



The Boys in Schools

BULLETIN



Practical Initiatives Addressing Boys' Needs

PRODUCED BY BOYS IN SCHOOLS PROGRAM OF THE FAMILY ACTION CENTRE



In This Issue

The Emotional Life of Boys

How good are boys at knowing what they are feeling?

Enhancing 'Self-Concept'

Important research from New Zealand

Building Emotional and Social Competence

How one school in rural Victoria overcame the obstacles

The Boys in Schools Bulletin

- Focuses on practical initiatives going on in schools
- Puts teachers in touch with others who are trialing new approaches to boys' education
- Supports and encourages a constructive debate on boys' education issues
- Develops materials and programs to assist teachers in their work with boys
- Provides information on new resources directed at boys



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Editorial

In place of an Editorial, we have included the following article on remarkable young artist, Angus Wood. Angus's pictures, which were created while he was a Year 12 student at Canberra Grammar School, are featured throughout this issue of *The Boys in Schools Bulletin*. *The Bulletin* came across his work as part of Art Express, the exhibition showcasing work submitted for HSC Art in New South Wales in 2001.

'I've got nothing, Ma, to live up to'

What did you want to get across in your work?

I wanted to say something about the fact that males have little to look up to. We're obsolete in procreation, our role in society has been downgraded, we get beaten by girls in the HSC and if you make a scene about it then you are either against women or a pooker. The easy option for boys is to ignore what they feel. Subconsciously they might be aware of it but it still influences their actions, so that there's a tendency to lose humour, lose hope, just accept being inarticulate or get aggressive.

It has a lot to do with the culture of Australian males who show less emotion than in other cultures. Boys have no real way of expressing their feelings. They keep an air of everything's all right, an image that it's okay, 'I'm not fazed by it'. This was very common at school — I've been at all boys' schools since Year 7. It's a fear of standing out or being better or different from everyone else. For trying hard even in the top schools where there are smart kids.

These drawings show what boys do express. It's a kind of brooding, a pent up energy that explodes into verbal abuse or aggressive behaviour in general. Sport can be good for dealing with that, but if life is not good at home, then sport can only do so much.

What can be done?

Boys need to rely on friends, they need empathy to be able to relate, but that only seems to happen with maturity. Some groups of guys could develop that but in others there's no chance. The bond that holds them together emphasises being okay and being masculine.

The trick is to be able to see the better part of life, make the best of what you've got and be confident you can make your own path. You don't have to be a statistic: get creative and expressive no matter who looks down on you. I copped heaps for being poor at sport and for enjoying art.

Why the title?

It's an adaptation from the classic Bob Dylan song, 'It's alright Ma I'm only bleeding'. The image is that the boy has to tell someone and his mum will at least care about him even if she doesn't understand. Whereas with dad, there's not much of a chance he would get it.

What would you say to younger boys starting high school?

The tough years are Years 7 and 8. Work yourself out and in Years 9 and 10, when there's lots of pressure on you, stick to being that person — even though it's hard. Find your talent and go for it. We're all human; we've got to talk.

Disclaimer

Other than the Editorial, the ideas and opinions presented in *The Boys in Schools Bulletin* are those of the contributors, and do not necessarily reflect the ideas and opinions of the Boys in Schools Program of the Family Action Centre.

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Guidelines for Contributors

The Boys in Schools Bulletin is a practical journal for teachers and educators. The content is meant to motivate and inform those who work with boys and young men to try new approaches which benefit the boys, the school and the whole community (including, of course, the girls).

The sorts of questions we use when asking about initiatives are:

- Say a bit about your school: What was the initiative and who was it aimed at?
- What happened?
- What lessons did you learn?
- What advice would you give to other teachers as a result?

This doesn't have to be a formula but the information must be about what is happening with boys in schools. If you are in any doubt, have a look at previous issues of *The Bulletin*. Or contact us and talk about it.

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Primary Section

Single Sex Classes at Elanora

Barry Love and Graeme Townsend describe their experience in trialing an all-boys Year 7 class in a co-educational state primary school. Elanora State School has over 1,200 students and is one of the largest primary schools in Queensland.

We showed the highest score in literacy in our district when in Year 5 these same boys were only in the average to just below average category. So this was a massive jump in their performance.

Barry, how did this come about?

I attended the Boys' Education Conference in 1999 and came back impressed with some of the initiatives that schools were taking at the time. In 2000 I knew we were having a few problems in Year 6 with boys. It was the usual academic dramas: low achievement in Maths and English and a poor attitude to school. In that year there were 50 boys and 90 girls and so we came up with the idea of having two single-sex classes when they went into Year 7.

The first thing we did was send a letter to parents raising this as a suggestion only. To our surprise, 25 or so parents of boys said yes immediately. So did 80 of the girls' parents. I'm not sure why there was such a strong response. The timing must have been right.

So the boys essentially selected themselves although we did invite two or three others to join. It was a much harder task to work out who would go into the single-sex girls' class. Our selection was based on the criteria that the girls required extension either academically or socially; that is, they were overly shy, compliant in that they never put their hands up in class or were academically poor performers.

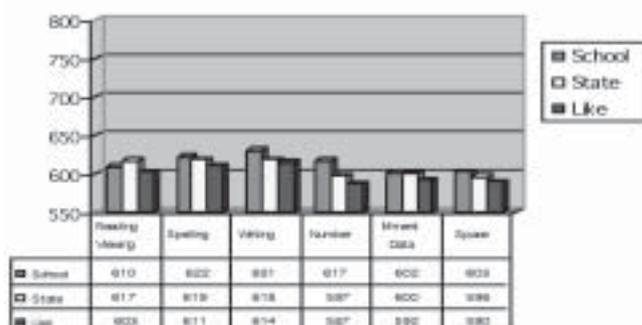
Then the task was to sell it to the staff. A female staff member jumped at the chance to teach the girls' class and Graeme agreed to take the boys.

What were the results?

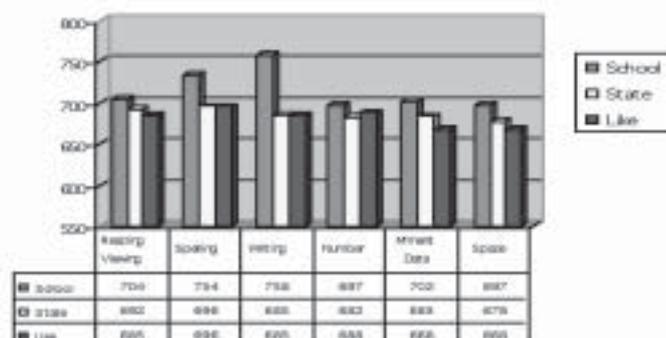
That year the Year 7 boys performed the best in the district on the state standardised literacy and numeracy tests. We showed the highest score in literacy in our district when in Year 5 these same boys were only in the average to just below average category. So this was a massive jump in their performance.

We also looked further into the data and compared the boys in the all-boys class against the boys in the other four mixed classes. In literacy, the mean for the all-boys class was 720 as against the others at 714 and in numeracy the score was 719 compared to 692. Even a small difference here is significant. We do have the graphs from the entire year at Year 5 in 1999 and Year 7 in 2001 (see opposite). The thing to notice is that the school has improved relative to the state average. Again even the small differences are significant.

1999 YEAR 5 RESULTS



2001 YEAR 7 RESULTS



Another interesting thing was that there were only six to eight boys in each of the mixed classes. We noticed that there were almost no problems in terms of the boisterous push-and-shove kind of behaviour.

What about you Graeme?

Well, in 1999 our Year 5 weren't even in the top 20 schools in our district, whereas in 2001 we were either top or in the top three schools in each category. We even looked at how the boys from the all-boys class have gone in high school. They continue to be far above the other boys from our school. Unusually, we have had positive feedback from the high school teachers that our students now in Year 8 are settled, keen to learn and are a pleasure to teach. Any teacher would know how rare that kind of comment is.

The other thing is that there were significant changes in the number of time-outs and suspensions in the boys-only class. Some of the boys were very anti-school and anti-authority when I met them at the beginning of the year. They were about a third of the class. I was quite concerned about behavioural problems. During the previous year (Year 6 in 2000) the 27 boys recorded 58 time-outs and three external suspensions. During 2001 the same boys recorded 25 time-outs and no suspensions. In comparison the remaining 32 boys in Year 7 recorded 38 time-outs and three suspensions in 2001. To take an individual case, in 2000 one boy had 12 time-outs, four office referrals and three suspensions. In 2001 he only recorded six time-outs.

After quite a few years teaching I have noticed that the students who have come back to say hello and visit the school have mostly been girls. So far this year, about 20 of these boys have been back, some several times.

What did you do differently?

The first thing was that most of our classrooms are built as double rooms with no walls between neighbouring classes. I knew there would be more movement and noise in an all-boys class so I requested a separated room. We were allocated a newer classroom with air conditioning (it's very hot here in summer) separated from the next class by a kitchen and an office. In fact, the all-girls class was next door. So we made curtains for our room using

After quite a few years teaching I have noticed that the students who have come back to say hello and visit the school have mostly been girls. So far this year about 20 of these boys have been back, some several times.

calico so no-one could see out or in and on hot days we could pull the curtains, turn on the air conditioning and it became like a cave. I had a student teacher with me who took the boys in twos or threes to sew up the material using an overlocker. We decided on a theme for each window, like sport or space and painted images onto the calico. This was by brainstorming ideas and voting. We left the last window to be the year in review.

One of the projects we did was incubating eggs and hatching chickens. It was amazing to see these 13-year-old boys being so gentle with them. The eggs had to be turned three times a day. This was a joint program with the all-girls class. Although Sandra and I didn't really plan the unit together, if either of us had an idea we'd share it with the other. We paired off the boys and girls (they had no choice in the selection) as parents to each egg. The eggs were numbered so we knew which belonged to whom but when the chicks hatched we lost which chick was which. We looked at each embryo developing by shining a torch under it in the blacked out office and then the students would do regular drawings of what they saw. Not all eggs hatched and then the students would adopt another chick. One mistake was to open some of the eggs which didn't hatch. We couldn't get the smell out of there for weeks. It was a six-week science unit and many of the activities were the same between the classes. It was possible to see from the kitchen [glass walls] how differently each class learned.

What did you notice?

I did a brief survey on learning styles with the class and found that 19 (68%) were kinaesthetic, nine (32%) were visual and none were auditory learners. All the boys who had behavioural issues were kinaesthetic learners. The test dramatically showed that the boys preferred to learn by doing. They wanted to be shown how to do it and then get in and do it themselves. This informed my methods. In the girls' class the majority were primarily auditory learners. I had a few student teachers coming through the class and a number of them said, 'As soon as I sit down and talk, they don't want to listen.'

At the beginning of the year I had no idea what to do. I walked in with my own plans based on my experience with my own three sons. I did what I normally do and found that talking didn't work. The boys needed something to go on with. So I developed really short lessons and activities, especially in the first two-hour block in the day. So we might start with a quick tables challenge and each student would see how far down a list of 150 tables questions they could get in five minutes. 'Right! Pens out. Begin.' Then we'd mark it and graph the results in our own folders. We kept track of the fastest in the class and I made a big fuss about improving our personal scores. The boys took pride in tracking their progress.

Then we might do mental arithmetic for 10 minutes, then discuss a spelling rule for one minute and then write five examples of their own. Then a quick general knowledge quiz on the theme or related to current affairs. This might be followed by some discussion.

How did you get them to discuss if they didn't want to listen?

Most discussion came from them. I would get two different newspaper headline flyers from the local newsagent everyday and put it up. If discussion came from me they weren't interested but if it came from them they were. Interestingly no-one dominated and they were keen to listen. This happened throughout the year.

How did you develop the cooperative behaviour?

One thing was the jigsaws. The first one I bought was a cartoon picture of Olympic activities and had 2000 pieces. We started this on the kitchen floor. When boys finished work they could go on to the jigsaw, only three or four at a time. They organised it themselves and at first had no idea. First they counted the pieces because one boy said there was no point unless they were all there. Then they turned them all over. But they had so much trouble getting it going and kept pulling their work apart. Finally a couple of boys began to work from the outside pieces. One of the larger bullying boys who had been suspended a few times began working with a smaller boy who was no good at sport. They worked really well together because they were good at different things. This was only in class, not in the playground. During the year they began to say they wanted to work together and by the end of the year wanted to sit together.

Of course some boys would rush their work and say they were finished so they could work on the jigsaw but that stopped when they found they had to redo the work if it wasn't adequately done. In the end there were a number of jigsaws going around the classroom. We also had models and kits to work on. I also used this for boys I thought were under stress, which was particularly noticeable when they had been in time-out during lunch, having to sit still rather than being active.

The boys and girls from the single-sex classes got on very well in their joint activities. Their interaction was very structured, such as during the chicken project or watching *Behind the News*. In the playground they would frequently go out and talk with each other, asking what they were up to in class.

How did you set up the classroom?

It was arrow shaped with both sides facing each other and a few desks at the back to form a triangle. There was a large space in the middle for activities. At the back was an old leather lounge that I had brought in and the boys would read there. At times I would use it to show things and books with them all sitting on the floor.

There were magazines all round the room, such as *Skateboarding*, *Inside Sport* and so on. Some of the sports mags had pictures of bikini-clad girls which some of the female teachers objected to. So I asked them to come in and have a look. We did remove some of those photos. We had the 'Books for Boys' pack but the students were not nearly as interested as in the magazines. One interesting thing we did was translating the language in the skateboarding and surfing mags. I asked them to make it understandable to old folks like me as there was a whole different language that most of the boys understood. For example, what does 'cutting back on a wave' mean?

A number of the female teachers were totally opposed to the boys' class. When I asked why, the reason seemed to be that boys need girls in class to show them how to behave and how to act. This was said to me about 30 or 40 times last year. In fact, this may be why the boys are underperforming: they are expected to follow the girls' example. This year, 2002, I am teaching a Year 6 all-boys class. Our half-yearly results showed that the boys-only class had made a marked improvement: slightly ahead in reading, on par with spelling — which is pretty good — but, on average, 10% ahead on maths.

How did those teachers make sense of these results?

This was explained by my having a bright class or that I spent more time on maths and related subjects. Well, I do spend more time on maths but the boys seemed to enjoy that. Interestingly, there are only about six male teachers on a staff of about 100.



One of the larger bullying boys who had been suspended a few times began working with a smaller boy who was no good at sport. They worked really well together because they were good at different things. During the year they began to say they wanted to work together and by the end of the year wanted to sit together.

My attitude was different to most teachers. I was less concerned with noise and movement. The boys always knew where the boundaries were.

How did you approach the behaviour management given that there were boys who were anti-school?

I always made sure there was something immediate to strive for, like the chance to work on the jigsaw. I would also put five stars on the board and say if we had any left at the end of the day we would have FAT — free activity time. Each time there was some difficulty I would rub one of the stars off. The boys argued that this was not fair because they were being punished for something one person had done. I would focus on the fact that we were all a team. They all understood that if one person on a team does something wrong then that lets the whole side down. They all suffer. I focused on them being a team and making the effort all the time. I said we were special but on trial. People were looking to see them doing things wrong. I knew they all wanted to be there as I had asked them at the beginning of the year. My aim at the start was to see a big improvement in attitude. I wasn't concerned with academic progress as I was confident of my teaching of the curriculum.

One other thing was to catch them doing things right. I instituted individual accounts where I would pay them 'school money'. This way they kept a bank account and learnt about deposits, withdrawals and interest. I would award them \$3 or \$5 for doing something like helping someone else, following instructions quickly or smartly, sincerely making a good effort. Some days I might give out 50 'cash' awards and on other days none. I would keep track of this on a sheet on the wall, and include such things as using their mark out of 10 on a quick quiz to generate the interest on the money in their account. They could also go into the red, for example, getting a time-out for doing the wrong thing in a playground, or getting a bad report from one of the specialist teachers. At the end of each term I held an auction of items the students brought in that they no longer wanted, old toys from home and about \$20 worth of stuff from Crazy Clark discounts — games, tennis balls. They used their money to get something they wanted. One boy brought in a Gameboy he no longer used.

My attitude was different to most teachers. I was less concerned with noise and movement. The boys always knew where the boundaries were. There was only one rule and that was Do the Right Thing. I told them we didn't need a list. They knew what the right thing was. When there was a disturbance my questions were simple: 'What did you do? Was it the right thing?' I did focus on the three Rs. In our class that was Rights, Respect and Responsibility. We did have quick discussions about these. I would emphasise them understanding others. For example, 'Have you ever been in a position when you were scared? Think about that . . . What might it be like for a person having their books tipped on the ground?'

All behaviour problems were addressed away from the group. I knew from my own experience that boys hate being shown up in front of their peers. Some students might want a confrontation in class but I would never give them one. I'd stay calm and tell them to go outside or to the kitchen and wait for me. That would give them a cooling down period too. There was no chance of coming back in as a hero. I would speak to them calmly and say, 'Well, I could have handled that differently. I made a mistake there, so have you. We can do this better. How can we fix it?'

However, their behaviour varied with other teachers when I was away. For one older experienced male teacher the boys were atrocious. I think that was because he wanted to stamp his authority onto the class and it didn't work. On the other hand they loved an older female teacher who wasn't confrontational at all.

How else did you adapt your ways of teaching?

At times we worked off the board. I'd get them to write first before we discussed it. Or I'd start explaining while they were writing. The key was that there was something to physically do while they were listening. I also got hold of a lot of classic stories on tape, like *The Hobbit*. I'd put these on while they were copying notes off the board regarding chickens or the solar system. We also did a unit on prehistoric man and the changes in technology and weapons. Another activity was using Text Files program to stimulate writing. After a program on, say, horror stories, I would hand out the paper and they would write their own. We did that once a week for six months.

I never gave them homework. This was from my own experience with my sons. It creates a lot of stress and is a major de-motivator. In term three I did give them a homework project over the whole term involving reading a novel and doing 10 of a list of 20 activities, such as writing a different ending, writing a back cover blurb that captured the story in 40 words without giving away the plot. The boys signed a contract, also signed by the parents, which involved bringing in their work in progress on three occasions that term. Two parents wanted to know why there was no homework. I said if they wanted me to set it I would. This happened but I noticed that it was never done. Overall I feel that the boys work hard from nine till three and need time to follow their other interests. However, I do still ask students to finish things off at home that should have been completed in class — but not for the sake of homework.

One of the critical things was to make the work relevant, as close to real life as I could. I would tell the boys, 'This is what you're going to need in the future.' Even for something like pre-algebra. For as many things as I could, I would set the context for the application of the knowledge, for example, linking percentages to discounts in shops. To me this was extremely important. The boys don't need to know why we're doing this, but they do need to know how it's useful.

In order to maintain high standards we would look at the writing they had done in the first few weeks of term. Usually it deteriorates from there, but I said these were the messiest pages in their books, as they should be improving throughout the year.

What have you learned from all this?

Essentially, that boys do learn differently and that they do need to be allowed to be boys. We do not want to turn them into girls. Teachers are the main ones who interact with students and they need to change the way they look at boys and how they are taught.

Because parents felt the 2001 program was successful, this year there was a waiting list for boys to join the all-boys Year 6 class. I wasn't involved in choosing who got accepted. That was done by the teachers in Year 5 based on boys' needs. Next year I won't run a boys-only class. My aim is to run a mixed class using these methods. I want to see if they are effective with girls as well.

We do not want to turn them into girls.

Barry Love is Assistant Principal and Graeme Townsend is a class teacher at Elanora State School on the Gold Coast in Queensland. They can be contacted on 07 5534 5988.

Research Section

Talking Research and Self-Concept

Dr Janet Clinton, of Auckland University, guides us through what research has to contribute to the field of self-concept in education.

Mental health research has shown that people with a strong sense of belief in themselves do not suffer as much from depression and other affective disorders.

Why is the field of self-concept so critical in education?

In the competitive environment in which we live we ask a lot of our students. They need to have a high level of self-efficacy; they need to be motivated to learn and to be self-regulated learners. That is, they want to be confident that they can learn and that they are in control of their learning, and that they can navigate the process and weather all storms. Given the complexity of this process, students need a strong sense of themselves as a learner to be able to do this.

A specific aim of education is to develop individuals who are well rounded and can function successfully in society. In New Zealand the National Educational Guidelines state that schools must provide opportunities for students to reach their full potential. In New South Wales, educational goals suggest that schools must provide opportunities whereby students can develop socially, emotionally, and intellectually, so they can lead productive and rewarding lives. The key to this goal is being strong within yourself, that is, have a strong belief in one's capability to achieve one's goals.

Mental health research has shown that people with a strong sense of belief in themselves do not suffer as much from depression and other affective disorders. They have more resilience and can manage challenges in their lives more constructively. Basically, they are better at coping. Recent research has demonstrated the importance of social self-concept as a predictor of active and social coping. This suggests that when an adolescent is under stress they will actively try to deal with their problems by, for example, seeking advice from others — provided they have a positive sense of social self. Moreover, those adolescents high in social self-concept do not use disengagement as a means of coping. Disengagement implies avoidance, which is contrary to being socially confident. Adolescents who have high social self-concept rely on a two-way relationship; they have had experience of having their peers and parents as part of their life and helping them solve problems.

Research into education and self-esteem used to focus on the link between achievement and self-concept. However, too many studies failed to show any direct relationship. A change in self-concept does not automatically result in a change in achievement (or vice versa). However, changes in achievement can have an impact on motivation to learn and on self-efficacy (the confidence that they can learn) — and vice versa. (See Pajares and Schunk (in press) for a discussion of the place of self in education.)

So, what is self-concept and how is it different from self-esteem?

One's self-concept is the concept you have as part of yourself, which sometimes describes a particular facet of one's self. Self-esteem is more a matter of worth: the worth you ascribe to yourself.

The problem with self-esteem is that it has become a household word and teachers can lose sight of the complexity of the individual student's self-esteem. For example, we might see students who are depressed, sad or angry and put that down to low self-esteem — whereas these may be the consequences of other factors — which then lead to lowered self-esteem. We knew in the 1970s that a global sense of self-concept was not an appropriate model, but we have resisted accepting this knowledge. Self-concept is a multidimensional, hierarchical concept. For each of us there is a

different order of these dimensions and different priorities. For example, some of us care about our achievement in maths more than our achievement on the sports field. These priorities can also change over time. During adolescence, the social self, physical appearance, and sporting ability can become more important. Teachers need to understand that there are different priorities at different age levels.

The major first-order dimensions for adolescent self-concepts can be subject-specific, family, peers, physical ability and physical appearance. These dimensions can be grouped into second-order dimensions of academic, social, and physical self-concepts. It is not clear that there is much value or support for grouping these second-order dimensions into a third-order 'general' self-concept (Hattie & Marsh 1996).

Does it change over time?

At about age eight, both boys and girls have a sense of themselves in various categories such as family, school and friends. For example, they can say, 'I'm not good at school.' The research shows no difference in how boys and girls develop self-concept (Bracken 1996). By about 12 years old some differences emerge in line with the physical developmental process.

At pre-puberty or early puberty most girls can distinguish between different dimensions of their self-concept and assess themselves in these areas. For example, they can say things like, 'I know I'm good at maths but I really can't talk to my peers.' This means that they can see a part of themselves that's positive and they therefore have something to hold onto. As they grow in self-awareness — especially about the less positive dimensions (e.g. 'I am not so good at sport') — they can also accept these attributes, which can mean that they look worse to the teacher. Being able to distinguish different dimensions also means they are beginning to manage the contradictions of life and to understand that they are different people in different situations. This explains why girls sometimes have lower means on self-concept tests when, in fact, they have higher concepts of their general self.

Boys, on the other hand, do not develop this kind of self-awareness as early (particularly about the dimensions in which they may not excel) and hence do not express it as readily as girls. For boys, one dimension that is low in self-concept can permeate other areas. So if they are poor at English they might act up in classes other than English.

Can you teach students about enhancing their self-concept?

In a meta-analysis study of programs to enhance self-concept, Clinton-Hattie (1992) found that you *can* make changes to self-concept. It is important to remember that self-concept is a complex cognitive construct and securing measurable change as a result of an intervention program is not easy to achieve. Essentially, we found that, all too often, programs to enhance students' self-esteem conducted in the classroom do not work. Teachers are focused on instilling knowledge and aiming for changes in achievement, not working with complex psychological concepts. Timing of interventions (e.g. running a complement-giving session once a week for 20 minutes) is unlikely to have a measurable impact. The environment and culture of schools, too, is not often conducive to psychological interventions.



One's self-concept is the concept you have as part of yourself, which sometimes describes a particular facet of one's self. Self-esteem is more a matter of worth: the worth you ascribe to yourself.

A teaching role is one of communication, and it is this communication that affects the student's self-concept.

How do we know that this kind of feedback works?

The strongest indications came out of a meta-analysis by John Hattie (1999) on what impacts on student learning. He drew conclusions from numerous studies involving millions of students (see box on page 12).

Essentially, the impact of teacher feedback on self-concept when it is negative about the self dramatically outweighs the impact of positive feedback. A comment like, 'That volleyball pass made you look silly' enters the student in a deeper more lasting way than positive comments about the self. The feedback, however, needs to be most specific to the task, the processes to undertake the task, or the confidence and effort to master the task — and certainly not at the person him or herself. Only when the feedback is focused away from the (generalised aspect of the) person, is the feedback likely to lead to changes in achievement and/or in self-concept.

Secondly, feedback that makes a difference to self-concept must include information about the task. For example, a student gets 16 out of 20 on a test and the teacher says, 'Well done.' This is too general and has little impact. The student can easily dismiss it and attribute their success to things other than themselves. Children with low self-concept in that subject will often reject the positive information and look for data that supports their existing level of self concept: 'It was an easy test. The teacher was kind. She was in a good mood.'

It's necessary to frame for the student the skill they have demonstrated and relate this to the effort and mastery of the task. The teacher might say, 'I like the flow of your essay, you argued your point fluently, you obviously enjoyed writing this. You cover most of the content. Next time you could try adding more evidence at the critical point in the essay. Then your essay would be more convincing for the reader. You should be pleased with your efforts. You worked hard on a difficult question.'

So the teachers are the key here?

Given the amount of time our teachers spend with our children, teachers are the obvious ones to target — although we know there has not been a long record of success by teachers to change self-concepts.

Some students sit through five hours of negative or non-directed feedback a day. We should not be surprised that these students are turned off school.

What do teachers need to understand from the self-concept research?

Teachers need to understand that while self-concept is not a concrete subject that you can teach, it is inherent in everything we do. A teaching role is one of communication, and it is this communication that affects the student's self-concept.

Given the incredible strides in the self-concept literature, teachers need to think differently about self-esteem and draw on a new generation of research. Firstly, this research shows that a concept of self involves different dimensions, with different orders of priority and with different weights for each student. Secondly, that making a student feel better about themselves might not affect their achievement but it might engage them more in learning and help them to become more motivated.

If I had a group of low-esteem students in my school I would more than likely find a program outside the classroom to enhance their self-esteem, such as an outward bound class. As a teacher I would concentrate on trying to engage the students with the challenge of learning. I would facilitate a process whereby students feel good about themselves when they try, make an effort, or make gains as a learner so that they can be motivated to set goals and confidently follow through with those goals.

The real task for teachers is to produce appropriate challenges where the students achieve at deeper levels of learning. The core of this is communication with students. As well as giving constructive feedback, a teacher needs to be challenging the students. Never say, 'You did your best,' but instead 'You might have to extend your best and make a new challenge.' Again the feedback needs to be focused on the task and the greater the challenge the more the possibility of the students seeking — and the teacher giving — feedback. 'You must be proud of the way you structured that answer. Did you think about doing it in another way? What do you think would have happened if . . . ?' To extend themselves and face new challenges, students need to be confident enough to take a risk and deal with negative feedback in a constructive way.

Engagement often comes down to whether teachers begin with where the students are, particularly by listening to them. For example, a boy coming into a maths class who says, 'I hate algebra. It sucks. I'm not doing it.' and the teacher responds by saying, 'Sit down! Be quiet, work.' He probably also thinks of the boy as rude and naughty. It is obvious that the teacher has not engaged him, and, more importantly, has not listened to him. Maybe the student is saying, 'I can't do it.'

Are there any examples where this approach forms the basis of the way schools operate?

Yes, a good example of an innovative approach that relies on feedback and communication at the heart of school practice is the Paideia Project (see below). The teaching method was introduced into 91 schools in Guilford County, North Carolina, USA. Our evaluation showed changed perceptions of reading and increased reading scores. The Paiedia method focuses on teaching at a deep level using feedback, buddy/mentor systems, learning contracts and seminar style sessions.

The Paideia program promotes three modes of teaching: a didactic mode, a seminar component, and a coaching aspect. The seminar component is the most distinctive and involves much training in active listening by the teacher, constructing peer-group tutoring for the whole class that uses rich and challenging texts (across all the curricula), and structures ways for the students to question the text and each others' understandings.

There was also powerful evidence that Paideia influenced students' perceptions of the quality of schooling.

The students claimed that teachers who implemented Paideia were better at explaining information, more able in ensuring that students had a good understanding, put more effort into teaching, taught in interesting ways, and showed by example that learning is fun. There was less friction in classes, less fooling around, students were considered calmer and not mean, and they felt safe. Students see more flexibility in the classroom when Paideia is implemented.

(Hattie 1999, Inaugural Address)

What are you researching at the moment?

One current piece of research I am involved in for the New Zealand Ministry of Education has been to evaluate a group of programs in school to support students at risk. These programs were innovative and designed to suit the context, culture and needs of their community. The programs were designed to bring about social, academic, and behavioural change in schools. We investigated change in self-esteem, self-efficacy, self-regulation, behaviour in school attendance and, of course, achievement. Further, we are looking at what makes innovation in schools work, whether it can be reproduced elsewhere, and what is the best environment to create change.

In one large rural town the high school is working with role models (fathers and other respected community members) as mentors to reduce barriers to boys' achievement. Interestingly, when we measured self-concept, the boys were within normal bounds despite the academic under achievement. At an all-boy secondary school an alternative program was designed to enhance motivation and achievement. The program used an oral-based teaching regimen combined with a fitness and culture program. The teachers worked specifically on learning styles for Maori students, the program relied on Maori culture to build a sense of self.

Within primary schools, projects include a literacy program aimed at boys using texts to reflect their community, a culturally focused program for the Maori community, and a number of health and social programs. Of course, not all innovations worked, some did not always match the culture of the school in which it was applied. With innovations in schools, we cannot rely on the content of the programs alone, but also the vision of the staff, management of the program and appropriate resources are critical.

Can you make a concluding comment?

A number of schools are now concerned with reducing the barriers to achievement. One important pathway is to increase the sense of self, particularly by attending to the 'achievement self', through raising self-concept, self-efficacy and motivation.

For adolescents to succeed, having a high sense of confidence, efficacy, and positive belief that one can face new challenges is critical. This builds resilience in the face of difficulties, so that they can cope with the ever-changing world. As parents we can offer much comfort to younger students, although not all such children have this comfort. But adolescents are expected to, and often desire, self-responsibility. It is not necessary that their sense of self or their enhancement of their reputation are made via socially conventional goals such as achievement and success at school. It is therefore necessary that we aim to enhance the adolescent's sense of commitment to learning, to gaining reputation from facing socially acceptable challenges, and for teachers never to assume that just because students are in their class that they therefore share the teacher's goals. We need to remember that the self-concept of the student is more predictive of their later success in any venture than their actual knowledge of some curriculum subject. Successful students need to have the confidence — the esteem — to face challenges, the knowledge that they must invest effort, and have goals to achieve: in other words, high self-esteem.

To extend themselves and face new challenges, students need to be confident enough to take a risk and deal with negative feedback in a constructive way.

We need to remember that the self-concept of the student is more predictive of their later success in any venture than their actual knowledge of some curriculum subject.

Five overall findings from research into positive effects on student learning

1. **Innovation** is the theme underlying most of these effects, probably because it harnesses teacher enthusiasm. Teachers who constantly question, 'How am I going?', who wish to verify that their methods are having impacts on student learning, are the prerequisites for excellence.
2. The most powerful single moderator that enhances achievement is **feedback**. The simplest prescription for improving education must be 'dollops of feedback' — providing information how and why the student understands and misunderstands, and what directions that he or she must take to improve. The most fundamental component of teaching is imparting information to students, assessing and evaluating the student's understanding of this information, and then matching the next teaching act to the present understandings of the student. The incidence of feedback in the typical classroom is very low, usually in seconds per day at best. Reducing class size, prescribing more homework and introducing more computers, merely offers increased opportunities for more feedback and appropriately challenging goals to occur — it does not guarantee that it occurs. If we, as teachers, are to have an impact on learning, then we must come to know what our students are thinking so that we can provide more feedback, task information, encourage trial and error, and develop deep understanding and transformations.
3. The setting of appropriate, specific and challenging **goals** is critical. It helps if the students are committed to these goals — although it is the challenge that is most critical. Never allow a student to 'do their best' as this is the goal with the least challenge; everything the student does can be claimed as the best!
4. It is **how teachers teach** that makes the difference. In Table 1, I have reproduced a list of effects on student **performance**; those effects in bold type denote effects which have a greater than average impact. It is clear that structural and social influences are minor, and that what the student brings in terms of achievement and disposition to learn are significant. The teaching method used, however, is paramount. Given that different teaching methods are available for teachers to use, one can conclude that teachers do indeed make the difference, but only when they teach in certain ways. Too many teachers measure the effectiveness of the particular teaching method they are using against a single alternative, that is, what would happen if they did not use that particular teaching method. Teachers need to be more informed evaluators and consumers of teaching methods. Like their students they must set challenging goals, seek feedback on the effectiveness of their teaching on students, and constantly be attentive to improvement and innovation in the methods which optimise feedback and meet challenging goals.
5. The introduction of most teaching and school influences (structural innovations) merely alters the **probability** of the use of feedback and challenging goals. Teachers must be more informed evaluators as they need to ask how their methods increase the probability of what makes the difference — information, reconceptualisation, feedback, and appropriate goal setting.

Summary adapted from John Hattie (1999)

Table 1: Comparing effect sizes of influences on student learning

Teacher process influence	Effect size
Reinforcement	1.13
Instructional quality	1.00
Remediation/feedback	.65
Challenge of goals	.52
Teacher methods	
Direct instruction	.82
Class environment	.56
Peer tutoring	.50
Mastery learning	.50
Homework	.43
Teacher style	.42
Questioning	.41
Advance organisers	.37
Simulation and games	.34
Computer-assisted instruction	.31
Instructional media	.30
Testing	.30
Programmed instruction	.18
Audiovisual aids	.16
Individualisation	.14
Behavioural objectives	.12
Team teaching	.06
Student influences	
Students prior cognitive ability	1.04
Students disposition to learn	.61
Affective attributes of students	.24
Physical attributes of students	.21
Home influences	
Home factors	.67
Parent involvement	.46
Social influences	
Peer	.38
Television	-.12
School policy influences	
Aims and policy of the school	.24
Ability grouping	.18
Finances/money	.12
Physical attributes of the school	-.05
Retention	-.15

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For further information on the Paideia Program go to:
<http://www.paideia.org/html/research.html>

Much of the recent developments in self-concept research is conducted in association with the Self-concept Enhancement and Learning Facilitation (SELF) Research Centre, University of Western Sydney, NSW, Australia, see: <http://edweb.uws.edu.au/self/>

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Beyond Bullying

Roberto Parada links research on the enhancement of self-concept to his current doctoral work on counteracting bullying in schools. (See also the companion piece of a school's involvement with the program 'Beyond Bullying: Work in Progress' on page 42.)

Students who witness — or are the target of — bullying also feel less attachment and connection to their schools. Bullies are also less likely to feel part of the school.

What are you researching?

We're looking at the role of self-concept in the development of aggressive behaviours, especially in bullying. In particular, we want to see how the different aspects of self-concept are different in those students who bully.

How do you identify the bullies?

We look at how often students engage in bullying behaviours. If their score on the test we've developed is higher than 90 to 95% of their peers, we classify them as a bully. In this study we are looking at 4,600 students from Year 7 to 12 across eight schools. The scores are compared against those students.

We have carried out three assessments over the last two years, collecting baseline data on Adolescent Peer Relations, and controlling for variables. Data was also collected on student perception about good and bad things about school, whether the students felt attached to the school, the degree to which they felt supported by the school in relation to bullying. The reason for this is that students who witness — or are the target of — bullying also feel less attachment and connection to their schools. Bullies are also less likely to feel part of the school.

So far the data has shown that across these schools, 60% of students were bullied at sometime or another. The question is: when does this become detrimental? Between 7 and 16% reported having been bullied on a weekly or higher basis.

Boys, in general, bully more. Most bullying is verbal and involves a threat to a student's public image, what we call a high 'face' threat. We identify three kinds of bullying: physical (punching, destroying property), verbal (teasing, name calling) and the manipulation of social relations (exclusion, the 'silent treatment'). Numerically, more boys than girls are involved in all forms of bullying. Boys also exhibit bullying behaviours more frequently on all scales and, as well, they are more likely to be the subject of bullying.

Why is this?

We're checking this out at the moment. We haven't separated out the male/female data yet, as this is the last level of analysis. We've been examining other factors that predict bully behaviour. For example, depression scores are showing the highest link to social exclusion rather than punching or name calling. However, family background, country of origin of mother, and the family type (intact, blended, sole parent) show no significant difference so far.

What do you make of other research on bullying?

Well, basically nothing has worked. The most-quoted study on effectiveness of approaches to bullying was done by Olweus in 1985 but no-one has been able to replicate it. Despite a feeling in the air that we know what to do, evidence shows that in some showcase schools where there has been a big fanfare about anti-bullying programs, the incidence was worse three years later. Most programs fail because of a lack of consistency in implementation. Despite what you hear in schools, there is no convincing evidence that shows that peer support, peer mediation, peer counselling or even the 'common concern model' reduces bullying in a consistent fashion. There is a lot of political pressure to say that we are making progress, but as someone who understands the statistics I believe that there is no argument. These programs indirectly build links between students but don't affect the incidence of bullying.

Most programs fail because of a lack of consistency in implementation. Despite what you hear in schools, there is no convincing evidence that shows that peer support, peer mediation, peer counselling or even the 'common concern model' reduces bullying in a consistent fashion.

What interventions do you make on the basis of the data you get?

The program rests on a research-based theory of where bullying comes from, particularly research conducted on teasing and self-concept (Marsh et al. 2001). There are two main reasons: students have difficulty with social skills and are unable to make friends easily and, thus, do not know any better ways to relate to others (Schwartz et al. 1999); and students use bullying to enhance their self-concept.

Every student seeks to build their self-concept or the way they feel about themselves. The question is whether they do this in appropriate or inappropriate ways. Usually it is done through activities, hobbies, jobs, music, painting, sport etc. However, the way bullies organise themselves to enhance their self-concept is basically anti-social. That is, they have a distorted sense of how to increase their self-concept. Role modelling is important in both cases as it is clear to students that you can feel good about yourself from bullying others. It is interesting that our surveys show that while 80% of students say that 'bullying sucks', bullies say that most students believe differently.

The hypothesis about the central role of self-concept is confirmed in data from the USA where research into 10,000 Year 7, 9 and 12 students showed that students with medium to low self-concept who engaged in bullying enhanced their self-concept over time (Marsh et al. 2001). It also showed that targets of bullying with low self-concept stayed in a spiral of not valuing themselves enough.

The intervention is therefore twofold. Firstly, to find ways to enhance students' self-concept and, secondly, to restrict the kudos from bullying.

How does this work?

One of the key aspects of any intervention against bullying is to empower teachers to recognise, and then effectively intervene in, bullying episodes. We take a direct intervention approach and educate teachers in specific skills to reduce the kudos from bullying. Teachers are trained in techniques to get students to reflect on their behaviour. These techniques escalate according to the behaviour. Level one, 'micro-techniques', are as simple as standing next to the student, or creating a distraction. Level two, 'verbal judo', uses ways of speaking that allows the student to maintain their self-concept. This is very important. An example might be to respond to someone who sidetracks by arguing the point:

Tactic student may use	Strategy you can use	Example
The student wants to debate with you about the legitimacy of what you have said, the magnitude of the problem, or some such other distinction.	Refocus <i>Broken record technique</i>	<i>'We're debating now, I did not want to debate with you.'</i> <i>'I asked you to let Michael pick the members of the team and keep your advice to yourself.'</i>

The third and final level is removal to the office or direct supervision for exercises to think about their behaviour.

That is the 'stick' part of the program. The other part is the 'carrot'. Here we train teachers in skills to enhance students' self-concept and to encourage positive peer relations in the school and classroom. We particularly wanted teachers to have a set of skills that are transferable across all areas. This has been one of the weaknesses of other anti-bullying initiatives.

Research shows that particular forms of praise have a strong impact on targeted areas of self-concept. One study, Craven and Marsh (1991), showed that teachers using these techniques had a significant effect on academic self-concept after just three days of teacher training.

Some students underestimate their own achievement and attribute their success to 'just luck'.

In attributional praise the teacher might say, 'This tells me that you do have the skills.' The student internalises the message as, 'I have the skill.' A performance feedback comment such as 'well done' is not descriptive and has less impact on the student.

Attributional praise

What's involved	Example	Why
Step 1 Describing the pro-social behaviour	<i>You stayed on task rather than reacting to John</i>	Research shows that <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It is important to advise the student what the actual behaviour was that has attracted the teacher's praise to encourage the repetition of such behaviours in the future. • Stating the exact behaviour also ensures that teacher reinforcement is contingent upon performance and therefore credible. • This type of feedback — known as performance feedback — has been shown to be more effective than general praise.
Step 2 (a) Attribute success to ability	<i>You certainly have the ability to stay focused</i>	Research shows that: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • High self-concept children naturally attribute their successes to their ability i.e. this form of feedback encourages low self-concept students to emulate a naturally occurring process capitalised on by high self-concept students. Students prefer to be told that they have ability or are smart or clever at something. • Increases in ability attributions enhance students' self-concept.
or Step 2 (b) Attribute success to using effort and the right strategy	<i>You achieved that by trying hard to ignore John, which is a good strategy to use</i>	Research shows that: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Effort feedback — whilst not as valued by students as ability feedback — can be seen as more credible by students and can encourage further persistence on tasks. • Using strategy feedback helps students indirectly see themselves as having ability and strategy feedback has been found to more effectively enhance self-concept than effort feedback alone.

In internally focused praise, a teacher might notice a student being teased. 'You coped with that by ignoring it. That's a really good skill.' Or, in maths, 'You did well in division because you remembered to carry over the remainder. That's a good skill to have.'

Steps in internally focused praise

1. Be clear about what skill you want to enhance, e.g. coping with a verbal tease by keeping calm.
2. Gain the student's attention.
3. Start by praising the student for his or her skill or strategy use: 'You are really not letting Mario get to you, that's because you are ignoring the things he says and keeping calm.'
4. Encourage generalisation: 'Knowing how to keep calm will help you get along with other students and people in general.'
5. Encourage internalisation: 'You should congratulate yourself on keeping calm in spite of what was being said.'
6. Model internalisation: 'I know I would feel very pleased with myself if I had kept calm after all that!'

It was cool to be a trouble-maker. And they linked this behaviour to an enhanced probability of opposite-sex relations.

One of the other important elements is to build teacher resilience so that they cope better and manage their thoughts and feelings constructively in the face of bullying. Obviously our thoughts about events determine our reactions. So we examine the kind of traps that exist in teachers' thinking, such as 'all or nothing' thinking and over-generalisations. 'I tried it with Jo. It didn't work with him so it's not worth using at all.'

What is the basis of self-concept and are there gender differences?

We work from a base of 11 forms of self-concept. These are: maths ability; verbal ability; physical appearance; opposite-sex relations; same-sex relations; parent relations; general school ability; honesty and trustworthiness; emotional stability; and general self-concept (not an average of the different aspects). These facets of self-concept do not show any gender differences. Boys do show up with higher self-concept scores but this changes through time, particularly as 'reality bites'. They are cocooned at school where their own ideas are seldom challenged — teachers are too busy and most peers don't care. After school their views are challenged, perhaps in the workplace, and their self-concept goes down in some areas and up in others, and new facets of self-concept may also form.

In a study into trouble-makers and gender differences (Hay 2000) boys overestimated their social self-concept, while girls underestimated theirs. In other words, the boys appreciated nasty behaviour. It was cool to be a trouble-maker. And they linked this behaviour to an enhanced probability of opposite-sex relations. This is a bias that exists in our wider culture. The research on the influence of media is relevant here. In terms of statistical validity, violent media has almost as high an effect on aggressive behaviour as does smoking on lung cancer and many times higher than self-examination has on preventing breast cancer (Bushman & Anderson 2001). However, as a society we are not yet prepared to take on board a similar scale of initiatives as we do with preventing cancer.

So we also do need to have an impact on the messages that exist in our culture, so the last element of the program is the whole school approach, or a whole school culture approach. We still must say that engaging in bullying is not acceptable. It is not cool.

Given the problems you mentioned with inconsistency, how do you set up a workable program in schools?

Well, there are four modules in the program we've developed at the University of Western Sydney. For parents we prepare basic information, a leaflet and program for an information night. For students there are three lessons, a 35-minute video on students discussing bullying, overhead transparencies and handouts. Teachers receive a one-day inservice on the program, skill training in enhancing self-concept, looking for appropriate behaviours and reinforcing them, and teaching pro-social self-concepts. We teach comebacks, delaying tactics, the 'broken record' and refocusing techniques. The whole school, as the fourth module, must commit to modify its behaviour management plan to accommodate the flow chart we've developed, and include bullying as part of its behaviour management process. It must also commit to the revised policy and to building whole school awareness that bullying is not acceptable. The resource kit includes such things as a standard policy on bullying, researched from practice all round the world, and newsletter clippings to cut and paste into the school's newsletter.

A group of up to six consultant teachers are drawn from the school: they undergo a two-day training program and are assisted by us to implement the program. They become the consulting team and subsequently train all the other teachers using the resources included in the package. However, our personal intervention is kept to a minimum to make certain that the program is viable in schools that do not have the benefit of a university research team to back them up. There is also a launch of the newly revised bullying policy and student lessons are implemented.

What have been the results so far?

Preliminary indications are that it is doing well. Reported victimisation is going down and the feel of the school is changing. The feedback is that the intervention strategies are useful in other areas, not just in bullying situations. The teachers are saying that the content is new but it is not a shift from best-practice teaching. The training in interventions has improved the consistency of the behaviour-management approach. There is a common language for student management.

What can you say about the nature of bullying?

We don't know yet if underachieving kids are more likely to bully. There is no consistent factor in predicting who bullies. The type of bullying is affected by the perception of academic achievement, that is, it tends to be verbal or by social exclusion as opposed to organising a bully group.

Most bullying in schools does occur in groups. In my study, only 2% of individuals admitted bullying alone while 20% admitted bullying as part of a group. Peers are present in 85% of bullying episodes (Craig & Pepler 1997). Peer onlookers often act to reinforce the bullying behaviours and inflate the bully's self-worth. Indeed the most common reported motivations for bullying are to 'feel powerful' or to 'look cool'. Current studies contradict the received wisdom that bullies have low self-esteem and can in fact increase their self-esteem by bullying others (Salmivalli 1998). Within this social context, bullying behaviour and self-concept may be related. Students protect their gains in self-concept from being eroded through bullying others.

My hypothesis is that enhancing self-concept in other positive ways will reduce the need for students to get self-concept gains from the group in negative behaviours. The teachers are the point of intervention in that they are more likely to change student behaviour. They more than anyone set the boundaries in schools.

Several international and Australian studies show that the great majority of bullying is not reported to teachers or is not noticed by them. In most schools the playground and the classroom are the two places where the majority of bullying takes place. Teachers only notice about 50% of the bullying that goes on around them and intervene even more rarely. The following data on how often teachers intervene in bullying episodes is drawn from extensive video studies. According to Sullivan (Sullivan 2000, p 86), 'teachers intervened in only 3.9% of the bullying . . . [and] 31.5% of children who were victims of bullying reported that teachers almost never tried to stop it.'

Are boys responding to teachers working on self-concept?

It's too early to tell. What I have realised is that boys often do not like following instructions. It's very important that interventions allow them to maintain their self-concept and do not become power struggles. This program is feedback-based and builds awareness. 'Are you aware that is bullying?' As I said the levels of intervention escalate from there.

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Preliminary indications are that it is doing well. Reported victimisation is going down and the feel of the school is changing.

Roberto H Parada is completing his PhD evaluating the effect of a self-concept approach to reducing bullying. He can be reached at the SELF Research Centre, University of Western Sydney, Bankstown Campus on 02 9772 6428. At this stage materials developed as part of the Beyond Bullying program are only available as part of school involvement in the research study.

The Emotional Life of Boys

In this paper Greer White explores the emotional life of boys. She presents some of the findings that have arisen out of a qualitative research project with a group of 14 and 15-year-old boys. These boys indicate that they are generally aware of their emotional state and know what are appropriate emotional expressions. She outlines conclusions about working with boys in the classroom.

Nick, a boy expelled from school for repeated bad behaviour, was familiar with the vulnerability emotions engendered within a person. 'Inside I'm not tough. I'm a girl inside.'

Introduction

There is a large body of contemporary literature on the emotional needs of boys. Boys, it is stated, have difficulty in understanding, identifying and expressing their feelings (McGrane & Patience 1993; Colman 1997; Gurian 1998; Kindlon & Thompson 1999). Boys' emotional limitations have been linked to mental health problems, particularly depression and suicide (Colman 1997; Pollack 1999), to aggression and violence (Biddulph 1997; Kindlon & Thompson 1999) and to poor self-esteem (Pollack 1999; Biddulph 1997). Such claims about boys highlight the importance of exploring the concept of gender as one dynamic structure within society that helps shape the way individuals function in the world.

Boys come to understand, experience and express their feelings within this gendered field (Wheeler 1998). They actively negotiate their gendered identity and make choices about how they will express themselves based on what they experience as successful and what will best work for them (McLean 1995; Webb 1997). For boys, this is a process of creative adjustment.

This article firstly presents how boys understand their emotional life and how they express their emotions. The first section draws directly upon the experiences of boys. The following section draws some conclusions based on this exploration about working with boys in the classroom. The boys referred to in this paper were aged between 14 and 15 at the time of the study. They attended a single-sex boys' school with boarding facilities. The names given are not the boys' real names.

How boys understand their feelings

The boys interviewed indicated that for the most part they were aware of their emotional life. James understood his feelings as 'an expression of myself'. Ray described them as an energy or a force that helped give expression to his uniqueness: 'They [emotions] are something that makes you the person you are . . . [they] shape the way you deal with your day to day life.' Mick saw them as an 'experience that goes through you when anything happens.' Emotions were seen as being located within the person. 'They go in and end up inside your head and they tell you things' (Luke) and they are ' . . . a reaction to what happens in life' (Kevin). Nick, a boy expelled from school for repeated bad behaviour, was familiar with the vulnerability emotions engendered within a person. 'Inside I'm not tough. I'm a girl inside.'

There was an understanding amongst some of the boys of an individual's responsibility for generating their own feelings. 'I get feelings when I do something. If I do something bad then I get a bad feeling. Sometimes good stuff' (Barry). There was an awareness of how different behaviours in others triggered off particular feelings in themselves. 'There is this kid who is always really nasty and sometimes I see him and I think I hate him. My brain just ticks over and tells me those sort of things' (Bob). Many of the boys referred to life matters arousing feelings within them. They mentioned family problems, school pressures, their own misbehaviour, bullying, fighting with other boys and finishing school. 'Leaving school. That's pretty scary. Like, what are we going to be? What are we going to do and can we cope in the real world?' (Daniel).

For the most part, the boys interviewed indicated that they had a first-hand experience of the powerful impact of emotions. Some feelings make it 'harder to focus on things . . . to think about what you are doing . . . to make decisions' (Nick). All were able to remember the power of their emotions at significant periods in their life. Most indicated that they had an ability to distinguish different degrees of emotional intensity. 'There are two different types. There's really depressed angry and then there's angry where you get heaps of energy in your arms and legs and you just want to run around and go to the gym or something . . . The first one is the real bad one' (Barry).

A number had experienced the death of a family member and this experience was noted as their strongest emotional experience. Thomas immediately began to cry when asked what he thought feelings were. The question, and his response, immediately brought him into contact with the deep sadness that remained with him as a result of the death of his mother. 'It's emotions. An emotion that . . . all my different . . . sad. I was really sad when my mum died last year' (Thomas). A small number of boys identified their movement to boarding school as a significantly emotional time. They named feelings of grief and loneliness as accompanying this change in their life. Some indicated that they knew what it meant to have a mixture of feelings at any one time.

A few boys said that they could identify the feelings of others. 'I don't like it much. Like good mates. You're seeing that they're scared or not happy and you know they'll take it out on someone. I suppose if they let it out enough well that will be fine, but I'll always know what they've got in the back of their head, that feeling of fear' (Daniel).

Most of the boys interviewed convincingly demonstrated that they were intimately familiar with a wide range of feelings. The generic five emotional states of glad, bad, mad, sad and scared were fully described, though with a much subtler naming. Boys spoke of being jealous, frustrated, anxious, annoyed, guilty, embarrassed, excited, helpless, lonely, shamed and more. Thomas had lost his mother two years previously and was living with guilt. A doctor had told him that worry and tension helped cancer grow so he and his sister needed to be well behaved. He knew his behaviour was not always perfect at this time. His anguish was expressed when he stated, 'Sometimes I think it was me [that caused my mum to die]' (Thomas). Greg lost his grandfather when he was aged nine. He was still living with regret. He had not had the opportunity to say goodbye to him. 'I didn't know what was going on. I never saw Pop for the two weeks when he was ill. I was the only person who didn't see him when he was in hospital. I was either at a mate's place or wasn't able to go . . . I know it sounds odd to want to see someone die. But I still did want to.' Kevin, a 14-year-old boy who witnessed the accidental death of a friend, presented himself to a counsellor in the early stages of his trauma but returned 12 days later with a new wave of grief. He had realised that he had lost the opportunity to say goodbye to his friend while she was lying bleeding to death in front of him.

This group of boys demonstrated that they knew emotionally what was happening to them, and in some cases for others. The following also indicates that boys know what makes for acceptable emotional expression.

'There are two different types. There's really depressed angry and then there's angry where you get heaps of energy in your arms and legs and you just want to run around and go to the gym or something . . . The first one is the real bad one.'

Boys carefully choose whom they will talk to about their inner life.

How boys express their feelings

Boys carefully choose whom they will talk to about their inner life. For most boys the number of confidants is very small and includes close friends and significant and understanding adults. In the group of boys interviewed, a number mentioned their mother, their parents and/or close mates. One mentioned his father, one mentioned an older sister, another an older cousin and another some friends who were girls. Boys who have no-one to talk to are placed in a particularly vulnerable position. Craig remembers his early boarding experience thus:

Back in Grade 8 and the beginning of Grade 9 I used to get on the phone and talk to my mum. I'd start crying to my mum because when I was in Grade 8 and 9 I didn't know that many people because I was new. I'd lived out of town. I didn't really express things to anyone around. So when I got on the phone to my mum I expressed all my feelings and sometimes I got dumped on by my parents. They started getting angry with me about small things. Then I started to get angry.

Fathers were not always seen as appropriate persons for emotional sharing:

Greer: So what do you do with the feelings you can't tell your mates?

Craig: Oh usually I talk to my mum a lot. Like, tell her what's happening.

Greer: So your mum is the one that you're able to say things to?

Craig: Yeah, I rarely get to talk to my dad. Well, I don't really talk to him. Well, I talk to him about football. That sort of stuff.

Some boys were able to support their judgement of their dads as being a poor choice for emotional sharing. 'I just don't feel comfortable doing it [emotional sharing] with dad because, like, he always jokes around a lot . . . He wouldn't take it seriously. He'd probably think I'm joking or something' (Luke). '[My dad] was my footie coach for a while. You know, I'd get hit and he'd say, "Stop crying. Get back out there." I used to go horseback riding and he'd say, after I'd been thrown off the horse, "Get back on. Stop crying." That sort of stuff' (Craig).

Greg had data that supported his judgment for not speaking to either his mother or father:

Greer: Could you talk to your dad about your feelings?

Greg: No, he pays me out more than anyone. He makes fun of my cousin, my mates.

Greer: So if you went to him and told him you were really worried about your exams, what would he do?

Greg: He'd just laugh and go, 'You'll be right, just study. Instead of being out here talking to me get in there and study.' He'd just say something smart.

Greer: What does that feel like for you?

Greg: I think I'm letting mum and dad know how hard school is for me. Mum just thinks that if I try I'll do it. But I always try.

Greer: Like you are trying hard at school now.

Greg: But she thinks there is a little bit more I can do.

Greer: How does that feel?

Greg: It gets on my nerves a bit. My mum, she's only got 'one eye', like she sees everything with one eye. She keeps going on about my cousins and my neighbours. She keeps going on about them.

Greer: What does she say?

Greg: My cousin Sam. Only two people in Australia have been chosen to go over to some university in England and he was one of them. And she just reckons I could be like him if I studied full hard and everything. It's like, no, I do study.

Greg had indicated in the interview that he was particularly worried about upcoming exams. In this instance it can be seen that a mother's future aspirations for her son blocks her ability to see what is really happening in the present for him.

Boys know the cost of speaking about or expressing their emotions inappropriately. 'I'm kind of afraid that if I tell someone they'll call me a girl or something like that.' Other name calling for not keeping emotions under control included stupid, sissy, wuss and poofter. Mike stated that if boys could not handle their emotions they were likely to receive the following retort, 'Oh, you're a wuss. You can't handle very much' (Mike). Emotional expression is clearly known by boys to be outside of society's dominant masculine construct. Most boys know that it is in their social interests to keep within this confine. One boy reported his ability to work through his feelings by himself. 'I shut down and not do anything. It's like I find my own space' (Tony).

All boys have learnt that for the most part it is inappropriate to express their feelings through tears. As Nick expressed it, 'You don't want to degrade yourself by letting them see you cry.' Tony declared that he had given up crying after the death of his mother. He was 10 years old. Greg stated he had given up crying when he was about seven, when his Pop (grandfather) had died. Nathan described how he learnt to control his tears. He described how firstly he would keep his crying until he was alone in bed at night. Then he learnt how to stop his tears. Now he can turn to sleep to forget. 'When I feel upset or not happy with how things are going when I'm going to sleep, I just fall asleep and just forget about it usually.' Barry has learnt the art of crying 'without crying': crying without shedding any tears. Daniel could see the connection between a tough masculine expression and the need to control tears. 'I think its part of the macho.' However, some key emotional experiences are recognised as being acceptable times for crying. The death of a parent or close relative was generally accepted as one of those times.

I've got a few good mates, like Mark. His mother died. I talked to him and stuff. You need to know what's happening with him. He'd cry and I'd say, 'It's all right, it's fine.' He'd cry in front of me and I'd talk to him. It just depends who you're with (Craig).

Boys don't like to cry much. At my dad's funeral, because it was a funeral, nobody really cared. Crying at school or something you just don't want it to happen but because I lost my dad I didn't really care what anybody else thought (Martin).

Other boys stated that it was all right to cry if a well loved pet died or if you got expelled from school.

All boys accepted anger as being the most accepted emotional expression. 'It is a lot easier to express anger. I notice a lot of boys seem to express anger easily. They work it out through anger' (Craig). In fact anger can mask almost every other emotion, fear, embarrassment, frustration and even at times pride and happiness. Craig described the process of shopping for clothing with his mother. She kept asking him to try on different clothing items. 'I was embarrassed. I don't want to be hanging round with Mum. Anger came out but it was embarrassment. But you don't say, "Oh mum, you're



I was embarrassed. I don't want to be hanging round with Mum. Anger came out but it was embarrassment. But you don't say, "Oh mum, you're embarrassing me." I got angry with her.'

embarrassing me." I got angry with her' (Craig). Martin was easily able to identify how his sadness at the loss of his dad was expressed as anger. 'When I'm sad, I lash out at people. I get angry with my mates because they have their dads. One of my friends yesterday was saying something about his dad and I got a bit peeved off' (Martin). Nathan reported how he would get angry even when he was feeling really happy. 'My mates, like, might want to know what I'm happy about. I just get angry at them and then they leave me alone to be happy' (Nathan).

The boys who took part in this study clearly indicated that they lived for the most part within the confines of dominant or hegemonic male constructs when it came to expressing their emotions. What is most surprising is the depth of awareness they have about what is going on for them and their mates.

Conclusions

Some important conclusions can be drawn from this research that could help inform teachers about what may be happening for boys in their classroom.

i. Boys know what they feel

For the most part boys know what they are feeling but have learnt to keep their inner emotional life well hidden.

ii. Safety comes before expression

Boys need opportunities to express their feelings but the classroom will very rarely offer a safe opportunity for boys to do this. The classroom generally reflects society in microcosm and boys know the cost of expressing their vulnerable inner selves in a society that values a tough masculine expression. Emotional sharing demands a safe supportive environment.

iii. Being tough is an advantage

Boys know the social advantage attached to the expression of a dominant tough masculinity. The classroom can easily become the 'stage' on which boys 'act out' their particular expression of this dominant masculinity. This 'performance' can enhance their social status in the eyes of their peers but often is a direct challenge to the authority of the teacher and an opportunity to belittle and bully boys of lesser status and girls.

iv. Anger as a doorway

Teachers will often encounter a boy's anger. This anger may be directed against them or another person or situation. It is important to value this emotional expression. Anger has, for some boys, become the primary, if not sole, feeling expression. An exploration of the anger may become the gateway to understanding what is fully happening for a boy.

v. Address the power imbalance

Work with children will always be marked by a power imbalance between adult and child. Society's dominant masculine constructs value power and authority as appropriate masculine traits. Many boys choose to cut their gendered identity against these traits. Those who work with boys may find themselves in an unworkable situation if the power imbalance is not adequately addressed. The teacher can easily enter into a power struggle with the boy who demands to exercise his authority or may face a silent and uncooperative boy who feels shamed into submission.

vi. Teach for sensitivity

Boys need to be exposed to masculine expressions that value the more sensitive and vulnerable aspects of a person. They need to be exposed to books, films, topics and people that challenge dominant masculine expressions. Boys may demonstrate opposition to such exposure because of society's dominant masculine constructs.

vii. Working in the 'here and now'

Teachers need to meet a boy when he is in the 'here and now'. Boys have a wide experience of adults whose energy is directed towards their future life rather than their present reality. Teachers and parents often exhort boys to go beyond the now for the sake of their future life.

viii. Help them find their own answers

Teachers are not the experts on any particular boy's life. Boys generally know what is right for them. Many are just as intelligent as we are, if not more so. For the most part, they will know what is going on for them and may simply need our help to discover their own answers.

This paper has focused on the emotional life of boys. However, it is noted that some girls also choose to express themselves according to hegemonic masculine constructs and, consequently, much of what is written in this paper may also apply to these particular girls.

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Secondary Section

Dancing in the Playground

Glennis Pitches describes how a spontaneous student event of traditional Lebanese music led to the creation of a more harmonious environment at Fawkner Secondary College.

It was wonderful to see these boys smiling, swaying and dancing to the music. They had cultural permission to sing and dance.

What's your school like?

We are a co-educational high school of 360 students in Melbourne's northern suburbs. About two-thirds of the students are boys as there is a single-sex girls' school nearby. Over 70% of our students have a home language other than English and there are large subgroups of Arabic and Assyrian speakers. About 60% of students are on an education maintenance allowance. Improving literacy and student achievement are key issues for us.

There was a lot of physical violence in the yard. This tended to be 'mucking around' that went too far, rather than fights. Although we have diverse ethnic groups, the fights were mostly within friendship groups. Soon after arriving I had done about eight mediations. I knew we needed to do something to reduce the incidence of solving issues physically. The first thing was to shorten lunchtime from one hour to 45 minutes, which was highly successful.

At the same time, it happened that another round of funding became available through the School Focused Youth Service, which had been set up initially in a response to the Suicide Intervention Task Force. The idea was to link relevant agencies to provide better and more appropriate services to young people, particularly where there were gaps in the services. In conjunction with the Community Health Centre in Moreland and the Australian Lebanese Welfare Organisation we received \$2,000 in funding to provide a holistic health promotion and music program focusing on diversity, harmony and issues of masculinity.

What triggered the dance initiative?

One day I came out into the courtyard to see around 200 students clustered around some musicians. A Year 11 boy was singing traditional Lebanese songs and playing an Arabic drum, which had been provided by a Year 10 boy. He was a peer leader, bully and harasser but a power in the schoolyard. There was a joyful feeling in the group, and it felt very much like a traditional gathering. It was wonderful to see these boys smiling, swaying and dancing to the music. They had cultural permission to sing and dance.

I organised a follow-up session at lunchtime to brainstorm what the students were interested in doing. Anyone could come and about 100 students turned up, including the Year 11 singer. The boys wanted to learn how to breakdance, to play traditional drums and to be DJs. The girls wanted modern dance along the lines of Jennifer Lopez. At that time our classroom music program in Years 7 and 8 was very small given the size of the school. From this meeting we created a Student Organising Committee (SOC) of students to plan and develop the activities. A breakdance group already existed informally in the school, so one of them joined in. We also got someone from each of the other interest groups, such as modern dance, Iraqi dance and so on. We met on a Tuesday in class time but in different periods so as to not miss the same class each time.

A key member of the SOC was Mark Camilleri, a youth worker from Moreland Community Health Centre. He listened carefully to what the students were saying they wanted, and then found the artists and resources to meet their needs, within our budget.

The SOC was very important. It was ultimately their committee and they became a focus for other students to initiate the kind of activities they were interested in. Once the initial classes got under way, little groups started to form. The only requirement was that they find a staff member willing to supervise them during lunch and we worked out a timetable for their activity.

How did it all develop?

The youth worker helped us find George, an Arabic breakdancer from the northern suburbs of Melbourne, who agreed to teach three lunchtime sessions on Mondays in Term 2. At the first session about 150 students turned up to hear the music and see what was going on. For the second session — when there was a commitment to be involved — about 40 came and this settled to 30 in the last session. The idea was to come and learn and then — if there was enough interest — develop a performance. Girls participated in the sessions, but only boys went on to perform breakdancing. A lot of older boys participated with their younger brothers. This is not unusual in our school as there are a lot of large families and student response to programs is always vertical.

For the girls, Mark found Kate, a dynamic self-taught dancer who offered a Funky Dance class based on music from the 'Video Hits' TV show. Between 15 and 20 girls joined and the final performance involved 12 girls. This was a big success. Because the hall where the groups practised has large windows at one end there was the opportunity for others to watch. Initially a number of the Year 9 girls would stop when students walked past. They gradually developed enough confidence to perform in front of 600 people! In addition there was an Iraqi dance group for girls organised by one of the students. This year, the students inform me, there will be an all-boys' group of Iraqi dancers.

All of this culminated in the Gala Performance night in September. The program ran for two hours and included a fashion parade organised by Year 12 girls and modelled by Year 10 and 11 boys and girls wearing their own clothes. The Drama Club performed as did a belly dancer, a country and western singer and the Year 11 singer with his traditional Lebanese band.

There was little advertising but 600 people turned up that night. This was staggering compared to the limited community response to other activities held at the school.

The Gala was in the last week of school just after the September 11 attacks on the World Trade Centre in New York. We were all aware of potential tension between groups within the school. While there were a few 'go back where you belong' comments, they were minor. The Gala was the best display of who we were as a school and what we believed in. There was no need to send out a notice saying that we valued diversity and cooperation when the performance enacted it.

In hindsight, the performance element was itself critical. It was a very public way of acknowledging their worth. It also meant that they had to meet the high expectations of a performance. It was really important to work within the parameters of what matters to the students. Not only would a symphonic band be out of our reach financially, but this is not the type of music our students want to make.



The Breakers share their ideas with a primary school audience.

A lot of older boys participated with their younger brothers. This is not unusual in our school as there are a lot of large families and student response to programs is always vertical.

What overall effect was there in the boys' behaviour?

The boys were engaged and there was something meaningful to do at lunchtimes. The number of mediations decreased. It felt like people were involved in what they cared about. It also increased the number of positive interactions that existed as shared history between students. It contributed towards developing a culture where it was good to excel and to be recognised for it.

What has happened since then?

There has been a significant increase in student-initiated events. One Year 9 boy ran an indoor soccer competition for Year 7 and 8 students and cajoled staff to supervise.

The students next wanted to decorate the school. We are currently putting in student mosaics in the grounds, which celebrate the cultural heritage of our community. 'What about the inside of the school?' was the next question. So far the Student Representative Council (SRC) has painted one room purple, blue and orange, and the girls' toilets in the hall are now blue and pink. This was done after school, and students from Years 7, 10 and 12 were involved. So there is an increased pride in the school.

We want to take student involvement even further. The SRC ran spasmodically last year. A conscious decision was made to create a time allowance for a teacher to work with the council. Heath Pritchard has done a wonderful job in helping students understand college processes and see possibilities of how they can be involved.

Through Kate Armstrong, the dance teacher, our students were involved along with 80 students from other schools in a dance performance through the main street of Melbourne during Moomba. We have employed her to work with more students to produce a Gala Performance in 2002.

The twists of the Breakers.



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Samih gets ready to helicopter.



Leo gets ready to tumble.



Andrew flips over Samih.



Andrew, Leo and Samet watch Samih do a flip.



Robot Fred.

Building Social and Emotional Competence in Middle School



Amina Schutz and Lauren O'Meara outline a work in progress, the story of how one school is focusing on building social competence and emotional intelligence in Years 7 and 8.

We identified the need to change the curriculum, and this developed into twin goals: firstly, to develop a gender inclusive curriculum; and secondly, to change the community's perception of the school.

Tell us something about your school

Kangaroo Flat Secondary College is a semi-rural school in Bendigo, Victoria catering for students in Years 7 to 10. There are 605 students, mainly from Anglo-Celtic backgrounds. Most go on to the senior secondary college. The biggest challenge we have is to engage the full range of students in learning, especially those with low literacy and from families with a one or two generation history of unemployment. We have an approximately equal numbers of boys and girls.

Why did you focus on social and emotional competence?

The school started on the path of improving social competence in students about 10 years ago, but under a series of different labels. First, it was gender equity and gender reform. As a former technical school we had a ratio of over three boys to every one girl. We needed to make the school more attractive to girls if our programs and college priorities were to be viable. We identified the need to change the curriculum, and this developed into twin goals: firstly, to develop a gender inclusive curriculum; and secondly, to change the community's perception of the school. In the 1990s the school identified the need to attract more girls and every faculty worked on making their curriculum more girl-friendly. There were new buildings to house the technology programs and different approaches in maths and science. This concerted effort worked and we redressed the gender imbalance. The equal opportunity approach meant that both the curriculum content and structures supported changes in the social development of students by building a more inclusive environment.

By 1997 we had collected data on performance and on critical incidents and saw that they were related. Our middle management realised that it was foolish to separate behaviour management and curriculum. The under-achievers were also the source of the behavioural problems. There were a majority of boys in this group.

Table 1: Semester results combination of Es and Fs in 1997

Year	Boys	Girls	Ratio
7	29	7	4:1
8	21	7	3:1

We began to address this by focusing on student management using Bill Roger's approach. While this did build student-teacher relationships there was only an indirect effect on the curriculum.

Staff attended quite a number of inservices on boys' outcomes and literacy issues, and we were looking at ways to improve the school experience for both boys and girls. One of the significant steps occurred when we were visited by people from the Royal Children's Hospital, Melbourne, who were offering randomly selected schools the chance to become part of their Gatehouse Project. The project gave us a research model, funds for professional development and the facilities to analyse data from surveys of our students.

The focus of the Gatehouse Project was research into the links between students' experiences of school and health outcomes, with a particular focus on emotional health. The intervention strategy focused on enhancing connectedness to school through making improvements in the whole school climate, the classroom climate and engagement of students (see diagram). It also included a classroom component which assisted young people to explore, understand and apply strategies for dealing with common challenging situations and the emotions associated with them. A questionnaire administered to students measured student perceptions of relationships with school, teachers and peers, and how these related to health outcomes such as depressive symptoms and substance use.

In 1997, Year 8 students were surveyed and results showed that while we were no worse than comparable schools there was plenty of room for improvement. This data confirmed what many teachers knew intuitively but focused more of the teachers and staff on these issues. It also provided a baseline against which to measure progress. In 1997 we found that:

- 53% of Year 8 students in comparable schools suffered victimisation, compared to 52% Kangaroo Flat Secondary College (KFSC)
- 20% of Year 8 students in comparable schools suffered poor social connectedness (no-one to talk to, no-one knows them well), which matched the 20% recorded at KFSC
- 28% of Year 8 students in comparable schools described themselves as 'not noticed' by teachers, compared to 31% KFSC

Essentially, the project defined the first set of social competencies for the school. Yes, it is all about relationships. The three most important issues identified were: relationships with teachers; relationships with students (social climate and respect); and relationships with learning (engagement).

In 1999 we were also successful in becoming a Middle Years Research and Development (MYRAD) school through a project initiated by the Centre for Applied Education Research at The University of Melbourne and the Department of Employment, Education and Training Victoria. This meant that we were offered professional development and some funds over three years. The project's research looked at under-performance and ways to respond to the plateau in achievement in early secondary school.

Framework: With hindsight we can say that these two research projects gave us a theoretical framework and a whole learning community design model that formed a broader basis for our piecemeal approaches, and extended and developed what we were already doing.

The Gatehouse Project broadly identified the need to improve communication, to develop a stronger sense of belonging and to enhance students' security and respect. The research data highlighted the need to improve the learning environment, including changing the school culture and thinking and planning in terms of a whole school learning community. We developed professional development programs that focused on improving the social environment. The Gatehouse research data reflected the need to build resilience and social competencies in students.



© The Conceptual Framework of the Gatehouse Project, Centre for Adolescent Health 1997



The research data highlighted the need to improve the learning environment, including changing the school culture and thinking and planning in terms of a whole school learning community.

We changed the structure of our timetable to ensure that each class saw a smaller number of teachers.

The MYRAD project gave us a design model that identified the need for us to develop broader structural initiatives and extend our repertoire of creative pedagogical approaches that were more engaging for our young people. Our school also worked very closely with our feeder primary schools to achieve shared understanding of consistency and continuity. This was achieved by experiencing shared professional development and by working on developing teaching and learning programs through the middle years (Years 5 to 8) and especially through transition.

The Gatehouse and MYRAD research was complementary and helped us to focus us on students' attitudes to themselves and to the school. We now have data that shows a trend in improving student attitude. They are noticed more, listened to more, and there is less of a gender difference in attitudes. In our class, one way we listen to students more is by using internal surveys of students asking them what they would like us to include in next semester's work in Study of Society and Environment and English. Then we work through all the students' requests.

The most critical thing we learnt from the Gatehouse and MYRAD research is the importance of the teachers knowing the students well enough to know how to extend them. The quality of the learning environment also needed attention. Structures needed to change so that there was sufficient time to develop those relationships. We changed the structure of our timetable to ensure that each class saw a smaller number of teachers. We set up double classrooms to develop team-teaching approaches that modelled the kinds of skills that we want our students to practice at table groups.

Why did you select this approach?

In 1998 two staff members (Margaret Blake and Jill Allan) had already been working on improving the social environment and the inclusiveness factor. They began team teaching in their Year 7 classes together, using Howard Gardiner's model of multiple intelligences. They developed this approach during that year and basically demonstrated that what you do in the classroom, and the quality of the teaching and learning environment, counts more than everything else. Every student has an enhanced chance to achieve when tasks are spread across the intelligences.

Was this approach taken across the whole school or just middle school?

The team-teaching approach and elements of the multiple intelligences model have remained in Years 7 and 8, but team teaching has not spread to Years 9 and 10. Students only see eight teachers per week compared with 14 to 16 previously. We have now set up paired teachers across Years 7 and 8 classes so that, for example, 7A and 7B are combined for English and SOSE for eight lessons a week. We also timetable a fortnightly meeting (which is essentially a form of professional development) where we explicitly focus on student learning rather than coordinating student management. By 2000 and 2001 we began to have a significant impact on student achievement, in particular reducing the number of students receiving Es and Fs. These outcomes are continuing to improve.

Why was this important?

Team teaching provides subliminal role modelling of the kinds of the skills that we want our young people to develop. We model listening and supporting roles: team presentations that give the opportunities to acknowledge our teaching partner's strengths and to defer in a problem-solving manner. It also ensures a reflective review component.

The next element is the use of structures within the classroom to foster the same processes and skills. We used table groups for student learning and teaching teams. We wanted students to develop via the table group setting an appreciation of others' strengths and to assist each other with their learning. When we set up the table groups we explain why students do not choose the members of their own groups. The table group structure encourages respect for diversity. Students grow to appreciate that each of them has something different to contribute to the learning group. The negotiated class rules and table group expectations are critical if we are to foster the caring, resilient, problem-solving, safe learning environment.

We then moved into a trial of table groups across the paired classes in Years 7 and 8. This only operated in less than 25% of their classes. The case for the trial was quite compelling. There was a wonderful atmosphere in the table group classroom. It was playful and fun, a warm environment where students were engaged and had better social outcomes. So we implemented it in 2001. It took 12 months to develop teacher confidence.

How did the boys respond?

That depends on the boy. The groups remained the same for the whole semester and of course they go through that storming stage of conflict and blame when a minority of boys might put up a folder so they won't get 'girl germs'. But we tell them their task is to bring out the best in each other. We develop a negotiated commitment: 'How I can help other members of my team achieve their best?' We develop tasks that require interdependence within the group.

For groups that are not working well we counsel and develop strategies for each of them to develop to assist the team. Students generally do not like to be moved from their table group. We do this as a cautionary step in our student management; something that highlights the significance of the table group. The group-based approach means that there are other interventions into behaviour than just withdrawal. Because other students are involved we are able to extend the skills of all students.

We also broaden assessment strategies to include reflections that express self-knowledge and ability to identify their own weaknesses and strategies relevant to the learning group. We have found that the democratic approach to curriculum means that things do take longer but that their learning is more transferable. For example, we get comments from other subject teachers on the research skills developed in the English/ SOSE table group work.

We do still work within the Curriculum Standards Framework outcomes set by the Victorian Department of Education so we don't accept that CSF prevents using this approach. We have noticed increased teacher satisfaction and the students have recognised the difference. But success requires consistency of focus so our fortnightly meetings are absolutely critical. The students like the table group activities and the self-management. In general, the parents support teaching the students to cooperate and we are noticing some boys developing through the improved social climate. Mainly we know we're on the right track because of the quality of comments from students engaged in tasks. Importantly, we enjoy it more.

The complementary strategy to the interdependent learning required for table groups has been to focus on building social competences through Howard Gardiner's approach to multiple intelligences. This model provides a routine acceptance of preferred learning styles and therefore recognises and celebrates diversity. Students are given choice within their class work but over a semester everyone has to work on their less favoured learning styles.

What are some of the strategies you have used?

We broadened our teaching and learning strategies and assessment strategies to cater for boys. We looked for opportunities to develop activities that had some game-like qualities with a score and involving problem-solving teamwork. We applied those kinetic approaches that the boys told us they enjoyed. They were telling us that they wanted games and more fun like 'Find Someone Who . . .' and the bingo games.

Fortunately. . . unfortunately: One of the strategies we use from the Gatehouse Project is a warm-up kinetic activity using a soft ball. We start by tossing the ball to a student inviting them to say what they felt and thought during the day using the key phrase 'fortunately' or 'unfortunately'. The first person might say, 'Unfortunately fear gripped me when I woke up this morning, as I realised it was Monday. But . . .' The person then throws the ball to someone else, who must then add 'fortunately'. The receiver continues, '. . . fortunately, after I took a few deep breaths, I realised that I would be seeing my new friend X.'

The Gatehouse Project encouraged use of such strategies in the 'safe' third person to consolidate knowledge of a text or an issue or in a non-threatening first-person hypothetical situation. We even use this approach to text study using graphics. Using an A3 or larger sheet we can have students plot the ups and downs that face a character in a text, such as Romeo (*Romeo and Juliet*), Josephine (*Looking For Alibrandi*) or Lockie (*Lockie Leonard*). Leunig's cartoon is helpful here.



Track the ups and downs of your character in the story.

One activity we use for writing is to play a 'soundscape' (any music that you feel confident that they will not have heard will do). We say that they might have heard something similar as background music to a film. We do not say it is classical music as we do not want to switch off their creative curiosity by any preconceived ideas. We have used Bach's unaccompanied cello suites and this year we chose Peter Sculthorpe's *Port Essington*, tracks 3–4 (Australian Chamber Orchestra, ABC Classics).

The negotiated class rules and table group expectations are critical if we are to foster the caring, resilient, problem-solving, safe learning environment.

The poems have moved readers to spontaneous applause from fellow students.

We hand out a pro forma that asks the students to write down in columns their responses to what they hear under headings of: what they feel; smell; see; think; imagine/remember. We ask for a setting. We have total silence while they listen the first time and then repeat it. They are not to take the pen off the page but allow their imaginations to flow. They are asked not to break the 'fix' or 'spell' of the music and the flow.

This all takes about half a session. We then ask them to share their ideas in the next session and we create a summary of ideas on a white board. It is a delight for all to see the amazing diversity of ideas. The really moving thing is that some students — including the boys — are able to describe feelings and associations. For example, they picked up a shift in the music from paradise to sorrow or the dissonance and sad melancholy. From this they variously described being in a jungle or tropical place where the birds were beautifully coloured, where there was a sunrise, water, two people walking, one injured. Another student remembered his grandmother's funeral and how sad it was and how the family were gathered around to remember the lovely things about grandma and so on.

They are then asked to shape a dense creative descriptive setting of their own using their own word bank and, if they wish, some of the ideas shared. This can later be turned into a longer piece, but there are ample teaching and learning moments from them, carefully crafting the first paragraph then reading their responses to the class. The stories can be shaped to include a setting, characters or action where something happens and then is resolved.

The focus here is detailed description. This activity arouses a heightened sensitivity of thoughts and feelings that few other activities arouse. It also taps an intuitive feel for form and metaphor and this can lead easily into narrative at an unconscious level before it is inhibited by spelling or preconceived ideas. Through this process many of our students with low literacy skills or students who might think it is uncool to express ideas will feel comfortable and valued in a way that is unexpected to them and to the rest of the class. Powerful feelings can be expressed in a non-threatening way.

We assess the work at two stages. Firstly for emotional intelligence (just the initial words and phrases) and secondly as a polished piece of descriptive writing.

Over the year we have found that some students whom we would expect to do well (who have highly developed language skills) do not necessarily do well in this and say that it is hard.

Others whom we might not think could open up to this activity surprise themselves and delight their audience. Music students or self-confessed music lovers do well on this.

You can also use the same process for students to write a poem. This is particularly appealing to sensitive students or students (often boys with low literacy skills) who are given the opportunity to refine via word processor and spell check.

During the editing process we work on rhythm. We do this by reading out aloud (conferencing with the student either within table groups or individually depending on the sensitivity of the student) and selecting how the lines should appear on the page. The poems have moved readers to spontaneous applause from fellow students.

This has been done successfully with Years 7 and 8 and it is one of our never-fail activities.

Flash cards: Over the past five years we have been developing a wider range of practices and programs that develop emotional intelligences. We use flash cards — either single words (feelings) or excerpts (quotes) — to develop expression. We start with the third person and then move to the first person when it seems safe to do so. After studying a text we create flash cards with, for example, the words 'anxious', 'humiliated', 'frustrated', 'jealous', 'bewildered', 'angry', 'protective', 'jubilant'. We give out a card each to 12 or so students and ask them to say, using a sentence, when in the story the various characters felt these things. Students stand and hold up the card and say, 'Lockie Leonard felt *humiliated* when he was unable to water ski in front of Vicki's friends and family.'

Another way is to have students read an excerpt (prepared in enlarged print) from, say, *Romeo and Juliet* or *Looking for Alibrandi*, and ask them to then select a card that best describes the feeling or thoughts of the character being portrayed. For example, Barton *felt* trapped because his father made all the decisions for him. The dialogue then goes something like this:

Teacher: What is he thinking? What thoughts does he have that lead to his actions?

Student: That his father makes all the decisions?

Teacher: How does this make him feel?

Student: Angry or frustrated.

Teacher: Is this feeling helpful? That his father makes all the decisions? What might have been a helpful way to think about this? How else could he think about this?

Student: If he had said to himself, as James suggested, Dad's forgotten that he is talking about my life, not his own. I would tell him that this is not what I want .

The point here is re-framing or thinking 'What can I change?' You cannot always change the situation but sometimes you can use more helpful ways of self-talking.

Teacher: What else could Barton have done?

Student: That he needs to tell his father that he does not understand. 'Dad, don't make all my decisions for me.'

Teacher: What made it difficult for him?

Reinforcing positive self-talk: Drawing on the Gatehouse Project, we use a range of activities to allow students to explore relationships between thinking, feeling and acting. For a journal, a role-play or a letter to a character we often use the following sequence:

I was feeling really angry/sad/frustrated when . . .

I thought that . . .

Then I realised that there might be another way of looking at this.

Perhaps . . .

This made me feel . . .

So now I will . . .

With a Year 7 text such as *The Schernoff Discoveries*, we do something similar with the first date by the main character Harold, but something as simple as a Charlie Brown cartoon can be used in the same way. With these two examples we ask the students to describe what else Harold and Charlie might have thought. How did what he thought affect the way he acted?

With all the above examples we are developing skills at re-framing. This way of approaching texts using the third person is a very effective way of demonstrating how characters' feelings lead to thoughts that can be helpful or unhelpful. Students can practise ways of thinking and feeling that will equip them with more resilient approaches.

Visual and emotional intelligence: Picture books are an interesting source of stimuli. In *Rose Blanche* we ask, 'How do we know that something sad has happened? How does the illustrator convey this to us?' We have found that the boys are just as able and as comfortable expressing these ideas. We were delighted when a boy in Year 8 was the first to put his hand up and his response

was heard in silence and with obvious interest, 'Because there is a flower near the barbed wire. He said the flower is her flower.'

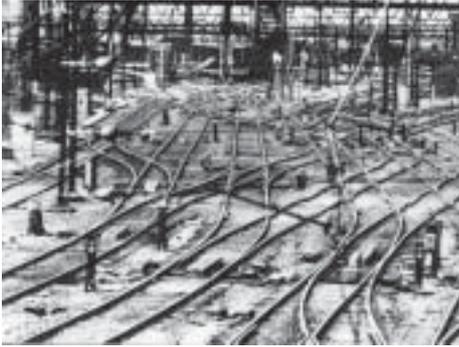
While he could not articulate something to the effect that the juxtaposition of the symbol of war (barbed wire) near the flower (innocence) suggests the senseless futility of her death, he nevertheless conveyed the feeling to his class very effectively. Visual and emotional intelligences are in this way given just as much importance as the type of written responses that require strong word intelligence.

Exploring characters in action: We use role-plays, such as the Oprah Winfrey TV show, and interviewing 'talking heads' and characters. This format can easily be adapted to explore attitudes, motives and feelings of characters within any text or part of a text. Four or five characters are played by student volunteers who form a panel at the front of the class. They explain why they acted the way they did and their feelings about one another.

The teacher or a student volunteer plays the roving host seeking questions and responses from the audience as well as assembled 'expert' authorities. These experts can be a psychologist, the author of the text, another character or some other relevant, real or fictional character. The rest of the class are told that they are expected to ask probing questions of one or more characters after each interview.

Pictures speak louder than words: As recommended by the Gatehouse Project, we used Photolanguage, a pack of 100 black and white Australian images. We put them out in the room and asked students to look at them and choose a photo that expressed how they felt about, for example, transition, weekends or when you are with friends.

We were delighted when a boy in Year 8 was the first to put his hand up and his response was heard in silence and with obvious interest, 'Because there is a flower near the barbed wire. He said the flower is her flower.'



Using Photolanguage. Select a photo for what it's like being in Year 7.

The link between teaching structures, social competence and curriculum:

Some very rewarding anecdotal evidence is emerging. The teaching of social competencies within the structure of table groups enhances our students' understanding of the link between subject content and how we teach it (i.e. pedagogy). The dynamics within table group settings can assist students to understand issues that are discussed in history and politics texts.

Our Year 7 students had been working on a research project on Antarctica for SOSE. As a class we were discussing some research questions that they had identified and formulated while they were involved with media and documentary study. The questions posed, and a summary of the answers, ran as follows:

What is the connection between Antarctica and the Kyoto meeting?

A few students identified the global warming issue and the rise in the sea level.

What has this got to do with us in Bendigo?

Pollution and thinning of the ozone layer affects us all.

What will make this difficult?

Different responses from key nations. We discussed the USA's position and Australia's response and why we should care.

What needs to happen for agreement between the nations at Kyoto?

Students' responses included statements such as, 'Countries need to be less selfish' and 'Governments should think of others and try to get the best solution.' Then one perceptive boy said, 'It's a bit like why we work in table groups. We have to work together, we have to listen and we have to have some agreed ideas to make it work for everyone.'

Here was a moving indication that social competencies that are bedded in the subject content can be taught and that students can transfer generic thinking skills to bigger global issues.

A second example occurred in relation to the tragedy of the September 11 terrorist attacks in the United States. Again, with the structured questioning and guided discussion, the students were able to appreciate the importance of all nations working cohesively to address the common concern of terrorism.

Our class discussions focused on problem solving and the need for a resilient approach. 'What can we do, what are New Yorkers doing to help?' Students discussed the importance of thinking things through and of not responding to inflamed passions. In this way we were acknowledging the feelings involved and then we analysed how feelings can lead to unhelpful thoughts which, in turn, can lead to inappropriate actions. We saw that there are helpful and less helpful ways of dealing with this. We recognised that we cannot change some things but we can change other things.

We had students write down what they saw, felt, and what needs to happen next. The link was made when we applied this to bullying and spreading rumours about suspects.

What effects have you seen?

Under-performance has been changing over time, and students in Years 7 and 8 are performing better. Progress with emotional competencies is noted by us and the students' reflections show tangible improvements. We are starting to report on table group competencies and social skill development, but much of the perceived improvement is still anecdotal. Boys are expressing feelings more and as they express themselves more their social competencies are rising. Certainly the data on the number of critical incidents supports this.

Along with problem solving and generic thinking skills, social competencies are undoubtedly at the centre of learning, not as competing areas of the crowded curriculum but bedded into all key learning areas. Just as we are broadening what we mean by literacy to include literacy across all key learning areas, so too can we do this with emotional intelligences. Michael White, Director of School Education, announced recently that schools should be involved with developing emotional and social competencies. Schools involved with middle years reform and review have all, at some stage, asked which skills need to develop in our young people, given that they will have about 15 jobs and three to four major career changes in their lives.

What's the next step?

At present we are reviewing Year 9 programs. The cohort that has moved into Year 9 this year say they miss the team teaching and the approaches that we had in place for Years 7 and 8. They also have the highest level of incident report so we are looking to increase engagement. However, it is not something you can impose. Staff have to be willing to change and to have input to any changes. You also need support from your principal and massive professional development over time. Our college has already begun this consultative inclusive whole-school improvement model and we are looking forward to implementing the changes.

MYRAD is a project initiated through the Centre for Applied Education Research at the University of Melbourne and Department of Employment, Education and Training, Victoria. Details and links can be found at: <http://www.sofweb.vic.edu.au/mys/research/>

The Gatehouse Project an initiative of the Centre for Adolescent Health at the Royal Children's Hospital, Melbourne. Details can be found at: www.gatehouseproject.com

Photolanguage, a set of black and white photographs, is available from the Catholic Education Office Resource Centres in your state. (For NSW, contact CEO Resource Centre, 38 Renwick St Leichhardt NSW 2040, phone: 02 9568 8221.)

Then one perceptive boy said, 'It's a bit like why we work in table groups. We have to work together, we have to listen and we have to have some agreed ideas to make it work for everyone.'

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Creating Better Relationships Through Pastoral Care

Chris McDermott and Peter Wade describe how relationships are at the heart of the way Emmaus School works.

The main focus of student-led conferencing is that the students create a portfolio of their work, and engage their parents in a discussion of what they have achieved, setting some goals for the future and working out what each party can do to assist.

Tell us a little about your school.

Emmaus Catholic College is a co-educational Year 7–12 school at Kemps Creek in the western suburbs of Sydney. There are 1,200 students from backgrounds ranging from very poor to very wealthy. Almost 40% are from a non-English speaking background and there are 37 different nationalities. However, there are few racial tensions — except during the soccer World Cup!

What is the pastoral system at your school?

The core of our school ethic and values is mutual respect. So we wanted to set this as the centre of the way of operating our pastoral care system. Mutual respect is really at the core of all relationships at the school and, therefore, pastoral care is not separate from other school activities. The key was to find a way to create a greater sense of relationship.

The first part of what we think of as the pastoral care system is the way the home room teacher is involved with the students. A key part of this is the student-led conferencing, which basically replaces parent–teacher interviews. We tried a number of variations in the way it operated before reaching the current arrangement. Of course quite a bit of time had to be allocated to preparing the students. This was sorted out by the heads of faculty, as the push for greater engagement originally came from them. In essence, all teachers need to be involved. The first year we put it through Years 7 and 8. Initially there was a lot of apprehension from teachers. However, most teachers were impressed with how it happened in practice.

How does student-led conferencing work?

The main focus of student-led conferencing is that the students create a portfolio of their work, and engage their parents in a discussion of what they have achieved, setting some goals for the future and working out what each party can do to assist.

The home-room teacher's job is to help the students get prepared for the interviews, monitor progress, the writing up of goal sheets (these are prepared from the literature we came across through research conferences), preparation of the portfolios. They run the students through practices on interview techniques, welcoming and opening the conference and making agreements.

The home room teacher hosts the parent–student conferences each semester, taking half their class at a time. The parent sessions last about 30 minutes. In Year 7 nearly all parents come, in Year 8 most, Year 9 half, Year 10 under half, Year 11 a quarter, with Year 12 having a very small turnout. The teacher spends about five minutes on the introduction, explaining what will happen and what is expected. Then the students sit down with their parent or parents and go through what they have achieved, areas they want to focus on, what their commitment is, what the parent can do to help and also what the teacher can do. The student leads the dialogue for about 25 minutes.

That seems like a long time.

We found that it goes very quickly. In fact, we had to cut it down. When we first started we had the teacher facilitating a conference between an individual student and their parents. It went too well, often going for 60 or 90 minutes which was not an effective use of teacher time. Especially with say 27 students to cover.

The teacher finishes the conference session by saying that it's a beginning and they can take it further at home. So many students have never had parents say, 'Tell me about what happens at school.' No-one has asked them and they loved talking about it.

After the conference, many parents are satisfied but if they have further questions they can go to the hall to meet the teachers. This is the normal parent-teacher event but it is shorter and more focused. The advantage is that it is a more efficient use of teacher time as they are booked in for 30-minute slots before they go to the hall for a shorter parent-teacher evening. They no longer have the five-minute cameo with parents. The teacher becomes a facilitator and is forced to engage with their home room students beyond administration, in that they have to know about their students' academic performance. In effect it means that the focus is off teachers reporting on students and the onus is on the students as learners.

So many students have never had parents say, 'Tell me about what happens at school.' No-one has asked them and they loved talking about it.

Is this part of a wider approach to learning?

Definitely. Conferencing is driven by the middle school coordinator from the beginning of the year. It is one aspect of the middle school set up which involves year-level teams. In Year 7, each class has two core teachers who take three subject areas each. One takes English/HSE/Religious Studies and the other Maths/Science/Health and Physical Education. We use specialists for LOTE (Languages Other Than English), Creative Arts and Design and Technology. In Year 8 the process is similar but there are three core teachers for the six subjects. In Years 9 and 10 we have the more traditional subject arrangements.

At the beginning of Year 7 we do not go directly into the curriculum. We start with how we manage ourselves, what it means to make choices, we look at learning styles (based on the Hermann brain model) and what it means for how we can learn and that students are expected to run the parent conferences.

What we want to achieve is that kids own the learning. In the conferencing they say what they've done, what they can't do, what they plan, how they'll get there, what they need to do. Previously the teacher did this, although it still occurs to some extent. However, we know that the students are doing these things in conferences so that is a major factor.

In Years 7 and 8 the boys are not yet resistant and they are the ones who are less likely to talk at home. So we are practising them in this, giving them an opportunity to feel comfortable doing the talking. One advantage is the chance to present their profile using technology, PowerPoint or even movies, rather than in paper form.

We are what's known as an 'Apple Distinguished' school and we are trying to incorporate technology as a tool to support learning. In our Year 7 and 8 classes the teachers are not limited to 40 minutes on maths then history, but can use what is happening in one unit to link across subject areas. There is a lot more group work and we have, say, six laptop computers in the class for projects.

As it has grown, we now have teachers wanting, say, two Year 7 classes, or one Year 7, one Year 8 and one other. They enjoy working without these time constraints.

Did you have difficulty creating specialist middle school teachers?

Yes, we did. So we created an arrangement that if you taught in middle school you were guaranteed to also have a senior class at the same time. As it has grown, we now have teachers wanting, say, two Year 7 classes, or one Year 7, one Year 8 and one other. They enjoy working without these time constraints. The focus is now that we are not content-driven but skill-driven and integrating skills across the curriculum.

Quite a number of students have commented that, 'It was the first time I told mum and dad what I do,' and that it felt good telling them.

How long have you been working on this?

We started discussion about eight years ago and modified as we went. We were facing the typical issues of students not being sufficiently engaged with their learning — boys especially — and began investigating what other schools were doing. Our next challenge is to enhance learning and technology — especially in light of boys' education and the need to work in more kinaesthetic ways.

How often does the home room teacher see the students?

Every home room teacher sees their class for 15 minutes at the beginning of the day. In Years 7 and 8 the home room teacher is one of the core teachers. The home room class stays together as it moves up each year and in Year 9 we look to have the home room teacher take one of their subjects.

How do you know that student-led conferencing is working?

The early feedback from students was that it was a tough shift for them and for the parents but after a couple of goes they started getting there. The younger students warmed to it more readily. It puts boys, in particular, more into the role of communicator and negotiator. The conferencing approach is now becoming part of the school culture and we get a range of qualitative feedback from parents, staff and students.

Our Year 9 teachers have said they cannot believe how many students form groups and get on with the job. Traditionally, Year 9 was a focus for problems, especially boys. Quite a number of students have commented that, 'It was the first time I told mum and dad what I do,' and that it felt good telling them. A few students say it is a waste of time and that often mirrors the receptivity of the parents.

So getting the message across to parents is a key task?

Yes, we put out a lot of literature and research information to parents by letter and school news. We also run a parent information night. At the last Year 7 and 8 parent night 160 parents (out of a cohort of 480 students) attended. We try to get parents to understand that it's not a one-hit wonder. It's not just kids articulating what they have done for the sake of it. It is something they can use in the future. A portfolio is a common method of entry into tertiary courses and for many job applications. They need to practise presenting themselves. For the students we get local business people in to talk about the importance of how they present themselves and what they have done.

What about student behaviour?

From a pastoral perspective, Year 7 has improved out of sight. They work together more effectively, they understand learning in groups and the roles involved and they use higher order thinking such as De Bono's 'hats'. Previously we had a significant number of notifications of poor behaviour. Teachers were complaining to their coordinators about student behaviour and much of lesson time was unproductive in that it was spent on settling and managing students. Class work was used as a tool to manage kids but they did not learn effectively.

Basically the kids are happier. We know this from senior staff visits to classrooms. We don't have anything like the number of issues referred and the notifications have changed in nature. Rather than being unacceptable behaviour, it's more a matter of kids getting carried away in their learning.

Another significant factor is that we know the students are known very well by only a few teachers. Being known by the teacher is, we think, perhaps the most critical element. We strongly believe that students cannot learn unless there's a good relationship, so we have set up structures to support the development of that relationship.

We also try to create an environment where parents feel the same connectedness to the teacher, closer to that which existed in their primary school. We now have less parent contact for problems and they comment on the quality of work when they go through conferencing.

What are the downsides of your approach?

Well, we get a lot of complaints in Years 7 and 8 that students never know what books to bring. While each class does have a home room, they cannot keep things there because it is used by other classes when they are doing specialist subjects.

Some parents are very concerned about the lack of specialist teachers in maths (never English) so we have to continually manage that. The hardest thing is that some class groupings don't click with particular teachers and are stuck with them for two years.

We cannot yet say that we are achieving better academic results. The ELLA and SNAP tests suggest that students are progressing normally but do not give enough data to know if we're adding to normal progress. We won't know this until we get results from next year's Year 10 cohort. However, I am not too concerned about it because, pastorally, the world is better, and learning is enhanced through student engagement already.

What else is involved with pastoral care?

The home room teacher is expected to work through issues of a general nature. We are restricted by union agreement to one hour of pastoral care a week, although we have negotiated for a bit more time out of other areas in the curriculum.

The other fundamental part of the pastoral care system is how student behaviour is managed in class. Our approach to behaviour management is based on Glasser's choice theory of how we operate. We all make choices. Ultimately, all schools do want the students to learn self-awareness and skills in better managing themselves. In classrooms, teachers use choice theory techniques such as 'My job, your job' and students discuss class rules. Each of our year level and key learning area coordinators have all had some training in this area, all the way up to the principal. We now have people on staff who conduct the in-house training and each year we run three weekly one-hour sessions — usually in term 1 — to refresh existing teachers' knowledge, and to build awareness for new staff.

What effect has this had on boys?

There has been a lot of improvement over the last five years. At one time we had complaint after complaint about them. They couldn't sit still for 40 minutes. Now they are engaging in learning activities.

What advice would you offer other schools?

Firstly, if — as a secondary school — you can look at how transition from Year 6 to 7 occurs, do it. Terrible things happen at this time. Secondly, the significance of relationships in learning needs to be thought through very clearly. The teachers have to focus on relationships, not content. Ultimately recruitment is important. We should employ teachers of kids not teachers of subjects.

However, we can't just expect staff to get on board. They need to own it as much as the students do. Therefore, we have to give them a lot of professional development and options and resources so that they can see the benefits. The greatest difficulty in adapting and refining our approach to learning and relationship appears as we go up in year-level groups. There seems to be a psychological barrier as we reach the senior years that we switch tack and teach the old fashioned way. I don't believe that it has to done this way any more.

Being known by the teacher is, we think, perhaps the most critical element. We strongly believe that students cannot learn unless there's a good relationship.

Chris McDermott is currently Principal and Peter Wade was Assistant Principal at Emmaus Catholic College, Kemps Creek, in Sydney. Chris can be reached on 02 9670 4588 or email: cmcdermott@emmaus.parra.catholic.edu.au

Beyond Bullying: A Work in Progress

Part of the conditions for featuring comments from a school involved in the Beyond Bullying Program (see page 14) was that the author and school remain unidentifiable.

While we were not terribly different from other schools some of the details certainly woke staff up.

For every positive affirmation from teachers there were five negative comments from their peers. So we really have to value the use of praise and catch them doing it right.

What are your concerns regarding boys in your school?

We are a typical large, western suburbs, co-educational secondary school which has issues with engagement. It is certainly cool to be the fool here. Some bullying and dominating behaviours are accepted in the community and therefore the boys get this modelled for them. However, we are focusing on making the school an oasis where it can be different.

How did you get involved?

We were aware of the pilot study being conducted by Roberto Parada and others from the SELF Centre (University of Western Sydney) and were invited to be part of the research. We also saw the baseline statistics and were keen to do something about the level of bullying by both boys and girls. Currently, we are in the training phase and expect to begin the implementation phase next term. Our consulting team of six teachers has been trained by Roberto and we have begun working with the teachers in our school.

The first part was understanding the bullying and related data for our school. While we were not terribly different from other schools some of the details certainly woke staff up. These included that 5.4% reported being bullied everyday or very regularly, including in the classroom. This was after it had been explained to the students what bullying meant. This statistic opened the eyes of our teaching staff. They weren't aghast, it just raised awareness. The data for our school also supported the idea that bullying behaviour is based on students wanting to get a sense of power and that it was cool to dominate. Of course the kids who were targeted showed up with low self-esteem. The evidence also showed that these students felt that the school did not treat their problems seriously.

Some teachers had the attitude that, 'I am here to teach. I shouldn't have to do this.' Our response is that teaching is about relationships. If you haven't got good relationships, then the students are not learning well. So the program does fit our philosophy very well and most teachers didn't see it as a great imposition. The consulting team has trained teachers in the interventions, looking at behaviours and strategies the students use to divert the teacher and other practical skills in re-focusing students. This still needs more work though.

The statistics also included data on the number of our teachers perceived as bullies by the students. Interestingly, female teachers scored higher than males. This may be because we have more female teachers; they are 60% of our staff. But it also may be that they have a more verbal style of control. So bullying is not just an issue for the men. Both men and women are involved.

Roberto showed us research that using particular forms of feedback increased students' self-regulation. Moreover, for every positive affirmation from teachers there were five negative comments from their peers. So we really have to value the use of praise and catch them doing it right. We expected some teacher resistance here along the lines of 'Why praise somebody when they are doing the right thing? That's what they're supposed to do.'

The key for us is to understand that we do not want to crush the students when we manage behaviour. We want the teachers to remain calm and composed and keep focusing on the core issue of getting students to understand their own behaviours and take responsibility for themselves. Low

key tactics, such as the 'broken record', are very helpful. When dealing with things such as putdowns in class, the relationships are important enough to stop teaching and go back and remember what we value in the class, especially in the junior years.

What have you done about your school policy on bullying?

Well, teachers have always been expected to intervene but they may not have had specific skills to do this. Some still want to refer the students to coordinators. We do use the flow chart of escalating interventions where we send kids to coordinators if the behaviour is repeated.

The language in our policy is very similar. We did give the proposed policy to teachers to have a look at. It sets out what teachers are responsible for and what students are responsible for. We received feedback from our consultation, and some tweaking was required, but it fits our philosophy very well. We invited parents to a parent night on the issue but it was poorly attended. We also heard some comments opposing the program as a waste of time.



Bulletin Board

Resource Review: The 'Be Real' Game

Reviewed by Sue Gordon, St Helena Secondary College, Victoria



The 'Be Real' Game is an Australian adaptation of a Canadian game that provides Career and Vocational information to K12 students in a simulation format. This version is aimed at students in Years 9 to 10. The game takes students through a 20-year cycle during which each student makes decisions about how they live and manage their lives. They have to develop resumes, find out about the occupation they are in, and write job applications. The game offers 27 different roles, each with a wealth of background materials. Some activities are done in the roles assigned to students — such as kitchen hand, graphic designer and so on. The game lasts for four to six weeks in four Study of Society and Environment (SOSE) periods a week. That's about 25 hours, but I wouldn't want to cut it down.

Our trial involved two teachers using the game with a total of four mixed Year 10 classes. While we were invited to be part of a Commonwealth Department of Education, Training and Youth Affairs (DETYA) pilot we were interested in introducing something active into the careers unit. The initial issue was to investigate ways of increasing the engagement of Year 10 students in the SOSE curriculum while providing them with useful information relating to their vocational learning pathways. We also wanted to see how this could assist in implementing Curriculum Standards Framework in our subject. Within the SOSE area, and specifically in the Year 10 careers unit, we aim to develop real life skills and to create an awareness of the economy and work options. Without a clear sense of who and where they want to be in their future, the right choices can be elusive. The question for us was how do you access the real world from the classroom!

We wanted the students to understand what they would face in the future and were interested in the approach where they experienced what it was like to take up a role, live with the effect of the decisions they made and go through changes as they got 'older'. The normal program is based on Internet research, focused on themselves and researching career paths in the library. So there is a lot of reading. Most of the time the students fail to see the relevance of labour market statistics or changes in employment patterns. The socio-economic profile of the student body is in the middle range and we have about 75% of students going on to further education (60% TAFE and 40% university).

What was involved?

Students have to form communities of about six people. In my two classes I selected the groups randomly and made sure there was a range of income and occupations in each group. Then the groups have to work together. The students weren't skilled at group work and that is the point. They need to learn this. One commented that, 'It made me get to know the others in my class. They turned out to be okay.' The groups improved their collaboration as we went along.

Each of the four classes had boys 'going nowhere', yet in each case some of these boys came to the fore, being involved, taking leadership where previously they would just sit back and endure the lesson time. One boy said. 'This is alright, miss!' I asked him if he wanted to give me a hand and he even did some preparation to run an activity. Some students were taken aback but everyone had to listen.

One of the criticisms from students was that there wasn't enough time in communities. To the teacher it looked like they were doing nothing substantial, yet making up the name of their group and working out where they lived was important to them. They benefited from working things out such as, when a bushfire came through, and who and what was involved.

What effects did it have on the group and the boys?

Have a look at the table (see below). I used a standardised set of surveys from the DETYA website (available online) before the game and some weeks after the game had finished. I couldn't believe the results. There was a massive increase for boys on student safety, connectedness to teachers, peers and school, a big improvement in motivation and a smaller rise in self-esteem. The girls' experience was much more mixed. They showed a rise in motivation, drops in connectedness with peers and teacher, but minor changes in safety (+ve), esteem (-ve), connectedness to school (-ve). The boys were obviously empowered by the process, particularly, I think, by being able to learn 'in role' so that it wasn't them under the spotlight. I think the girls were challenged by the environment where they had to let go of their cliques and work out the relationships as they went.

Year 10 Results of Effects of the 'Be Real' Game

Feelings about yourself and school student survey (secondary)	Pre-test group mean	Post-test group mean	Whole group difference	Pre-test male	Post-test male	Difference male	Pre-test female	Post-test female	Difference female
Self-esteem (Rosenberg)	3.94	3.97	+0.03	4.12	4.26	+0.14	3.81	3.76	-0.05
Student safety	4.02	4.19	+0.17	3.71	4.02	+0.31	4.25	4.31	+0.06
Connectedness: peers	4.30	4.34	+0.04	4.13	4.56	+0.43	4.42	4.18	-0.24
Connectedness: teachers	3.41	3.54	+0.13	3.17	3.72	+0.55	3.59	3.40	-0.19
Connectedness: school	3.00	3.11	+0.11	3.00	3.37	+0.37	3.00	3.02	+0.02
Motivation to learn	4.02	4.21	+0.19	4.27	4.48	+0.21	3.85	4.01	+0.16

It has to be worth it. The students became more tolerant of one other. They built relationships and managed to go through things that are otherwise dull — taxation, budgeting, prices of housing, health insurance and so on. The most valuable thing is that they will be able to use all these skills again. For example, they had to work with a range of housing issues (some shared a house, others stayed at home and some lived in mansions) and work through what this meant to them.

As teachers, it was challenging to let go of teacher-centred learning and allow students the scope to determine the outcome of tasks. It was well worth the anguish as we saw self-directed learning develop. Overall, the class was more engaged as evidenced by the amount of enthusiasm and interaction. Students looked forward to the next SOSE lesson and often asked what came next or can we do this tomorrow or can we do this or that. This was really encouraging and indeed proof of their interest. We modified plans to include their suggestions.

Most resources are pre-prepared. The one-day teacher inservice was very helpful as we experienced what the students go through. The manual has too much in it, though.

We have decided that the 'Be Real' Game will be introduced as part of the SOSE curriculum for all Year 10 students. The game will begin slightly earlier to give us more time. Some of the activities at the end of the game concerning learning styles could be done as part of a form group period and the game also complements the existing Goal Setting and Managing Individual Pathways program for Year 10. We also will investigate inviting community and parent visitors to speak to students about their experiences. There is enormous scope for this and we want to encourage students to visit community and tertiary providers.

For information about the Australian edition of The 'Be Real' Game (12–14) go to: <http://realgame.detya.gov.au>

The 'Be Real' Game Facilitator's Kit costs \$225.00; go to website for details about associated products such as Student Folder etc. You can order online. Sales and distribution is done by McMillan Customer Service Phone: 02 9795 1200.

Different levels of the game have been developed in Canada. It is planned that Australian editions will be produced. To find out about what is going on in other countries try: <http://www.realgame.com/BRG/BRG.html>

Sue Gordon is careers teacher at St Helena Secondary College, Victoria. She can be reached on 03 9438 3500.

Update on Federal Inquiry into the Education of Boys

When Parliament dissolved in 2001 for the Federal election the inquiry into the education of boys lapsed. When the new Parliament met, a new standing committee on Education and Training was established, chaired by Mr Kerry Bartlett, a former high school teacher and Liberal member for Macquarie in Western Sydney.

The previous chair of the Inquiry, Dr Brendan Nelson, was appointed Minister for Education and has asked the committee to complete its work on the education of boys under the same terms of reference. The new committee subsequently held hearings in Darwin, Griffith and on the Gold Coast.

To see what has been going on visit the committee's home page www.aph.gov.au/house/committee/edt

So far over 200 parties have made submissions and every State and Territory education department was contacted for its view. The report is expected to be tabled in the House in August or September 2002. A copy of the report will be sent to all those who appeared before the committee or sent in a submission.



James Rees, Secretary to the Inquiry into the Education of Boys, can be reached on 02 6277 2121.

Kids Help Line: Talking to Boys and Young Men



'Some call because they can't talk to anybody else as it may show the other people in their circle that they are weak.'

Kids Help Line is running a project called Males and Help Seeking Project. Here are some of the results and insights from talking to its counsellors.

Boys and young men are disturbingly over represented in suicide, incarceration, homelessness and drug-use statistics. In contrast, they are substantially under-represented in their use of support services. Kids Help Line is no exception, with fewer than one in three callers to the service being male. In response to this, Kids Help Line is researching the nature of male help-seeking. As part of this project, counsellors have shared some of their insights gained from working with boys and young men on the phones.

Last resort

Males are perceived as calling Kids Help Line as a last resort and after having exhausted other options. Some counsellors suggest that boys and young men are more determined to sort out their problems for themselves because they are more socially isolated. Almost 50% of counsellors confirm that the male callers they speak to are lonely, isolated or marginalised and a third reported that male callers often have no-one else to talk to about their problems. Others believe that males avoid seeking help because they are fearful of being criticised or ridiculed by peers or significant others. Those boys who do call are seen by counsellors as being brave for having the courage to tell someone about their concerns despite their unfamiliarity with the process and fears of being ridiculed.

Unskilled and uncomfortable

Male callers are described as being less practised and skilled at engaging in the counselling process, particularly when discussing their feelings. This does not apply for all — some are very comfortable with the counselling process. Counsellors describe these males as being more sensitive, open, verbally confident, comfortable with their feelings and 'softer' than the majority of young males to whom they talk.

Age plays a role in this distinction. Three-quarters of counsellors say that boys under 11 are more open, less inhibited, more willing to express their feelings and generally easier to work with compared to older boys and young men. Moreover, they suggest that, while younger boys and girls are similar to work with, older males are challenging in that they present with more complex concerns and are more guarded, defensive and skeptical about the counselling process.

Focus on what to do

Gender differences also occur in the emphasis placed on problem solving. Compared to females, males are more likely to focus on what to do about their concerns and less likely to want to explore the nature of those concerns. They are more likely to expect concrete advice from counsellors rather than exploring their options and possible outcomes. As a result, counsellors frequently find that action-oriented words and phrases focusing on the external world of physical experiences and events — rather than on internal experiences such as thoughts and feelings — are most effective working with boys and young men.

Humour can play an important role in easing young males into the counselling process by creating a more relaxed atmosphere that allows trust and rapport to develop. Slowing the interaction can also be useful in facilitating trust and reducing vulnerability, giving time for greater emphasis on normalising and validating the caller's experiences. In contrast, the best way to build rapport with young males is to 'cut to the chase' and meet their immediate needs first. By initially responding to requests for practical solutions, some counsellors are of the opinion that they provide a sense of legitimacy about their ability to help whilst at the same time reducing the caller's level of distress.

Thoughts first, feelings second

Exploring emotions is considered to be particularly difficult when counselling males. Counsellors tend to avoid directly asking males about their feelings, preferring instead to use more subtle ways to engage them on an emotional level. A common approach is to ask the caller what he thinks about an experience or event rather than what he feels. The focus on thoughts rather than feelings appears to be a safe way for males to reflect and provides a space in which feelings may surface. Another approach is to share the feelings that other males in similar situations have talked about over the phone. This can be a powerful tool to help normalise experiences and gives the caller the opportunity to explore these issues further.

There is little doubt that many boys and young men find contact with a counsellor a positive experience. Over half (55%) have called previously, and 35% agree to reconnect with their counsellor again. The opportunity to safely and anonymously connect with someone who will not label them as weak for seeking help can be an extremely powerful experience. In such an environment, boys and young men can extend their communication skills, share their hopes, fears, experiences and perceptions of their world, and begin to try out new behaviours.

'It seems like it can be helpful to reverse the usual process sometimes, problem solve first and then open conversation up to explore thoughts and feelings.'

'There are huge elements in most conventional counselling processes that boys are not comfortable engaging in. They are encouraged socially to cope alone and suddenly someone starts asking them to share their inner world. This must surely be very confronting to say the least.'

For more information about the Males and Help-Seeking Project email ian@kidshelp.com.au

Male Teachers' Strategy: Strategic Plan for the Attraction, Recruitment and Retention of Male Teachers in Queensland State Schools 2002–05

The Male Teachers' Strategy was launched by the Queensland Minister for Education on 24 May 2002, but implementation has not yet begun. A Reference Group chaired by a member of the Strategy Management Team will be appointed during Term 3, 2002. The following excerpts are drawn from the full document, available at <http://education.qld.gov.au/workforce/diversity/equity/male-teachers.html>

What is the purpose of this strategy?

This strategy has been developed to assist Education Queensland to create a diverse workforce by increasing the number of males engaged in the delivery of educational services.

Specifically, the strategy provides a framework to address the factors that impact on the attraction, recruitment, and retention of male teachers within Education Queensland. These factors include:

- community perception of the teaching profession, and more specifically of male teachers in the profession;
- the reduction in the number of males enrolling in teacher education courses at university; and
- the attrition of male teachers from the Queensland state schooling system into other areas of employment.

What are the issues?

Education Queensland acknowledges that the employment profile of males in teaching falls short of the 35% strategic target. Current statistics indicate that males occupy only 28% of teaching roles in Queensland state schools. Also, in 2001–02, only 3.3% of the total number of males leaving Year 12 and moving on to university chose teaching as a course of study. Down from 4.8% in 1998–99, this number is predicted to decrease in the future unless specific action is taken. Supporting this quantitative data, research conducted within Education Queensland suggests there are some concerns about the perception of the teaching profession — especially of male teachers as potential targets of sexual misconduct. It is also evident that there is concern about the lack of male role models in the teaching profession for young boys. Among other factors, the lack of male role models or authority figures in schools may influence the attitude of boys towards academic achievement and towards schooling in general. This research is also reflected in existing literature.

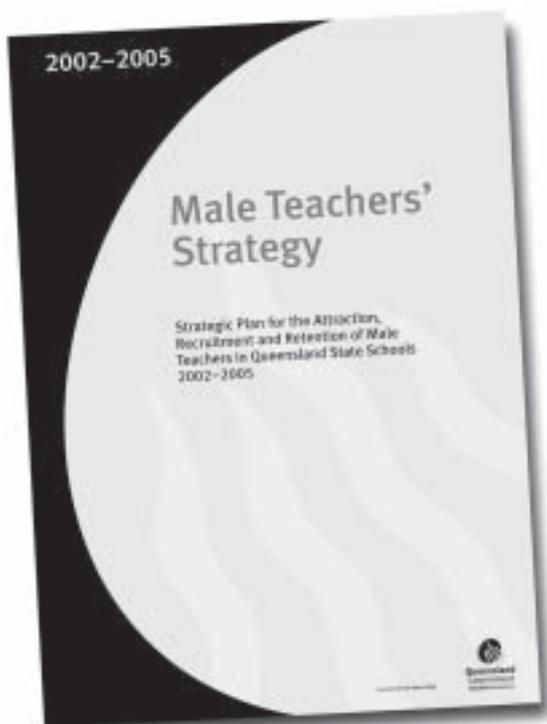
How will change occur?

Although this strategic document is relevant to all employees, it is specifically aimed at principals and managers, organisation decision-makers and key internal and external stakeholders and partners.

How will we know if the strategy has made a difference?

The strategy for the attraction, recruitment and retention of male teachers in Queensland state schools is accompanied by an action plan that describes: the planned result areas; the officers responsible for implementing various aspects of the strategy; the relevant timelines; and a variety of measures that indicate how well we are performing. We will know that the strategy has made a real difference when Education Queensland has:

- increased the number of males applying for teaching positions;
- enhanced employer of choice status for males wishing to enter teaching as a career;



- increased the representation of male teachers;
- increased the job satisfaction level of male teachers working for Education Queensland; and
- improved working conditions and established a culture that values and acknowledges the needs of male teachers.

What is the target?

The Male Teachers' Strategy aims to assist Education Queensland in the creation of a diverse workforce by increasing the number of male teachers to 35% by 2006.

Who is responsible for making it happen?

Ultimately, the Director-General is accountable for meeting the target for the representation of male teachers in Queensland state schools, as outlined in Destination 2010. Consequently, assistant directors-general, directors, managers, district directors, and principals will be accountable for achieving outcomes.

The Strategic Management Team (SMT) will ensure that partnerships are formed between key internal and external stakeholders including business units, district offices, schools, unions and related educational sector networks and associations. These partnerships will enable the Male Teachers' Strategy to be incorporated into planning, reporting and performance documents. Incorporating the Male Teachers' Strategy into key organisational documents will enable SMT to evaluate the implementation of the strategy across the balanced report card and increase localised sustainability by ensuring accountability for initiatives at a school, district and business unit level.

What are the planned results and strategies?

There are four major Planned Result areas, with strategies in place to ensure that they are achieved. The planned results, and their accompanying strategies, are set out below.

Planned Result 1: Supportive and Participative Workplace Conduct and Culture

Education Queensland has an inclusive work environment that is free from all forms of unlawful discrimination and harassment, where people are valued for their diverse experience, knowledge and abilities.

Strategies

1. Develop and implement a policy framework to support Workforce Diversity and Equity including establishing and maintaining a contact officer network.
2. Establish, maintain, and support the Diversity Council.
3. Develop and implement a diversity and equity-training program.
4. Develop a framework for employment equity accountability and integrate it into all reporting documentation and achievement plans.
5. Establish a formal consultation process with unions and other key stakeholders.

Planned Result 2: Attraction

Education Queensland has established teaching as an attractive career opportunity for professional, pre-tertiary and tertiary males resulting in an increase in the number of males applying for teaching positions in Queensland state schools.

Strategies

1. Establish partnerships with other government departments to promote teaching and the attraction of a more diverse range of professional males into school-based roles — for example, police officers, nurses.
2. Establish partnerships with education faculties within Queensland and interstate (University of New England and Southern Cross University) to align with the universities' teacher education course attraction methods for males.

3. Liaise with Queensland universities to establish Targeted Academic Programs to address areas of male teacher shortage.
 4. Establish partnerships with local communities, industry, the Board of Teacher Registration, and professional associations to assist in the recruitment of male teachers in targeted areas.
 5. Develop and implement a marketing and communication campaign to promote the profession of teaching to:
 - upper primary and secondary school students
 - young males in rural communities
 - parents and local larger community
 - males currently in other professions
 - professional associations
 - guidance officers and university career counsellors
 6. Encourage male teachers to promote the teaching profession at school and university career fairs.
 7. Establish a secondary school-based program for existing male teachers to mentor male students wishing to become teachers.
 8. Link male teacher attraction and recruitment strategies to the Employing Quality Teacher Induction Website.
 9. Review current and proposed research that considers the attraction and retention of new teachers.
3. Encourage male teachers to complete their final practicum and an internship in a rural or remote location to increase the representation of male teachers across the state.
 4. Explore, with the Board of Teacher Registration, the appropriateness of establishing a mid-career change process for the admittance of people with an undergraduate qualification other than teaching and a requirement to complete teaching qualifications within a specific timeframe.
 5. Investigate the appropriateness of a review of the starting salary of mid-career-change people into the teaching role in Queensland state schools.

Planned Result 4: Retention

Education Queensland has working conditions and a culture that values and acknowledges the needs of male teachers and facilitates a work-life balance.

Strategies

1. Establish a career structuring and mentoring framework for first and second year teachers.
2. Establish a career management and succession planning process for teacher aspirants.
3. Establish, maintain, and support local peer networks for teachers in districts and across the state.
4. Develop mechanisms to support teachers who are being investigated as a result of student complaints and link strategies to existing mechanisms in the *Child Protection Act 1999*.

Planned Result 3: Recruitment

Education Queensland's recruitment and selection process is inclusive of males, particularly at the teaching level, resulting in an increase in males applying for and being recruited into teaching roles within the Queensland state schooling system.

Strategies

1. Develop a targeted scholarship program for tertiary teaching courses aimed at Year 10 students, Year 12 leaving males, males currently enrolled in another tertiary course of study and males already possessing an undergraduate degree in an area other than teaching.
2. Establish a program to enable first and second year university students completing degrees other than teaching to undertake work observation or work shadowing in Queensland state schools during university holidays.

Inquiries can be made to Jane Guttormsen or Melissa Morris at the Diversity and Equity Unit, Education Queensland, contact 07 3237 0824.

Professional Development for Educators

Available through the Boys in Schools Program, Family Action Centre, the University of Newcastle

Boys in Schools Program

How can we get the best for our boys and from our boys?

Parents, teachers and schools all over Australia are grappling with the issues of how best to educate boys. Boys' low levels of literacy, poor academic achievement, aggression and harmful risk-taking are seen as serious problems in our community.

Would you like to know: how to fully engage boys in classroom learning; how to help boys use all of their intelligences; how to bring out the best behaviour in boys and develop their self-confidence; or what a boy-friendly school might be like?

The Boys in Schools Program offers a strengths approach to engaging boys, individually and in groups, that recognises the importance of male identity and uses the potential resources of energy, humour and safe risk-taking that boys and older males are likely to bring to any situation. The program offers knowledge and skills development in educating boys for professionals and parents across Australia through workshops, seminars, training programs, postgraduate courses and publications.

BEBOP:

Boys' Education, Boys' Outcomes Project

A systematic and comprehensive project for Professional Development and Action Research in Educating Boys. The project aims are:

- Improving the academic and social outcomes for boys
- Providing professional development for all staff in educating boys
- Providing targeted professional development for groups of staff taking on specific roles in educating boys
- Assisting schools to develop and evaluate a whole-school approach to educating boys

The project enables schools and/or groups or clusters of schools to systematically develop their approaches to boys' education over a 12-month period, supported by research staff from the Boys in Schools Program, University of Newcastle. It involves a series of professional development seminars in school-identified priority issues in educating boys, coupled with supported school-based action research tasks for school staff.

Involvement in the project enables schools to:

- Identify and prioritise their school-based boys' education issues (e.g. boys' literacy, self-esteem, behaviour)
- Gather school-based information and develop boys' education benchmarks
- Develop and implement effective strategies for teaching, assessment, behaviour and welfare of boys
- Develop effective school-based structures for enhancing boys' outcomes in parallel to outcomes for girls
- Document school-based approaches through comprehensive policy and strategy documents and case studies
- Evaluate, monitor and adapt school-based boys' education strategies and programs.

Suggested topics include:

- Planning for a whole school approach to boys' education
- Effective teaching and assessment strategies for boys' learning styles
- Effective behaviour strategies for boys
- Boys and literacies
- Engaging fathers in educating boys

In the seminars, school staff are provided with latest information on specific boys' education issues and are assisted to develop and document action research projects that can be incorporated into their practices with boys at school and in the classroom.

Between the seminars participants conduct small action-research tasks in educating boys, in their classroom or school area. Participants are supported in their action research tasks through an email discussion group once a term and a phone or face-to-face meeting with the staff from the Boys in Schools team. Certificates of attendance and participation from the Boys in Schools Program, Family Action Centre, University of Newcastle will be issued to program participants.

Boys in Schools Specialised Workshops

The Boys in Schools Program offers tailor-made professional development workshops for education staff on a local school, cluster or district basis. You can contact us with your particular professional development needs in educating boys. We offer reasonable rates for whole-day and half-day professional development workshops.



Presenter fees are negotiable and in the range of \$1,500 per day plus GST. Travel expenses include economy air fares or hire car rates, mid-range hotel accommodation and meals.

Fees include negotiated content and times to suit your individual needs, quality presentations by leaders in the field of boys' education, and a copy of workshop notes booklet for each participant.

Graduate Certificate and Masters Program in Educating Boys

From 2003 the Boys in Schools Program will offer both a Graduate Certificate and a Masters program specialising in educating boys. These programs are the first in Australia for practising teachers who wish to develop their professional expertise in educating boys in various settings, primary, secondary, single-sex or co-educational schools.

They are available by distance mode through the Faculty of Education, University of Newcastle and are delivered by the staff of the Boys in Schools Program. This means you can upgrade your skills and specialise in educating boys no matter where you teach.

The Graduate Certificate consists of four courses and the Masters program of eight. Students can choose from: Introduction to educating boys, Understanding the academic and social needs of boys, Meeting the academic and social needs of boys, Boys and classroom practice, School organisation and structural issues in educating boys, Boys and literacies, Action learning in educating boys 1, and Action learning in educating boys 2.

The program offers maximum flexibility for busy teachers. At least three courses are offered every semester and students can begin the program in either semester one or two. On completion of the Graduate Certificate, graduates can apply to continue to complete the Master's program. To complete the Graduate Certificate students must successfully complete a total of 40 credit points made up of one core course and three electives. For the Master's program, students need to complete 80 credit points.

The program is full fee paying, with payment of the fees directly to the university. Costs are likely to be \$700 (inc. GST) per course. There is also a general service charge. Course fees may be a legitimate tax deduction.

Designing and Implementing Programs for Boys

Presented by Rollo Browne

What makes programs work? How do we get skills to stick? What are the key elements, useful processes, activities and strategies to use with boys? This workshop has a practical focus on working with boys in schools towards social outcomes. We will examine:

- How to design and run programs for boys
- What's in it for boys? Revealing the need for change
- A framework for thinking about boys' programs
- Key elements of effective boys' programs, including:
 - Engagement
 - Group work
 - Use of action methods
- Selecting appropriate topics
- Practical activities and strategies
- Approaches to building social skills

This is a two-hour to three-hour program with notes provided.

Building Relationships with 'Difficult' Male Students by Observing Ourselves

Presented by David Shores and Jackie Marlu

The relationship between teacher and male student is recognised by many educators as a critically important in a student's positive social, emotional and academic development. Much work has been done attempting to understand and remediate classroom and school situations where this relationship has broken down. Often this takes the major focus of attempting to modify or manage the behaviour of the 'difficult student'. This often provides a new start for a more positive relationship. But what happens when the relationship breaks down? What do we do when boys continue to withdraw, resist or actively and consciously work not to develop a positive relationship or change their 'difficult behaviours'? Building Relationships with 'Difficult' Male Students by Observing Ourselves has been developed specifically with such situations in mind. The workshop has been conducted extensively, over five years, in South Australian schools.

This is a one-day workshop.

Year 9/10 Boys Program on Masculinity and Power

Presented by Rollo Browne

The school's male teachers run small groups of boys through a series of rotating activities. Rollo gives a keynote address, uses action methods and on power and runs activities during the morning. In the afternoon the small groups work on and present their solutions to problems such as bullying, harassment and violence. Activity sessions include Language and Sexuality, Images of Masculinity (Photolanguage or Male Photopak) and Males Coping with Pressure. Staff must run through the program prior to the day. A suitable venue, such as a library with sufficient break out rooms, is required.

This is an all day program. Copies of teacher notes and student handouts are provided.

Social Education Classroom Program: Developing Social/Emotional Intelligence Through an Exploration of Risk-Taking Behaviour, With a Focus on Boys

Presented by David Shores

If the Girls' Educational Strategy was very broadly about getting our female students out into work with a wider range of options, then what's the aim for boys' education? To get them out into the world? They're already there! I believe that the aim of boys' education is rather to get our boys and young men back into themselves, to develop introspection. The Social Education Program uses young males' attraction to physical risk-taking to create an interest in, and an understanding of, our intra-personal experiences. Participants explore how these experiences can be used to create more positive relationships in the classroom. What we think, feel, do and say are connected. With practice, by observing ourselves in action, we can develop an understanding of what it means to take responsibility for our internal and external behaviours.

A Whole School Approach to Boys' Education

Presented by Richard Fletcher

There are three sources of concern about boys: outcomes for boys in learning, health and welfare; aggressive and destructive styles of behaviour; and our recognition that we do not understand what makes boys tick. Whole school approaches to boys'

education must integrate outcomes planning, behaviour management and creating a positive culture for boys. An understanding of these three areas will enable staff to engage the boys and community members to provide better outcomes for all. This seminar will present four key steps:

- Developing staff support
- Engaging boys as teachers
- Getting dads involved
- Keeping girls in the picture

This interactive seminar provides tools for building support among staff and parents, methods for engaging boys, and examples of current practice where boys' learning is improved.

Boys in Schools: What are they on about?

Presented by Deborah Hartman

In this interactive workshop, Deborah Hartman will lead participants through a series of activities that will get you thinking about boys' motivation and behaviour. We'll begin to answer some of the big questions about boys. What are the links between male identity and success at school and in life? What do boys say about school and teachers? Who are the best role models for boys? How can we support all boys to behave appropriately and get the most out of their school experience? Don't expect to keep still and be quiet in this workshop!

Women Working with Boys: We Can Hardly Wait Till Monday

Presented by Deborah Hartman

In this interactive workshop, Deborah Hartman will encourage participants to share their successes in teaching boys. We'll explore what works for boys and for women teachers. And we'll look at how women and men can work together to support boys in developing a male identity that includes success at school. To do this, we'll examine our own attitudes and expectations.

For further information about these exciting professional development opportunities contact:
Michelle Gifford
Phone: 02 4921 8739
Email: Michelle.Gifford@newcastle.edu.au
Or visit our website:
www.newcastle.edu.au/centre/fac



Rock and Water



Who is Freerk Ykema?

Freerk Ykema has been a Physical Education and Remedial Teacher and Counsellor at Schagen in the north of The Netherlands at a comprehensive school. In 1995 he trialed the Rock and Water course at his school to address boys' motivation and self-confidence. Since then he has trained teachers in many countries around the world to deliver the course. In 2000 the course won a national award in The Netherlands for targeting boys' education.

The Rock and Water program is coordinated throughout Australasia by the Gadaku Institute. The Institute is located in Perth and cooperates with the Boys in School Program of the University of Newcastle.

The program offers teachers a new way to interact with boys and girls, physical/social teaching, physical exercises are constantly linked with mental and social skills. In this way the program leads from simple self-defence, boundary and communication exercises to a strong notion of self-confidence. The program offers a framework of exercises and thoughts about boys and manhood to assist boys to become aware of purpose and motivation in their life.

Topics include: intuition, body language, mental power, empathic feeling, positive thinking and positive visualising. Discussion topics include bullying, sexual harassment, homophobia, goals in life, desires and following an inner compass.

We offer three types of workshop:

One-day workshop: Introduction to the Rock and Water program provides a survey of the entire course (with teaching materials). The emphasis is on the contents of Lesson 1, 2, 3 and 4: standing strong, the rock and water attitude in physical, mental and social context, and dealing with pressure from others.

Two-day workshop: This workshop extends the range of exercises and topics: breathing to extend physical power and to keep in self-control; the body language of The Tunnel and The Beach; feeling, setting and respecting your own and other people's boundaries. All lessons from 1 to 8 are practised.

Three-day workshop: All lessons from 1–14 will be taught in this workshop. You will cover all topics as well as lessons 9–14 which are best directed at boys only and are more suitable for students aged 14 years or older. They address lack of direction, sexuality and personal development.

Refresher Course

This workshop will introduce you to the International Gadaku Institute. You will revisit the most important exercises of the Rock and Water

program, be introduced to new exercises, and exchange experiences with others working with the Rock and Water program. You will also be advised about further development of the Rock and Water program in Australasia, and a train-the-trainer program. Teachers already experienced in working with the complete Rock and Water program and who are interested in participating a train-the-trainer program in March 2003 should attend a refresher course in order to be selected.

Important note: Though the program has a clear focus to support and guide boys on their way to manhood the program has a similar, profound impact when taught to girls.

The next tour throughout New South Wales and the Northern Territory will be in November 2002 and March 2003.

For more information about the course, up and coming tours, or to find out how your organisation or school can host a workshop in NSW or NT contact:

Michelle Gifford
Phone: 02 4921 8739
Email: Michelle.Gifford@newcastle.edu.au
Or visit our website:
www.newcastle.edu.au/centre/fac

For all other enquiries throughout Australia please contact the Gadaku Institute at Events WA on:

Phone: 08 9409 8688 or
Email: eventswa@ozemail.com.au

BOYS' EDUCATION RESOURCES FROM THE BOYS IN SCHOOLS PROGRAM

ORDER FORM

TITLE	PUB NO.	RRP (INC. GST)	QUANTITY	TOTAL
The Boys in Schools Bulletin (school set) — 3 copies of each issue	002S	\$95.00		
The Boys in School Bulletin (single) — 1 copy of each issue	970	\$45.00		
The Boys in School Bulletin back issues — (3 issues) — 2001 Bulletins	004S	\$33.00		
Being a Man Photopak	979	\$132.00		
Boys in Schools	961	\$28.00		
Leadership in Boys' Education	992	\$33.00		
I Can Hardly Wait Till Monday	001	\$33.00		
Report on Men and Boys Project	993	\$11.00		
Boyz Rulez posters	981	\$33.00		
FatherCare posters	983	\$20.00		
Male Health posters	991	\$33.00		
Boys to Men posters	004	\$33.00		
113 Ways to Be Involved As a Father poster	006	\$11.00		
The Rock and Water Approach	002	\$55.00		
Rock and Water Perspectives	003	\$35.00		
Rock and Water Action Reaction video	004	\$55.00		
Rock and Water Basic Exercises video	005	\$55.00		
Man's World: A Game for Young Men	974UK	\$121.00		
		Sub Total		\$
PLEASE NOTE: Unfortunately we cannot send resources on approval. Please add 15% for postage and handling (up to \$20.00 maximum)		Postage & handling (add 15% to max. \$20)		\$
		TOTAL		\$

Please make cheques payable to: **The Boys in Schools Program** (ABN 15 736 576 735)

Contact name: _____ **Organisation:** _____

Postal address: _____ **Postcode:** _____

Order no: _____ **Phone no:** _____

Please invoice our organisation (Australia only) Enclosed is my cheque for AUD\$ _____

Please debit my credit card Bankcard Visa Mastercard

Expiry date: _____ **Name of cardholder:** _____ **Phone:** _____

Signature: _____

The Men and Boys Program, The University of Newcastle, University Drive, CALLAGHAN NSW 2308
Phone: +61 2 4921 8739 **Fax:** +61 2 4921 8686 **Email:** men-and-boys@newcastle.edu.au **Website:** www.newcastle.edu.au/centre/fac

The third biennial Teaching Boys Conference: *Boys to Fine Men: School and Community Partnerships*



Sponsored by the Boys in Schools Program and the Engaging Fathers Project of the Family Action Centre, the University of Newcastle, and the NSW Department of Education and Training.

The third biennial Teaching Boys Conference: Boys to Fine Men: School and Community Partnerships

5 pm Thursday 27 March to 4 pm Saturday 29 March 2003
Also featuring optional pre-conference workshops
9 am to 4 pm Thursday 27 March 2003

Plenary and keynote presentations, participant discussions and interactive workshops will showcase successful programs, school and community partnerships, innovative and practical strategies and current research.

Conference themes:

- Engaging Boys: Building on boys' strengths in the educational process
- Boys and Literacies: Building on home, school and community partnerships
- Welfare and Behaviour: Building partnerships for developing resilience and purpose in boys

And . . . hear the Northern Territory Boys Choir!

Who should attend

Teachers, principals, health and welfare staff, parents, educational leaders, counsellors, youth workers, policy-makers, community and government agency staff

Conference Manager

Tulips Meetings Management
PO Box 116
Salamander Bay NSW 2317
Australia
Ph: (02) 4984 2554
Fax: (02) 4984 2755
Email: boys@pco.com.au
Conference website: www.pco.com.au/boys2003

Key Dates

Registration brochure available	Late October 2002
Early-bird registrations close	20 December 2002
Optional pre-conference workshops	27 March 2003
Conference	27 to 29 March 2003

Are you doing things that are exciting and innovative in this area?

To discuss sharing your strategies and successes with others, please contact:

Michelle Gifford
Family Action Centre
Phone: (02) 4921 8739
(international +61 2 4921 8739) or
Email: men-and-boys@newcastle.edu.au

Some of the confirmed presenters include:

Ann Buchanan University of Oxford Centre for Research into Parenting and Children
Recent research linking family factors to boys' resilience and school outcomes

Bob Morgan Murri Consultant and Associates, NSW
Using the strengths of the Aboriginal community to grow fine boys into fine men

Ken Rigby University of South Australia
Effective bullying strategies to help schools tackle bullying

Freerk Ykema Creator Rock and Water Program, The Netherlands
Linking action to teaching; boys setting boundaries

Richard Fletcher Family Action Centre, the University of Newcastle, NSW
Developing a positive role for fathers in your school

Deborah Hartman Boys in School Program, Family Action Centre, the University of Newcastle, NSW
Women's role in teaching boys well

John Spirings Research Strategist, Dusseldorp Schools Forum, VIC
Pathways to growing fine men; workplace and community support for boys in schools

To express your interest in attending
and to receive a conference
registration brochure in late October
2002, please complete an on-line
expression of interest at
www.pco.com.au/boys2003



The UNIVERSITY
of NEWCASTLE
AUSTRALIA