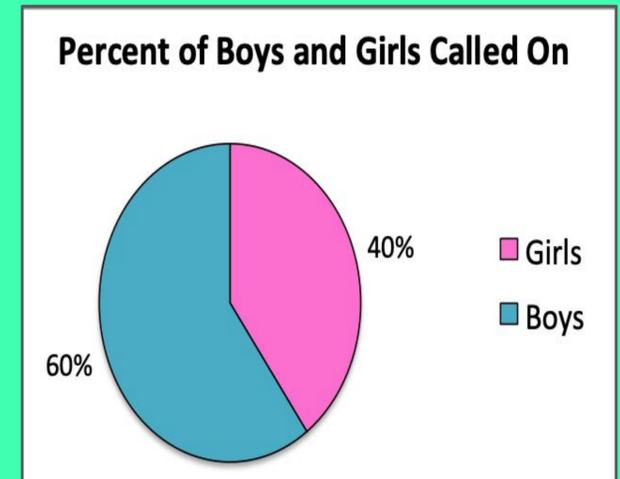
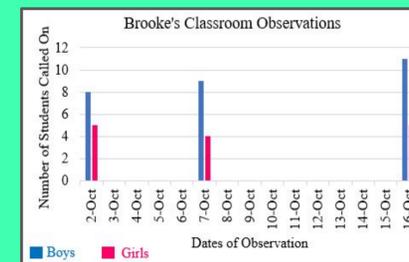
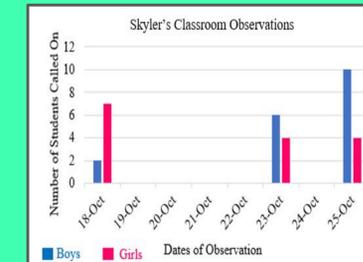
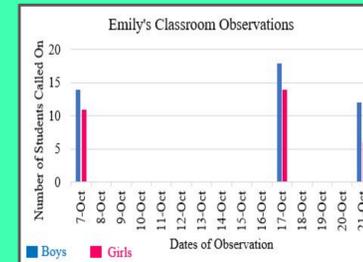
For our curiosity project, all observations were completed at Alexander D. Goode Elementary School in the York City School District. Brooke observed a third-grade class, Emily observed a second-grade class, and Skyler observed a kindergarten class. All observations were recorded over a thirty-minute time period. Each observer completed three thirty-minute observations of their classroom in the month of October. Tally marks were used to mark each time the teacher called on either a boy or girl during whole group instruction within the classroom. During observation time in the classroom, difficulties rose. Remembering to physically make a tally for each time a student was called on was more difficult than it seemed. We had to be focused and remember to accurately tally the teacher's actions when calling on a student. Additionally, in the urban school setting, teachers always need extra help. Therefore, it was hard to find time to just sit back and observe the classroom because we were always busy doing other things within the classroom to help our cooperating teachers. In addition, we all ran into some difficulty with finding times where our cooperating teachers were looking to engage students and call on them for participation. Our three cooperating teachers did not do much direct instructing within their classrooms, so whenever they did, we had to take advantage of these rare occurrences in order to collect enough data for our project.

## References

Sortino, D. (2012, December 13). When boys get more classroom attention than girls. Retrieved from <http://davidSortino.blogspot.com/10161/when-boys-get-more-classroom-attention-than-girls/>.

## Results

After the three of us made observations of who our cooperating teachers called on within their kindergarten, second grade, and third grade classrooms, we compiled the data we had recorded from these observations. We each conducted three 30 minutes periods of observations and recorded how many times the teacher called on boys versus girls with the use of tally marks. In each of our individual data sets, we found that our cooperating teachers were calling on males more than females. We then put all of our data together to make a larger pool of data to look at the results. When we did this, we found that boys were called on more than girls in a ratio of 3:2. Boys were called on 90 times out of the 150 total times students were called on throughout all the observations made in the three different classrooms. However, girls were only called on 60 times out of the 150 total times students were called on throughout all the observation made in the three different classrooms. Therefore, boys were called on about 60% of the time while girls were only called on about 40% of the time.



## Reflections

After reviewing our collected data, we concluded that teachers generally call on boys more than girls in an elementary school classroom. With data collected across three different grade levels, our results had the same trend: more boys were called on than girls. We utilized our process skills of communicating, observing, and inferring throughout this process. First, we communicated as a group the best way to complete our data collection. Then, we completed multiple observations in the classroom to discover which gender of students were called on most in our field experience placements. We then used our results and our prior understanding of teacher actions within the classroom to infer that we too may call on boys more in our future classroom than girls. We can use our collected data to make ourselves more aware of this issue and encourage ourselves to be cognizant of how often we call on each gender and encourage equal participation from both genders. As future elementary school teachers, this research we are conducting can help us recognize why girls could be losing interest in science or have negative attitudes toward the subject. If, as teachers, we are calling on boys more in the classroom, that could be a cause of these issues. Therefore, these issues could be avoided by ensuring we are calling on the same number of boys and girls. Despite ability, gender, and race, we should be giving each student equal opportunities to answer questions in the classroom.