

What Girls Want

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Part 1: Practical Guidance and Didactical Approach

Background and keywords:

Jari Sinkkonen reports on the survey conducted among elementary schoolchildren in Finland and England on the lives of boys and girls. It reveals that it is difficult to be a boy nowadays. Emerging sexuality creates tensions during the prepubescent period. Boys want to go out with girls, find a girlfriend, be popular with girls. They are usually totally incapable of doing so. According to Steve Biddulph, most boys aged between 13 and 14 have doubts about whether a girl will ever like them. If pre-pubescent or pubescent boys do not learn how to 'treat girls properly', their sexual energy may turn into anger and aggression against women. The signals that boys observe in their surroundings and in the various media frequently give a far too distorted image of the kind of boy girls like, namely an athletic, broad-shouldered, cheeky, trendily dressed boy, hence a so-called 'cool macho'. What a difference between this and the suggestion made by S. Biddulph to explain to boys that girls are looking for a good-natured, attentive partner with whom they can feel safe and secure.

Similar topics:

Social competence, empathy, first love.

Materials:

The Estonian children's film (2005) Röövlirahnu Martin /Der magische Kater/ Mat The Cat

Plot: After moving to the country, ten-year old Martin finds it difficult to get used to his new surroundings. His greatest rival at school is Kevin, a spoilt, rich boy, who manages to court Maria's favour with all his fantastic possessions. Martin, on the other hand, appears to be really disaster prone. His grades are not the best and this makes his single mother unhappy.

So Martin withdraw "into his own world", a wooden house on a huge cliff. He can hardly believe his eyes when a tomcat addresses him. The bizarre creature, which can actually speak and occasionally also turns into a strong boy and does magic, becomes his friend. It is not long before the two are inseparable and together they succeed in winning Marta's heart and even solving Martin's school problems as well.

- Worksheets
- 5 photos (copied several times)
- Speech and thought bubbles (stickers)
- Pencils
- Glue sticks
- DVD with the film (2 film sequences: sequence 1: 39.39 – 40.27 minutes; sequence II: 40.27 – 42.09 minutes)
- Slips of paper (pink, blue)
- Blue, pink box

Duration:

3 to 4 teaching units of 45 minutes each

Number of participants:

from 4 boys upwards (and girls)

Age:

From the age of 9

Aims:

- to express what is happening on the photos;
- develop imagination and empathy;
- improve the understanding of one's own gender and the opposite gender;
- compare one's own production with the original, find and name differences.

(Short) explanation:

Each boy thinks for himself initially what girls must feel, think and want when they find themselves alone in a room with a boy. (The teacher keeps the associograms. He compiles a summary associogram on a poster during the group work and hangs it up after the poster presentation).

The children then form groups. Each group receives an envelope with photos and a worksheet with questions. The groups compile a photostory with thought and speech bubbles. The posters with the photostories are hung up in the room and presented by the respective group. The teacher must ensure that no vulgar or offensive language, *inter alia*, is used.

The teacher hangs the associogram up and comments on it.

The appropriate film sequence is then shown. The boys complete a table (AB 3) after watching the film sequence.

The teacher moderates and leads the ensuing discussion, and the differences between the photostories and the film are scrutinised.

The boys are then given the opportunity to correct the associogram if they have changed their mind after watching the film sequence. The boys then say how the story might continue.

The next film sequence in which a furious boy leaves home is watched together. The teacher moderates the discussion by the whole group.

At the end the boys can act as advisors and keep the relevant advice "in a box". The teacher then reads the advice out loud.

Reflection:

The following are used for the reflection:

- The associogram compiled by the teacher: what and how the group has thought?
- After watching the film sequence AB 3: How did we imagine it? How was it in the film?

Variations (Continuation):

Ideal for classes.

The group of girls is given the same tasks. The boys then look at the results of the girls' work (associogram and posters) and vice versa. The teacher helps them to find and discuss the differences.