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Gender differences in mathematics learning.

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Summary: Gender differences in mathematics and science have received substantial attention in the education research since the early 1980s when strong evidence for a male advantage was found in various studies. Given that mathematics is required for a variety of careers, the potential cause(s) of this disparity have generated much research, much of it conflicting with other research in regard to the nature of this difference as well as the timing of its occurrence. To examine how gender differences are related to mathematics learning, males and females have been compared using variables including innate ability, attitude, motivation, interest, and performance behaviors. Recent findings from both international and national studies suggest that gender differences in mathematics have declined over the years. This research brief does not seek to identify that one category of students is superior to another; rather, it is to provoke more exploration of how females and males learn differently. Knowledge of how they are different in terms of mathematics and science learning can be of great value in seeking and finding ways to enhance teaching and learning for all. (ERIC)

Classification: C60 C30

Keywords: females; gender differences; males; cognitive style; mathematics achievement; research methodology; environmental influences; teaching methods

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