Source?
Boys and Girls Together… Jennifer Medina … New York Times

What is/are the main idea(s)?
Children being taught separated from the opposite gender

What are some of the supporting details?
1. How classes are conducted
2. Not everyone agrees on the new system

3. Implemented to address decreasing test scores and increasing behavioral problems

4. It is an experiment – no scientific evidence of effectiveness

Are there two opinions? What are they?

Some parents see better behavior from their children

Some believe it reinforces bad things

Response: Boys and girls should not be separated

-       Discourages healthy interaction (Paragraphs 1 and 2 | Paragraph 4)

-       Won’t be prepared for the future (paragraph 5, line 3)

**Is it really beneficial to teach boys and girls separately?** Some schools are teaching children in gender-segregated classrooms, according to the article “Boys and Girls Together, Taught Separately in School” by Jennifer Medina printed in The New York Times. In classrooms separate from the other gender, boys are taught by a teacher who behaves like he is coaching a sports team, while the girls are taught by a woman who uses a much more sensitive approach. The new approach is an experiment that many schools are trying across the country to address problems in test scores and students’ behavior, but the strategy is getting mixed reviews. While some parents feel that their child is paying more attention without the added distraction of the opposite gender in the classroom, some experts are worried about the future implications of the new teaching strategy, insisting that it will hurt children later in life when they can no longer avoid working with the opposite sex. Research hasn’t yet confirmed whether the teaching method is more effective than more traditional approaches. I believe that there is no way separating boys and girls will benefit students because it dissuades students from interacting with and learning about the opposite sex and makes them ill-prepared to face the future when they’ll be forced to work in a mixed environment.

 While I understand the goals of this experiment, I believe they are ultimately misguided. **For instance, we see in the article how the teacher for the boys and the teacher for the girls run their classes completely differently.***This reinforces the idea that girls and women are one way and boys and men are another,* but we know today that not all men are exactly the same, nor are all women. I saw a commercial for a movie the other day that was about how boys are raised being taught that boys don’t cry, and they often have trouble expressing their emotions. **Mr. Napolitano treating his group of boys like a basketball coach** *is exactly the kind of treatment that creates issues like this.* I think society has come to the understanding that boys need girls around so that they can learn about a broader spectrum of behavior than simply yelling and roughhousing and sports. Additionally, the girls’ class is being taught as if the students there are all fragile and emotional. This is ridiculous to me, because not all girls respond to this kind of coddling. They need boys around to balance out this treatment.

            Another problem with this program is that it does not prepare students for the future. **Sure, Samell Little is quoted as saying that his son is focusing better in school now that there aren’t girls around,** *but if his son is having that much trouble focusing now, how will it get better without him being taught how to focus and behave*? Taking away the distraction is not the same as teaching him how to overcome it. *One day he will be forced to work with women, and he will not know how to handle it.* **In the article, Kim Gandy seems to see this problem as well and states that “a boy who has never been beaten by a girl on an algebra test could have some major problems having a female supervisor.”** I remember what it was like being a flirtatious and distracted middle schooler. I think learning how to get past that and focusing is one of the big lessons school is there to teach. Without this lesson, we’ll end up in the working world with men not trusting women’s math skills and women confused why men don’t respond when they don’t treat them like a coach would. This does not help them be successful in the future.

 In the end, it is clear to me that separating boys and girls is problematic because they will learn less from the opposite sex and not be ready for working in mixed environments in the future. Boys need girls around and vice versa so they can benefit from the differences between the genders. Additionally, most people won’t work in a segregated environment and need to be ready to interact with the opposite sex. Schools that participate in this experience are creating more problems than they are fixing.